

Journal 2017

Gildas Hamel

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1 January

MONDAY, 2 JANUARY 2017

Visit by David and Catherine today before their trip back to southern California. Rémi and Leslie had a chance to talk together about getting into the medical profession. Rémi flies back to the East Coast tomorrow, for an interview Wednesday with the University of Virginia.

Message from F. Kerrain:

Demat dit Gweltaz

Kalz a blijadur am eus bet o resev da bostel gant luc'hskeudennoù da diegezh. Trugarez bras dit. Degemerit ivez, te hag Amy, va gwellañ hetoù evit ar bloaz nevez, evidoc'h eveljust hag evit ho pugale. Gwelout a ran ez a war ledanaat. Va merc'h Trefina a zo nevez dimezet e dibenn an hañv. Gant ur stourmer breizhat ouzhpenn, Nil Caouissin e anv, moarvat ez eus bet degouezhet ganit klevout komz eus ar familh-se (e-pad an eil brezel-bed !). Met va merc'h henañ, siwazh, a seblant kaout kudennoù spered. Un tamm nec'het on ganti. Ankeniet e vez alies, ha d'am meno, e chomo dizimez.

Plijadur am eus bet ouzh ho kwelout. Krog on da goshañ da vat. Spi am eus em bo tro da gejañ ganeoc'h c'hoazh ! Gant va brasañ mignoniezh

Mot de Pierre:

Bonne année à toi également. Je te rappelle mon adresse mail personnelle : corbel.pierre35@gmail.com Si on se décide à aller vous voir (pas sûr que ce soit en 2017), tu seras prévenu bien avant. Juste une petite question : as-tu reçu le colis de livres que je t'ai envoyé des PUR au mois d'octobre? Si ce n'était pas le cas, il faudrait que je mène l'enquête. Je vous embrasse.

Charpin defends and uses the notion of *living* and *dead* archives that in his opinion should replace the meaningless distribution of Mesopotamian

tablets into “private” and “public” collections.¹ “Living” were texts that accumulated and presumably were available to authority and family in palace and temples until time of destruction by external event. “Dead” is for texts that were discarded by the ancients themselves and sometimes used in interesting way (floor fillers for instance). Living archives of palaces usually had a short life of twenty to forty years.² The living archives belonging to families and that mostly consisted of property deeds had a much longer life of one to two centuries. Temple archives also had a long life, from about seventy years to one hundred twenty and even one hundred fifty. Note that no duplicate of letters sent were kept in archives. Only passive correspondence was kept. From the mid-second millennium, the texts of treaties were kept: see Hattusha and Ugarit. In Assyria, a matrix of god Aššur was kept in “city hall” (*bit ālim*), and texts were kept in an annex next to the temple of Nabu. This aspect of royal archives may have been common and may help explain the story told in 2 Kings 24 about the text found in the wall of the temple: rehabilitation of a building conveniently leading to a discarded treaty with YHWH.

I just learned of John Berger’s passing in the *NYT*. Not surprisingly, the article and obituary on this great figure is “mi-figue mi-raisin”. The *NYT* is not pleased to see labor and humble conditions become the center of attention of a “provocative art critic,” a false label that Berger’s whole attitude and work defused. See the *Guardian*’s obit. One can watch the BBC episodes of *Ways of Seeing. Into their labors (Pig Earth, The flag), A Fortunate Man, To The Wedding, A Seventh Man*, are more relevant today than when they first appeared. Berger did much of the necessary thinking for us.

Callum and Lucie love to listen to recorded songs. Callum likes what he calls “rock music,” which is more rhythmic singing and percussion, including guitar. This morning, he retrieves a couple of cards I had thrown out on which I had written words used by him a few months ago during one of our video conferences. One says “avion,” the other “bunny is funny,” all in capitals. He reads them without problem, and I can see his eyes starting on the left of the writing and moving slowly to the right.

1. CHARPIN, *Reading and writing in Babylon*, 101,104–5.

2. *Ibid.*, 102.

FRIDAY, 6 JANUARY 2017

Documentary: *German Concentration Camps Factual Survey*, by Sidney Bernstein, 1945, restored, shown in 2014 at festivals in Berlin, Jerusalem, etc., and commercialized in 2016.

SUNDAY, 8 JANUARY 2017

I discover today that the officially released film made by Billy Wilder and released in January 1946 was called *Death mills* or *Die Todesmühlen*, while the German version I referred to yesterday was done by a different director and editor. These are the versions that were issued because they were less controversial politically. The German expression implicates the forces of modern technology into the destruction and erasure of what made Europe habitable. For that reason, as well as for the less obvious tie to the medieval notion of the mystic mill, Celan used it in his poem *Spät und tief* (see 27/2/2010: *Ihr mahlt in den Mühlen des Todes der weiße Mehl der Verbeißung*).

Yesterday, mention in passing of the possibility of limits to desire(s): Hayden thinks it is boundless. By allowing and selling a 24/7 fantasm of presence, our transportation and imaging instrumentation keeps building and increasing our distance from others and ourselves, in a fuite en avant of constantly distantiated objects that makes more poignantly frantic the still-hoped-for possibility of presence. Rémi reminds me this morning that present-day adults spend about one third of their waking time on digital “distance reducers/maximizers” (my name for all machinery that moves and mobilizes us, beginning with daily language). Desire then becomes regret and even regression. We are creating a greater distance from objects that we create as projections of selves and which we believe we control via our putative mastery of discourse, instrumentation, ethic norms, and social constructions. Transcendence is “ingraved”—I want to say “enshrined,” “hacked” even—into these projections, yet tends to escape and become something all its own, part of the construction of distance that no one is in charge of. So, our distance from the world increases. If desire has as its main function the union with, or proximity of, a present world—including present as in “giving presents”—, this absence keeps tripping and reshaping desires as unquenchable. Capitalist institutions rely upon this fleeing and deepening distance and absence, including that from oneself, to offer their paying (re)mediations. Kings of ancient times did something similar in

increasing a divine distance and power that in turn they re-presented and mediated in temples and altars they kept under the watchful eyes of their palaces.

MONDAY, 9 JANUARY 2017

I cull a few notes on the origins of sedentary agriculture from a book on the ancient peoples of southern Mexico.³ Arguments by MacNeish and Flannery regarding modelization of the archaic period have been going on for thirty years at least. Redating by a more precise AMS technique as well as theorization on gender and social relations has meant that new models are emerging. First clear evidence of sedentism (permanent settlement) in Oaxaca between –1900 and –1400. Indications of social complexity become more evident only in 850–400 BC (Middle Formative).⁴ Joyce thinks that sedentism is not only a matter of sufficiently abundant resources but also of new social relationships. Sedentism's effects: investments in fixed technologies and tools (that it was prohibitive to transport before); ceramics; permanent structures, and reliance on storage facilities. This would allow for increased competition for wealth and status.⁵ Sedentism had an effect on symbolic relationship to landscape, which was transformed by fixed structures. Social identity and memory were affected. Architecture can be used to create new social spaces (plazas, ceremonial precincts). Earlier social circumstances may have had an effect. The more and more permanent associations bound to other fixed points mean that occasions for social tensions became more frequent: problem of labor investment, marriages, enforcement of reciprocity. Early villages were generally small (1 to 3 ha) with populations of a few dozen people. Small, nuclear families with 5 people by household?⁶ Five to ten households per community, typically. Remains: houses, bell-shaped pits for storage of food, tools and valuables, human burials, ovens. Burials close to the house imply claims by the family to the land. Abundance of figurines whose significance is disputed but can be generally taken to mean engagement with a broader world. Evidence of buildings for social rituals?

3. JOYCE, *Mixtecs, Zapotecs, and Chatinos: Ancient peoples of southern Mexico*, 66–83.

4. *Ibid.*, 71.

5. *Ibid.*, 72.

6. *Ibid.*, 75.

TUESDAY, 10 JANUARY 2017

Similar reflections across part of the northern hemisphere regarding culture, economy, and politics. In a superficial article for the *NYT*, for instance, Roger Cohen misrepresents a small fraction of the liberal-thinking people as if it was the whole. I've often noted this weight given to =isms by "liberal" or culturally "left" people who lose sight of the much larger issues that do not impact them directly. I remember Richard Rorty warning UCSC intellectuals about abandoning the core values of the nation. Cohen and many others (Lilla whom he mentions) think intellectuals have gone way too far in adopting facile cultural aspects but do not propose any way to come together around economic and social values.

Seen from France, the widespread loss of universal ideals and values is alarming. As Bensoussan says in an interview with the *Figaro* (of all things!):

La République est d'abord une forme de régime. Elle ne désigne pas un ancrage culturel ou historique. La nation, elle, est l'adhésion à un ensemble de valeurs et rien d'autre. Ce n'est pas le sang, pas le sol, pas la race.

There is a real hostility rising in, and making two peoples who fantasize about their anchoring and seem to agree only on not having anything to do with each other. Too many intellectuals have expressed their concern about "amalgams" and their risks rather than a more fundamental interest for truth (regarding the long history of Judaism, the animosity vehiculated by Islamic education for a very long time, the situation of many of those voting for the FN, including now a majority of working class people, etc.).⁷ For those "sur le terrain," (urgent care people, police, teachers, etc.), it looks often like civil war in the making. Islamophobia is a particularly inept word. It is supposed to suggest that criticism of attacks that are also religious is racist and fascist. Only fifty people at a demonstration in 2012 organized by imam Chalgoumi after the Merah attack.

Triumph of selfish interests, disregard for the common good, that is where we are in Europe and the US, and in other areas invaded by modern capitalist forms. Other thing to remember: Arab nationalism, pan-arab or national, has failed. Islamism is the only ground, whatever religious and cultural forms it takes. Failure of -isms also (communism, trade-unionism), joined to disintegrated media. What Bensoussan says about the

7. Brenner (pseudonym of Bensoussan) and Corvarola, *Les territoires perdus de la République*, 2002. New edition: BRENNER, *Les territoires perdus de la République*.

pre- or trans-colonial anti-judaism, the jealousy that was expressed after the Crémieux decree of 1870, is striking:

Travaillant plusieurs années sur l'histoire des juifs dans le monde arabe aux XIXe et au XXe siècle (pour juifs en pays arabes. *Le grand déracinement*, 1850-1975, Tallandier, 2012), j'avais constaté l'existence d'une culture arabo-musulmane, du Maroc à l'Irak, entachée d'un puissant antijudaïsme, et ce bien avant le sionisme et la question d'Israël et de la Palestine. Il existe en effet, et de longue date, une culture arabo-musulmane anti-juive, souvent exacerbée par la colonisation (mais qui n'en fut toutefois jamais à l'origine). Il fallait faire de l'histoire culturelle pour comprendre comment, pourquoi et quand la minorité juive qui s'était progressivement émancipée grâce à l'école, s'était heurtée à une majorité arabo-musulmane aux yeux de laquelle l'émancipation des juifs était inconcevable et irrecevable. Il n'était question alors ni de sionisme, ni d'Israël ni de Gaza. Et encore moins de « territoires occupés » qui, pour les ignorants et les naïfs, constituent le cœur du problème actuel. Ce conflit entre une majorité qui ne supporte pas que le dominé de toujours s'émancipe, et le dominé de toujours qui ne supporte plus la domination d'autrefois, se traduit par un divorce, et donc un départ. Il s'agit là d'histoire culturelle. Où est le racisme ?⁸

Quelques réflexions sur les rapports entre la droite israélienne et Obama. La droite israélienne a compris dès son premier mandat en 2008 qu'il se remplaçait clairement dans la ligne du président Carter. Les implantations ont été considérées de nouveau comme des "obstacles à la paix" et la résolution du conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies 242 (adoptée à l'unanimité en novembre 67) plus les discussions de fond qui avaient mené aux accords d'Oslo sont redevenues la base d'accords futurs. Je dis "de nouveau" parce qu'on avait laissé tomber cette ligne avec Reagan et surtout le deuxième Bush qui s'est fait emberlificoter par Sharon. Clinton était perçu par Israël comme étant également favorable à la politique d'Israël, perçue comme étant de "gauche" ou "libérale" alors qu'en fait le parti travailliste a souvent continué la politique d'implantations de la droite. Voilà d'après moi pourquoi Obama a été vu tout de suite comme un ennemi. J'ajoute qu'il devenait alors facile pour Netanyahu et autres de se faire des voix en s'opposant à Obama de toutes les façons possibles et imaginables.

Il n'en demeure pas moins qu'ont été signés par Obama en septembre 2016 des accords de soutien militaire à Israël sur 10 ans qui montent à 38 mil-

8. See his *Juifs en pays arabes. Le grand déracinement 1850-1975* (2012).

liards de dollars. Entre parenthèses, il y a eu aussi un gros paquet pour Sisi et confrères en Égypte. Ce soutien est sans contrepartie politique puisque Biden ou Kerry ont été pratiquement moqués par le gouvernement israélien pendant leurs dernières visites (décisions d'implantations faites et promulguées ou rendues publiques pendant leurs voyages en Israël). Obama a donc abandonné ses velléités des premières heures. Il les a abandonnées tout de suite dans les médias et dans ses rapports officiels avec les autorités israéliennes mais on a malgré tout continué à le soupçonner de vouloir faire des coups bas à Israël, d'où cette pression constante de Netanyahou sur Obama, allant jusqu'à l'ingérence dans les affaires politiques US (son voyage "invité" au Congrès, son soutien public au candidat républicain en 2012 pour le second mandat d'Obama).

Avec Trump et consorts, on peut aller très vite vers la solution mono-étatique voulue par Neftali Bennett et autres pour la région. Les bons de crédit moral tirés sur la Shoah fatiguent, on va en venir à la force pure. Je pense que les zones A et B palestiniennes (90-95% de la population en 440 villages et villes, 22-23% de la surface) peuvent devenir une vaste prison à ciel ouvert. La zone C serait déclarée comme faisant partie d'Israël. Voir Vincent Lemire sur tout ça (site web de grand intérêt). Comme l'a écrit Martin Indyk dans un article récent dans le *NYTimes*, Israël devra choisir entre la démocratie et son identité juive.

English translation: Some reflections on the relations between the Israeli right and Obama. The Israeli right understood from his first term in 2008 that he was clearly in line with President Carter. Settlements were once again publically proclaimed as "obstacles to peace" and the resolution of the United Nations Security Council 242 (adopted unanimously in November 67), plus the substantive discussions leading up to the Oslo Accords, became again the basis for future agreements. I say "again" because this line had been dropped by Reagan administration and especially the second Bush who accepted to be under Sharon's influence. Clinton was perceived by Israel as being supportive of Israel's perceived "left" or "liberal" politics when in fact the Labor Party had often continued the policy of right-wing settlements. That's why Obama was immediately seen as an enemy even though he relented and didn't dare go against the backlash in 2009. This change however was not trusted and he was still suspected of wanting to undercut Israel's policies, hence Netanyahu's constant pressure on Obama, to the point of interference in US political affairs (his public support for the Republican nominee in 2012 for Obama's second term, and his more recent "guest" trip to Congress). Netanyahu grossly exploited the tension to gar-

ner coalition-strengthening votes at home.

Nevertheless, one may wonder why in September 2016 Obama signed military support agreements with Israel over 10 years that amount to 38 billion dollars. In parallel, there was also a large package for Sisi and colleagues in Egypt. Yet, it was a mistake to grant this support without political counterpart in regard to the first problem of Israel's military defense, the status of Palestinians. Biden or Kerry were virtually mocked by the Israeli government during their last visits. Settlement decisions were made and promulgated or made public during their travels in Israel.

With Trump et alii, one could go very quickly towards the mono-state solution wanted by Neftali Bennett and others for the region. The moral credit vouchers drawn on the Shoah have lost their worth, Israel will have to do without external moral justification in its use of force, like most states do. The Palestinian areas A and B (90-95% of the population in 440 villages and towns, 22-23% of the surface) can become a vast open-air prison. Zone C would be declared part of Israel. See Vincent Lemire on all this (website of great interest). As Martin Indyk wrote in a recent article in the *NYTimes* concerning the status of Jerusalem and the use of the US embassy's move from Tel Aviv as bargaining chip, Israel will have to choose between democracy and a Jewish identity.

THURSDAY, 12 JANUARY 2017

Bruno m'écrit :

Trump va découvrir outre l'U.R.S.S. mais la Chine qui balade sa flotte au sud de la mer de Chine obligeant Taïwan et le Vietnam à faire décoller ses avions et la septième flotte à se remuer devant l'entreprenant ! L'armée chinoise, particulièrement l'aviation est pressée d'en découdre. Il existe une nouvelle route de la soie en train via la Russie et ses satellites qui va jusqu'à Londres ! Le Japon réarme. L'histoire est semblable à un condensateur électrique avec ses répétitions périodiques.

Je lui réponds que les bruits de bottes ne sont pas seulement ceux de la Chine. Notre démagogue en chef non seulement prétend rétablir une politique de force envers la Chine mais s'entoure de militaires. Le plus grave est que l'enrichissement d'une trop petite fraction des populations dans les pays dits riches en diminue d'autant la consommation de base, ce qui fait que tant la productivité du travail que les PNB restent bas (sous réserve de

vérification des chiffres, car il paraît qu'il y a comme une reprise aux Etats-Unis et que les salaires sont en légère hausse sur l'année précédente, où ils baissaient). Je pense que c'est grave parce que dans un climat de problèmes de distribution de la richesse, la guerre surgit vite comme une tentation ou la seule solution que les démagogues vont se voir enclins à offrir. Tant qu'on était dans une logique d'enrichissement avec retombée de grosses miettes pour les peuples, les bruits de bottes pouvaient se conjuguer avec ceux des mâchoires de la consommation ! Cela continuera-t-il ? Je ne peux pas oublier que les E-U s'arrogent le droit de dominer tout le Pacifique jusqu'au littoral chinois, sans parler de la surveillance satellitaire. Trump au pouvoir ne va pas arrêter le flot de conteneurs, mais les choix qu'il est en train de faire augmentent terriblement les risques.

Otherwise

Janet Kenyon (1947–95)

I got out of bed
 on two strong legs.
 It might have been
 otherwise. I ate
 cereal, sweet
 milk, ripe, flawless
 peach. It might
 have been otherwise.
 I took the dog uphill
 to the birchwood.
 All morning I did
 the work I love.
 At noon I lay down
 with my mate. It might
 have been otherwise.
 We ate dinner together
 at a table with silver
 candlesticks. It might
 have been otherwise.
 I slept in a bed
 in a room with paintings
 on the walls, and

planned another day
 just like this day.
 But one day, I know,
 it will be otherwise.

About the ideology of war: I've long thought that modern post-Christian societies labored under a paradox when it came to justification of war. For Augustine, war could only be waged with the goal of achieving peaceful life and harmonious relationships of equality, not submission of others to one's will or that of self to another's. Christ couldn't easily be claimed to be calling for war. The humility and glory he condensed in his person didn't allow for Ciceronian proclamations of the superior right of Rome to conquer the universe or the more hypocritical American version of a universal "civilizing mission." No matter, divine will, especially that of the "father" in the blessed trinity, played a fundamental role for centuries. In modern nations, on the contrary, divine will was abandoned and war decisions were supposed to originate with the people's will and interest(s). Which are? Yet, it seemed that modern nations still needed to find moral ideological cover that recalled the Christian message, no matter the identity of the enemy (helping your neighbor, saving lives, duty of sacrifice, civilizing mission with a moral bend, etc.). I thought that there was little difference between a Reagan and the Romans when it came to the practice of war, only in the ideological cover. Romans also did need moral cover, but it was narrowly constructed. In Cicero's words: "That the Roman people should be slaves is contrary to divine law; the immortal gods have willed it to rule all nations" (*Philippicae* 6.7.19).⁹ Reagan et alii claimed a kind of universal, Kantian, duty, with more variables than Romans or other cultures simply thought unnecessary. In the end, it looks like Augustine's view of war as glorified looting is the right one, no matter the ideological justifications given by, say, the Assyrians (gods' will and world order), Romans (gods' will and order), or modern USA with its own variant on people's or god's will, and the "global order."

FRIDAY, 13 JANUARY 2017

Readings today: Monroe on primitive capitalism (!); Ska on Van Seters on the Pentateuch; Frahm on Oded in *AfO*; Christine Hayes on divine law

9. Compare to Virgilius, *Aeneas* 1.278–79; 6.794–95.

(chapter 7 of her 2015 book), and Rhyannon Graybill on Ezekiel and Daniel (affect and unstable nature of masculinity in Hebrew prophets).

SUNDAY, 15 JANUARY 2017

Leslie, Callum and Lucie flew back to Michigan today. Callum came to our bed this morning and we had a funny discussion with Bunny about the correct pronunciation of “volcano.” I explained that people a long time ago thought very powerful beings made the earth quake or volcanos erupt. They imagined their lives and made up stories about them. Callum turned to Bunny and told him about legends! Tonight, a little before 21h00, Leslie called from the car in Michigan to tell us they had made it and had a good trip.

MONDAY, 16 JANUARY 2017

The schmoozers discussed contempt Saturday. Jerry held for a practical view of it that can focus on one aspect of a person’s behavior without letting it bleed into a feeling of contempt for the whole person. Others thought it would be difficult to manage to compartmentalize the emotion to a single aspect. I realized during the discussion that my whole tradition and education erects powerful guides forbidding not only the expression of contempt but even the feeling of it about anyone. Even vice is still within redemption. The notion of creation and the nature of the messiah forbid ranking of people and feelings of despise or contempt, as they are contrary to the idea of radical equality as it is imagined to radiate in the divine mind.

The complaint some historians of antiquity are wont to express about a sad lack of information or the regrettable fragmentary aspect of a source strikes me as curious and illogical. I would understand the feeling in modern history where one can get access to complete series of information, say on harbors’ commercial tonnage, but in ancient history? I would think it is in the nature of epigraphy, archaeology, and even textual remains, to be fragmentary and even to make it often impossible to estimate the extent of the fragmentariness. Such is the case even (or especially?) in the abundant archives left by Neo-Assyrian kings and officials. Charpin estimates for instance that hundreds of thousands of documents have disappeared.¹⁰

10. CHARPIN, *Reading and writing in Babylon*.

Here are some examples of this low-key lamentation by Monroe in his attempt to draw a picture of what he calls entrepreneurial traders in Late Bronze Levant. So, about portuary activities: “Unfortunately we lack any maritime ‘bill of lading’ comparable to...”¹¹ Or about a text that could be seen as a wonderful scrap from ancient life: “This is unfortunately a unique text whose ambiguities are hard to clarify without suitable comparanda.”¹² Regarding Levantines versus Mycenaean trade “is so poorly documented in Aegean sources” not on account of an abhorrence for trade but because “little is well documented in Mycenaean texts,” and “Linear B is such a poor script for recording a behavior as complex as trade [...]”¹³ Again about social relations (but granted, this could be talking about the failure of historians to gather the documentation): “poorly documented [...] liminal relations.”¹⁴ Finally, about the risks any interpretation runs: “lacunae and ambiguities perforate the topic generally [...]”,¹⁵ i.e. the commentator’s bucket is full of holes.

TUESDAY, 17 JANUARY 2017

David Brooks uses Ehrenreich’s 2007 book in his *NYT* column today to argue that early movements go from their free spirited if not orgiastic moods to a somber frame of mind guided by social concerns.

In her book *Dancing in the Streets*, Barbara Ehrenreich argues that in the first centuries of Christianity, worship of Jesus overlapped with worship of Dionysus, the Greek god of revelry. Both Jesus and Dionysus upended class categories. Both turned water into wine. Second- and third-century statuettes show Dionysus hanging on a cross.

Statuettes? Or rather a fourth-century amulet that could be a forgery. The two worships “overlapped” only in the most general sense. They developed in roughly the same period and geographic area, though the devil is in the details. The turning of water into wine is not quite the same in the Cana story as in the Dionysus stories, pace Broer.¹⁶ Yet, a long-standing equiva-

11. MONROE, “Tangled up in blue,” 15.

12. *Ibid.*, 18.

13. *Ibid.*, 35.

14. *Ibid.*, 42.

15. *Ibid.*, 45.

16. BROER, “Das Weinwunder von Kana (Joh 2,1-11) und die Weinwunder der Antike.”

lence was made between Jesus and Dionysus by Nietzsche.¹⁷ Girard argues that this equivalence is superficial and dishonest. It was rendered possible by the Religionsgeschichte school of thought for which all religions share the same features, and especially by Heidegger for whom any kind of return to “monotheism” was an evacuation of thought and an “obscuring of an original revelation of being” (with eyes turned into ears). The radical difference that even Nietzsche saw between Jesus and Dionysus and that he didn’t even bother to comment on (but Girard made his life’s goal to do exactly that) is that the dionysiac tradition has the god as either the victim of the Titans or the instigator at the center of the destruction of the victim, a *σπαραγμός*. Nietzsche rejected Christianity because it refused suffering and the mob-instigated victimization that he saw as intrinsic to life. Contemporary critics do not have the honesty of Nietzsche and do not accept that the story of the passion of Jesus comports a radical criticism of myths and hence all culture. Moderns still today do avoid Nietzsche and turn mythology into a sort of Bible (Jung et al) or turned the Bible into a mythology, blanc bonnet et bonnet blanc! N. saw *ressentiment* as the weakening of vengeance. Perhaps living before WW I was a blessing. Girard also asserts in this article that Heidegger too fancied and glorified the primitive *sacred*. He simply, happily proclaimed the weakening of the old, biblical god, and saw a simple “mimetic rivalry in the opposition between Dionysus and the Crucified?”¹⁸ Girard goes back to Heidegger whom he reads as “demystifying” false differences and missing the real one and I add he was followed by the likes of Bultmann and followers (still today).

After reading this paper, one thought: there is a more practical way to understand both the supra-tragic story of the passion and the tragic element of every myth. I think it is possible to explain the feeling that story-listeners and believers have that their lives in any group somehow depends on a sacrifice which is all too often a victimization. But if cultures arise from the smothering remains of a mythic murder (Moses, God, Dionysus, etc.), and if the gospel has revealed the “antique road of perverse men,” why is there a Christian culture? Or must one think that Christianity has fallen into the same blindness as all other cultures and re-mythicized its own story?

17. GIRARD, “Dionysus versus the Crucified.”

18. *Ibid.*, 828.

WEDNESDAY, 18 JANUARY 2017

Talk by Susan Buck-Morss about a new way to remember history. I took a few notes on what struck me at the moment. What she read of her first chapter (in a book to appear soon?) sounded to me like a meditation on the consistency or fibers the present shares with the past. With Benjamin and others, we reject the notion of historical progress, the idea of historical stages, and the thought that this improbable historical progress would be parallel to secularization. To the contrary, the Israel-Palestine nexus cannot be thought without also thinking Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Christianity “matters,” as does Islamic thought with its present global reach.

This talk made me reread W. Benjamin’s last text on history:

Auf den Begriff einer Gegenwart, die nicht Übergang ist sondern in der die Zeit einsteht und zum Stillstand gekommen ist, kann der historische Materialist nicht verzichten. Denn dieser Begriff definiert eben die Gegenwart, in der er für seine Person Geschichte schreibt. (BENJAMIN, “Über den Begriff der Geschichte,” xvi)

In Dennis Redmond’s translation:

The historical materialist cannot do without the concept of a present which is not a transition, in which time originates and has come to a standstill. For this concept defines precisely the present in which he writes history for his person.

THURSDAY, 19 JANUARY 2017

Hadot’s book on nature has become one of the trusted guides for those trying to understand the relationship of Christianity to science.¹⁹ This rich and precise book makes me wish for another kind of book that would attempt to connect the evolution of the meaning of nature from Greco-Roman antiquity to the modern European world, on one side, and on the other the political, social and economic developments. Is Roger Bacon’s sense of a nature-machine related to the large economic technological and economic developments of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and how? Or differently put, is Langland’s notion of Piers Plowman as a Christic figure of salvation part of a slow unfolding sense of the dignity and power of work and all human activities? And are both Bacon and Langland somehow reflecting views of the world that are broadly shared in their times and on

19. HADOT, *Le voile d’Isis*.

which the discoverers and scientists of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries will build their views of nature as an immense machine? In older times on the contrary, it was thought that nature's assumed hiddenness and sense of modesty were not to be violated. Some ancient philosophers thought that going beyond an agriculture of sufficiency (that in itself could be seen as a paradoxical situation) and force nature to "disgorge" its secrets by mining iron or gold was immoral and caused by greed. This went, on the part of most elites, with obscuring completely the enormous work that went into providing for subsistence by making it either despicable or automatic (nature providing abundance of itself).²⁰

The notion of rationality takes different forms in antiquity.²¹ There is no linear development. Stoicism has the notion that all belong to the *logos* and are to understand and accept their place in the ordered universe. Live in harmony with it, or else! Aristotelian dialectic and logic were widely accepted although they remained secondary to the idea of mystical union or *henosis*. Moreover, the development of apophatic knowledge became important and was clearly accessible to very few. In spite of these seemingly narrowly defined views, there were Christians who thought that everyone could share in the understanding of the creation and the divine, even children, each one at its own level.²² Against the elites' ways of yonder, they think of a *via universalis* that is open to all. Yet, in spite of this broadening or because of their hostility to it, more conservative thinkers proposed the idea that the being or essence of the divinity were hidden to humans rather than accessible through the study of biblical revelation and philosophical arguments. Some of these more restrictive currents go back to Basil, Gregory of Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa who propose the doctrine of an "incomprehensible" God. The struggle went on and rationalist attempts kept cropping up, even in Islam with for instance the Mu'tazilites.

The twelfth of January came and went without any thought being given to Yvon. Instead, Callum and Lucie filled that day.

20. With the exception of certain technical abilities, if they were practiced as part of a life of freedom.

21. Article "Rationality" in BOWERSOCK, BROWN, and GRABAR, *Late Antiquity, a guide to the postclassical world*, 661–62.

22. Part of that stream would still include Gregory the Great, and his famous image of Scripture as a river deep enough for elephants to swim and lambs to walk: *Moralia on Job*, section 4.

SUNDAY, 22 JANUARY 2017

In Deuteronomy and other Pentateuchal books, Thomas Römer detects the development in the Persian period of the notions of Torah, Moses, and Abraham as heirs and replacements for the theme of Davidic kingship (displacements of the theme of Davidic kingship?).²³ See how this works in Chronicles. In the same collection by Oehming and Sláma, Auld argues that the theological story of the northern kings was patterned in a synoptical way after southern kings.²⁴ Manfred Oehming wonders in his epilogue to the collection about the paradox offered by the narrative on kings: powerful and elevated above the people, yet criticized for damnable behavior. He proposes the concept of *basileodicy* to deal with this paradox.

MONDAY, 23 JANUARY 2017

Downpour yesterday afternoon as we go to the inauguration of the M. Baumgarten Jewish Studies Chair. A new chair on the deck of a listing ship in spite of appearances. I learn later that history, a well organized department, has been losing students recently, presumably to the sciences, via the STEM program and general draw to business, economics, software, health jobs.²⁵ What does Jewish Studies mean today at UCSC and more critically, as a way to map our history and societies? The friends who have gathered for the event are all connected to UCSC one way or another. Murray presents aspects of the history of this program, going from the sixties to the present. The year 1967 is eponymous, an opening. I see it as an expansion and a grabbing (vs the oft repeated notion that Israel didn't want to grab the territories but found no one to talk to: what of the objurgations by Nahum Goldman in late 1967 if I remember correctly, and even of Ben Gurion). No word on the other side(s) of this history. Ksheh 'oref. All in catalogue form about survival and efflorescence. There was "modern," then "post-modern," and new "knowledge." "A garden of learning." The world of Hebrew thought (!), field studies. In 1983, the commemoration of Auschwitz (Russian opening) and the beginning of holocaust courses. An endowed holocaust chair. A list of teachers, thanks,

23. RÖMER, "Joschija, Moses, und Abraham als Erben Davids: Der Umgang mit der davidischen Dynastie in der persischen Zeit," 85–101.

24. AULD, "Righting Israel's kings: Israel's kings in synoptic perspective."

25. I learned about this on 7 June 2017, in a conversation with Cindy Polecristi who tells me they miss me and other lecturers as we provided many bridge and introductory courses.

and self congratulations were in order. The commemoration once over, the question remains: What is Jewish Studies? How can it become part of the study of the contemporary world? Do its practitioners want to do that? I still think it is Nahum Goldmann's position that is the most attractive and the one with the long vision: being an "unarmed anarchist" who sees himself as a *goy*, that is flexible, negotiating, thinking of Zionism as not necessarily beholden to Israel and its narrower politics...

TUESDAY, 24 JANUARY 2017

In reading Hugh White on Piers Plowman, I get a sense of "the worldly" in Langland's contemporaries.²⁶ The Pearl-poet and Julian of Norwich understand the incarnation to mean that the divinity is not indifferent to the sufferings of "sinful man." The redemptive figure of Piers, which thinks of labor at its most modest as participating of this redemption and therefore receiving dignity from it, is more hopeful than Milton's view.

Regarding "social assets:" for antiquity, they are not separable from material goods, which themselves cannot be neatly separated (as commodities for instance) from access to land and command over one's and others' labor.²⁷ Ancient political systems were not servo-mechanisms.

Ancient kings and court officers, unsurprisingly, tried to maximize revenue: land taxes, poll taxes if they could, access to and control of luxury items (trade with two main goals: luxury goods, often for religious reasons, for palace and temple; and metals, especially copper, tin, and silver), elimination of competition, expansion of base, and especially *war* of conquest that gave access to metal and labor wealth (soldiery and administration). So, the master words are: to ensure security, with expansion as part of this, maximize power, and cooptation of divine will.²⁸ The frequent attempts to paste "entrepreneurship", modern markets, ventures, etc. onto the ancient

26. WHITE, *Nature and salvation in Piers Plowman*.

27. ALTMANN, "Ancient comparisons, modern models, and Ezra-Nehemiah," 106. See POLANYI, *The great transformation: the political and economic origins of our time*, 46 (check).

28. So, one can explain security and risk-abatement as a fundamental response of all those ancient societies to their "ecological niches," as we are invited to do by HORDEN and PURCELL, *The corrupting sea: a study of Mediterranean history*, but without losing sight of the exploitation aspect (in labor use and protection, in debt, or in trade) and the evolutive circumstances they inherited, as one is invited to do by BANG, "The Mediterranean: A corrupting sea?"

societies seem driven by the desire to show that modern capitalism has *deep* roots and therefore is like divine power: it already and always was there.

On the question of tribute: if it was in kind, was it necessary (and possible) to transform it into a more fungible form? What distances were involved? Redistribution at the “borders” of vassal states was probably important: it went to the army. See Sargon II’s correspondance. How was the tribute organized? In Neo-Assyria, the most important movement by far was from the periphery to the core.²⁹ Ad hoc measures? Forced exchange, leading to collapse of center, but not the periphery?³⁰

The deportations were means of getting labor cheaply. Regarding Aramaeans, one may perhaps adapt Horace’s line regarding Rome and Greece: *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit*.

WEDNESDAY, 25 JANUARY 2017

On expressions of contempt in the Bible, see Psalm 123:4 for instance: רַבַּת יָמַי לְאֵימָהּ הַבּוֹז הַבּוֹז הַשֶּׁהָאֵשׁ הַלֵּל הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַנִּשְׁכָּחָה לְהַבְהִיחַ לְאֵימָהּ הַבּוֹז הַבּוֹז הַשֶּׁהָאֵשׁ הַלֵּל הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַנִּשְׁכָּחָה which is translated in the Greek (122:4) as ἐπὶ πλείον ἐπλήσθη ἡ ψυχὴ ἡμῶν. τὸ ὄνειδος τοῖς εὐθηνούοισιν, καὶ ἡ ἐξουδένωσις τοῖς ὑπερηφάνοις. *RSV* has: “Too long our soul has been sated with the scorn of those who are at ease, the contempt of the proud.” The divinity is expected to be on the side of those who are objects of scorn and contempt. The theme is intensely developed by Paul: Romans 14:3, 10; especially 1 Corinthians 1:28; 6:4; 16:11; and many other passages. The divinity itself became object of scorn. This belief meant that politics would never be quite the same again.

Reading Clover and thinking with him about White’s and Braudel’s misreadings of history’s two moments or two placements (“positionings”) in 1789–93 and 1848–51. Is capitalism a force based on everyone’s desire for survival and therefore theoretically without masters or guarantors. Indirect instead of direct domination?³¹ I read it as domination of all. Workers, “however distant in time or place,” who provide and help guarantee my survival—including my growth—are my “lords,” my “sirs,” my dignified, trustworthy equals. There is a certain willingness in vouching oneself to a distant other. My notion of debt, guarantee, forgiveness.

29. GRASLIN-THOMÉ, *Les échanges à longue distance en Mésopotamie au Ier millénaire: une approche économique*.

30. MOKYR, *The lever of riches: Technological creativity and economic progress*.

31. CLOVER, “*Genres of the dialectic*,” 437.

THURSDAY, 26 JANUARY 2017

[continued] How to give an account of ancient Israelite society:

1. even in the centuries preceding the monarchy (LB to IA), was there domination by some, and how was this domination possible within kinship systems? How were the sustenance of one's life and the possibility of its expansion guaranteed within kinship structures? Within small villages and households, what kind of religious guarantee was sought, and via what kind of imagery? Ancestor cults and divine images?
2. Under kings, shift to partially direct and indirect domination, with gods shared more broadly? Ancestor cults redefined, as was the notion of property and land? Long centuries under distant kings, except for the short episode of the ethnarchy.

Old notes on ancient economy, after reading Miller's introduction to the book he edited two years ago. How can Yehud be thought of as a place of economic activity?³² The religious and political aspects cannot be dissociated from the economy. He wants to see what type of market exchange there was, its relationship to other dimensions, and how market economies evolve. "Market" is baked in the question, and by market is meant modern capitalist market. He later wonders about the size of the tribute and whether the military had a positive effect on the economy.³³ Indeed, it did, as an essential part of the extractive tools! As for the size of the tribute: it's safe to suppose that it was by definition estimated to keep the farming and laboring population at subsistence level. The local appeal to fairness based on kinship and religious identity reinforced (at least in part) the overlord's political framework.³⁴

FRIDAY, 27 JANUARY 2017

How much would it cost the state of California to return to a free public university education of quality that doesn't need to resort to privatization as a stopgap measure? 48 dollars per tax-payer in California: see [Reclaiming Master Plan](#).

32. MILLER, "Methods and models for understanding ancient economies," 5.

33. *Ibid.*, 10.

34. *Ibid.*, 12.

On the logic that led kings and priesthoods of ancient states to project the divinities as distant powers whose presence could be managed by them, see Assmann:

Der Staat setzt die Gottesferne also voraus—und kompensiert sie. Noch schärfer formuliert: Wären die Götter gegenwärtig, gäbe es keinen Staat. Weil die Götter aber fern sind, muß es eine Institution geben, die den Kontakt mit der Götterwelt auch unter den Bedingungen der Gottesferne aufrechterhält.³⁵ (Politische Theologie, 59, n. 7)

The kings themselves imitated the gods' dynamics of presence and absence. This is how I understand the "left behind" officials of the Seleucid kingdom.³⁶ These ἀπολειμμένοι were so called as they were waiting their king's return. Compare the parables, often involving this tension between faith and distance.

TUESDAY, 31 JANUARY 2017

All through the history of cuneiform, it is clear that the ability to read and write was more widespread than has long been assumed.³⁷ For instance, we have evidence that some rulers could read and write (especially true of Assurbanipal). Merchants and some priests also seem to have been able to handle the necessary documents they relied upon.³⁸ But how widespread was reading and writing among the elites?³⁹ There is evidence that some women in nun-temples and in harems could read.⁴⁰ Finally a quote that speaks to the difficulty of the training: "An unsuccessful scribe, he will be an incantation priest!"⁴¹

As Aramaic alphabetic writing spread from the end of the second millennium BCE on, cuneiform writing became more self-aware of its tradition and developed a literature of commentaries.

It seems to me that Mesopotamian scholars understood that cuneiform writing could not rival alphabetical systems, particularly

35. "...But because the gods are far away, there must be an institution that keeps contact with the world of the gods even under the conditions of the distance from God."

36. BAZZANA, *Kingdom and bureaucracy*, 304, n. 108.

37. CHARPIN, *Reading and writing in Babylon*, 53–67.

38. *Ibid.*, 59.

39. WILCKE, *Wer las und schrieb in Babylonien und Assyrien*.

40. CHARPIN, *Reading and writing in Babylon*, 63.

41. See VELDHUIS, "Elementary education at Nippur."

Aramaic. Instead of trying to simplify cuneiform, they made it even more difficult, adding more values to the signs and playing on their different readings; the decipherment of an omen text from the Old Babylonian period is much easier than that of the same text as it was written by scholars of the first millennium. (CHARPIN, *Reading and writing in Babylon*, 250)

Alphabetic writing had the advantages of speed and economy. It could be done in ink on papyri, skins, or ostraca. In response to these developments, the writing of cuneiforms became esoteric. There came to be a limit on the function of communication. Wisdom became divine revelation.⁴²

We saw Jarmusch's *Paterson* Saturday night. Let me recapitulate the moments in this film that were the most vivid. The dog, the little house with a zebra-like black and white decor and its tiny study, the large brick buildings with potentially sinister underpasses, the bus and its driver often filmed from below, the mess of narrow busy streets, the contrast between this old industrial landscape (oldest planned industrial city in the US, 1791) and the Passaic river's fall, still mysteriously grandiose in spite or because of its being traversed by a metal pipe and a bridge, the frighteningly regular evening moments at the corner bar, the cool dudes in a fancy black car, the meeting and short conversation with the young girl poet ...

On the peaceful side: the cup cakes, the solidly comforting, englobing presence of time (seven days, the watch in the morning around 6:15am or spinning fast later on during the day), the stanza structure of the film, the reliability of the bus dispatcher, the act and tools of writing, the books of William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stegner, and others. There is also the lunch hour the driver takes on the bench before the falls, the meeting of the Japanese poet and the AHA moment that I took to be the recognition of the vivid power of words to transfigure even an industrial landscape and give it a moving universal reach in spite of the seemingly shared untranslatability of poetic language.

42. CHARPIN, *Reading and writing in Babylon*, 52–53.

2 February

WEDNESDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2017

Trump became president by riding a strong wave of anti-elitism. He played up the distance from society, culture, media, and political representatives of either party that many feel in their life. He filled the gap with a TV presence, a name, an image, and especially a language that seemed closer to a lot of people—the violent, sexist, and racist language of grabbing and having hits that can be heard for instance after a few drinks, while watching sports, or on the floor of bank exchanges—something that his crowds thought they could identify with. He fumbled for a while, testing whatever they seemed to react to positively. He eventually found the themes that had strong echoes: greatness (which covers any form of nationalism), security above all (sometimes called law and order), availability of work, and a distant third, health. Education or social security were not mentioned, though they are high on the Republican agenda. *Greatness?* He surrounded himself with generals and people easily wrappable in a flag. No dearth of them. For his cabinets, he played cat and mouse with people thought to be elitist (Romney for instance) and surrounded himself with very rich people who by definition are far removed from the daily worries of people who voted for him. They are perceived to be above politics and therefore not part of “Washington.” *Security?* (Muslim) foreigners on temporary visas or even green cards and immigrants from South America (reduced to Mexico)? Undesirable, a wall is needed. It doesn’t matter that a wall is already in place, that immigration was a complex and harsh system even under Obama, and that neither Trump nor Republicans (and how many democrats?) do not want to raise the minimum wage. *Health?* Immediate cancellation of the Affordable Healthcare Act, with some hurried replacement that will set insured and insurers on edge. Not further talk of expanding Medicare or allowing it to bid on pharmaceuticals and medical machinery. Rather, shares

of pharmaceutical companies went up yesterday when it became clear that the goals were deregulation and massive decrease in taxation in return for an easy promise of some symbolic jobs in the US.

I need to continue this and reflect on the dialectics of presence and absence at the most intimate, subsistence level.

Books were burned on May 10, 1933 on Berlin's Opera Square (Bebelplatz), and in many cities of Nazi Germany. The Christian Bible was not counted among the "Jewish books," as far as I can tell. But Torah scrolls were desecrated and burned in numerous cities on November 9, 1938, the date of Kristallnacht (see Confino). The burning of books was perversely attached to Martin Luther's purported publicizing of his 95 theses at the Wittenberg Castle's church. Now books are destroyed (recycled) because they take too much room. This is especially true of scientific journals, abstracts, symposia papers, etc. All of this can appear on a screen. Their image is flat but searchable (if you know what to search, which demands fuller reading). This infinite indexing, however, bound to a notion of grabbing or getting "information," makes reading of whole books unnecessary.

I breathe with my pen. My lungs have become the gills of the nib and the scratching on the paper echoes the wheezing of air in my throat.

Notes on trade in the ancient economy according to HOWE, *Traders in the ancient Mediterranean*. According to Monroe in the first paper of this collection, donkeys were a "rather inefficient means of long-distance transportation."¹ He mentions their carrying capacity as being a third of their weight (a fifth rather?), that is about 50 kgs, but doesn't detail the low consumption of feed, the longevity, resistance to disease, etc. He does note they are cheap. So, in ground transportation, the "point of diminishing returns" was rapidly reached, but what if the goods were luxury goods rather than grain. I think of the example of the Samaritan in Luke 10. As for entrepreneurship and "incipient capitalism" in the ancient Mediterranean, the author just gives a simplistic definition of capitalism (superficially Weber like, a "rational, continual pursuit of profit"). His approach is to give a catalogue of examples or what he calls "indications": rationally used weights with known ratios, the use of symbols (seals), etc.²

Why not add military conquest to this "incipient capitalism:" use of force was a much more efficient way of getting at stored silver, bronze, gold

1. MONROE, "Tangled up in blue," 13.

2. *Ibid.*, 10, 12.

in palaces and temples, as well as at specialized labor that would be useful for more conquest or revenue. In two ways: a) by helping the military machine; b) by suppressing the local capacity to rebel and therefore appropriating directly the mostly agrarian goods and local trade. This use of force supposes that the local political systems have reached a certain level of development that made them attractive targets for political powers of similar or superior strength. Not too surprisingly, ancient Israelite prophets—or the exilic and post-exilic leadership that had to make do without kings and prophets and edited the prophetic books we have—saw the accumulation that kings and elites pursued for reasons of security and risk abatement as an unmitigated disaster.

THURSDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2017

[continued, on the ancient economy's resemblances with modern capitalism] The El Amarna letters of a much earlier period are evidence that trade was a royal matter and did not belong to some kind of incipient capitalism. "Maritime trading practices were documented no better than in other periods of antiquity, i.e. poorly." (MONROE, "Tangled up in blue," 14) Then, even if they left some written traces, practices can't be evaluated on a very fragmentary basis.

Trade in the Roman world is examined by Hollander.³ The essay is a long catalogue of types of traders, materials and goods, transportation means, etc. A sort of modernized copy of Pliny's encyclopaedia. If grain was the most important item in trade, how much of it was being really "traded" rather than exacted by state for Rome and other cities? Hollander asks whether there was economic competition, and what was its nature.⁴ Did a market economy exist? Hollander relies on Temin to say it did. His definition of a market economy is that scarce resources are "rationed by means of prices as buyers compete for wealth."⁵ He cannot easily find traces of the invisible hand of competition, hard as he tries. In the case of wheat, the prices were not allowed to "float" and the record is filled with outcries at attempts to take advantage of fluctuating prices. His analysis of Cato shows that competition then was political in nature.⁶ He gives the example

3. HOLLANDER, "Risky business: Traders in the Roman world," 141–72.

4. See the criticism of Finley about trade by ANDREAU, "Twenty years after Moses I. Finley's *The ancient economy*."

5. HOLLANDER, "Risky business: Traders in the Roman world," 158.

6. *Ibid.*, 160–61.

of Galerius in Varro's *Rust.* 2.3.10: twenty herds of fifty goats instead of a massive herd of one thousand goats. The story implies the need for the existence of many markets (twenty, with daily sales, before refrigeration, unless everything was turned into cheese). In this case, the attempt to scale up was difficult if not impossible, given the technology and the state of economic development.

Regarding the absence of mentions of competition noted by Hollander (162), I would say the correct answer is that markets were under political surveillance and "protection." How was access to markets obtained, for instance for the sale of slaves, without permission of powerful elites? His final question therefore concerns a problem that didn't exist: "How can a market economy lack entrepreneurial rivalry?" (162). He also has a few superficial pages on ethics.⁷ Trickery and bad faith are extensively covered in the sources, as is trust. To me, these are symptoms of the absence of a modern market. Slave dealers were reviled, as were many others. Hollander misreads the "embedded economy"; it was not a kind of consumers' defense, but the defense of real estate owners whose status was politically and militarily determined.⁸ Extra profits were made by stepping out of *fides* arrangements (or networks of reciprocity and expected loyalty), that is to say, one could go after the resources of people one normally had no "truck" with. That was tricky and risky in a society where so much depended on *trust* and *piety*.

One can agree with the first conclusion that local autarcy was a myth: trade was obviously part of any regional economy.⁹ But does modern economics help understand ancient markets' functions? Supply and demand questions seem to be universal, but what of price? Finally, the author accepts that the role of the state was important in creating markets: Rome, army camps, the lowering of transaction costs, the managing of competition. I would like to know his opinion on the constitution of the state, the ties between the few hundred top elites and ownership of the land and command of the army, etc.

Finally, the essay by Manning. At the end of his essay, he touches upon the argument regarding the use of shipwreck data to determine volume (and value) of total shipment.¹⁰ In the case of grain, which was the major object

7. HOLLANDER, "Risky business: Traders in the Roman world," 169–70.

8. *Ibid.*, 171.

9. *Ibid.*, 172.

10. MANNING, "Hellenistic trade(rs)," 132.

of trade, how can one detect its existence?¹¹ A parallel problem remains, that of the use of stamped amphorae, and of sherd counts on archaeological sites. On piracy, war, taxes, and trade, he quotes Scheidel and others who argue that the main factor in the increase of trade was the Roman “imperial state formation.”¹² Shipwrecks’ frequency indeed increased. The reason: the reduction of transactional costs. Lower transaction costs and political power (not technology) were the main drivers of the increase in volume and productivity. My translation: predation on a larger scale becomes more efficient. See Bang for a clear argument about the political aspects.

But for the early Hellenistic period, Manning disagrees with Scheidel about the effect of third-century BCE political changes. Indeed the volume was up only in the second part of the second century BCE and especially the first century CE. But lower transaction costs and increased city demand began in the third century BCE.¹³ He gives the Canopus decree as paradigmatic: *OGIS* 56.17–18.¹⁴ His conclusion is that trade in Roman times was an expansion of Hellenistic trade and practices. Hellenistic state building facilitated later Roman exchanges: new cities, trade routes, ports (Herod!), and political relationships (Ptolemaic Egypt and Rhodes).¹⁵

Among all the theories on the development of the HB that Römer discusses with great clarity, the theory of Würthwein, Auld, and others, is attractive.¹⁶ The older strata of Dtr editing would be: the book of Kings, later (in different stages) Samuel and Judges, finally Joshua. Deuteronomy and the Tetrateuch came later and were influenced by the stories of the kings. But how to explain the frequency and cohesion of themes in the Deuteronomist History (such as “other gods,” the exile and deportation, the notion of destruction) that are not seen in the Tetrateuch (or rarely in Exodus)? Deuteronomy to Kings are tightly bound together in relating the story of a punishment announced by Moses. We still can see the strength of the Deuteronomistic History, but differently from Noth.

11. He quotes Gobbins 2001. See now NANTET, *Phortia*.

12. MANNING, “Hellenistic trade(rs),” 133.

13. *Ibid.*, 134, 137.

14. See Austin 2006, No. 271.

15. MANNING, “Hellenistic trade(rs),” 138.

16. RÖMER, *The so-called Deuteronomistic history*, 38–39.

FRIDAY, 03 FEBRUARY 2017

I was interviewed by Charles H. this morning as part of a series of short talks for a new online course at UCSC. The first interview was about the relation between religion(s) and science, especially between Christianity and modern science and technology. There is much hostility and misunderstanding, but the potentially positive role of religions in regard to science needs to be examined and their “deviations” replaced into a larger framework. How so? We know that many cultures reached high scientific levels, in astronomy, mathematics, medicine, hermeneutics. By *cultures*, I mean large population groups organized politically, religiously, and militarily, often with a succession of political regimes that don't seem to seriously affect the long-term development of these people. Think of Mesopotamia from the end of the fourth millennium BCE to the mid-first millennium BCE, especially the high level of mathematics and astronomy in Achaemenid Babylonia (perhaps tied to Achaemenid Zoroastrianism, many would suggest?). These developments of reason and science, however, could not be separated from political structures and were subservient to them. City-states elites and kings made gods more powerful and made them live at greater distances from the people (elevated them, with temples and liturgies, etc., as well as with fitting cosmologies), while becoming their mediators and the negotiators or facilitators of their salvific presence.

The relationship of god(s) to the world is different in polytheism from that in monotheism. In polytheistic mythologies, the divine powers were not completely separated from the cosmos. They were somewhat still related to it, even though the great divine powers often became astral powers. What was most important, however, is that they represented order (or were made to represent it), very much as a reflection of the monarchic order of human societies. In monotheism, or rather the one we know especially from Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the divinity is a creator that stands not only outside of the created universe and even time but more importantly even outside of, or rather above, all conceivable political regimes. Everything observed to obey “laws of nature” is thought to give a sense of a vaster, hyper-rational divine mind and theoretically one doesn't have to worry about being subservient to the political order. Human reason therefore can eventually attempt to read this divine mind. That is a major step in freeing human rational potential. It did take a long time for several important reasons. One was the need in the development of early Christianity to separate the clear achievements of Greek and Hellenistic philosophy, math-

ematics, astronomy, and medicine from their bonds with polytheism. Once detached from it, Greek rationalism could be completely appropriated by Christian scholarship. Another reason for the slow progress was the return of politics as mediating divine will and transcendence from the fourth century on. The reading of divine will and mind were to be modulated and had to be “authorized.”

I have expanded a bit on the notion of creation in monotheism as allowing, at least potentially, the exploration of the universe and seeing its relation to the reading of the divine mind. The consequences of this view of nature could be terribly negative as the critics of exploitativeness rightly have it, but they could also have extraordinarily positive consequences in expanding the reach of logic beyond the limits of “propriety” and “decency,” i.e. what political and social forces norm as such. The idea of universality of the laws of physics strikes us as self-evident but was it so in polytheism? It does look like modern rationalism since at least Bacon and Descartes or Copernic and Galileo is at odds with Christianity. But Christianity here seems to refer to the re-politicization and mediatization of divine will, whereas it could also mean the universal grantor and guarantor of reason’s solidity and infinite capacity.¹⁷

In this argument regarding the positive effects of the monotheistic revolution on rationalism, the notion of creation by a single agent outside of creation and history is only part of the story. The other essential part is the belief in divine redemption and radical presence or proximity of the divinity. In other words: the ability to countenance the projection of a beneficent and just order beyond any conceivable horizon, while giving meaning to one’s daily existence, via belief that the passion and resurrection of Christ were redeeming them and making them part of the divine plan. The notions that people had of their place in the world was slowly transformed by this conjoined view of a creator who redeemed the world. Contrary to very ancient views in status-ranked societies of antiquity, all of labor came potentially to be seen as having dignity or redemptive value. By the fourteenth century, as Roger Bacon was developing his idea of a nature-machine (see HADOT, *Le voile d’Isis*), Langland’s poem *Piers Plowman* was describing a complex world in which human activity itself became redemptive. I think that it is this view of labor, bound to a theologically-shaped rationality po-

17. While reading Musso, *La religion industrielle*, 58 and passim, I realize evermore clearly that the incarnation cannot be studied separately from the notion of creation. The latter word doesn’t appear in Musso’s index.

tentially unshackled from politics (i.e. from kings and other self-appointed mediators of divine will) that permits the further explosion of modern science in the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries. It was not very clean in practice when one looks at the technologically advanced Venice of the fifteenth-sixteenth century that purported to defend Christianity while literally making a killing on the inchoative capitalist markets of the time. My explanation differs from Musso's argument in that it takes it from the ground up whereas his essay remains a logo-machine taking the notion of incarnation into its maw but unable to step out of its Platonic, pre-existing ideas. In Musso's concept of industriation, I see too much attention given to the intellectual structure as if it preceded institutions or undergirded it, and none paid to labor and desire.¹⁸

SATURDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2017

Assmann on Exodus:

I therefore propose to designate the form of monotheism that is depicted in the story of the exodus from Egypt and connected with the name Moses as a "monotheism of fidelity." Over and against it, I set a "monotheism of truth," which is not from Moses in the Bible, but is represented by the exilic and postexilic prophets, like Deutero-Isaiah especially, Daniel, and others, and has evidently come under the influence of Achaemenid Zoroastrianism during the Persian period. This monotheism does not fit the liberator of Egypt, but the creator of heaven and earth, besides whom there are no other gods to defect to. While in truth a 'mosaic' monotheism of fidelity deals with the existence of other gods—for what meaning would fidelity have, if there were no competitors with whom one could be unfaithful to YHWH?—the other gods do not exist for the 'monotheism of truth', and they are therefore dismissed as 'idols', that is, self-made fetishes and fictions. [...] The separate monotheism of fidelity and the universal monotheism of truth exist side by side in the complex, multi-voice canon of the biblical writings, with the monotheism of fidelity constituting the *cantus firmus*. (ASSMANN, *Exodus*, III–13)

Assmann's idea of an evolution (or is it of two concomitant aspects) of a monotheism of fidelity to a more universal monotheism of truth is fascinating, as is the notion that it was a revolution. It calls for two developments:

18. Desire doesn't appear in Musso's index. "Travail" does, though as part of the history of ideas, not as locus of exploitation and the source of wealth.

one, the examination of the biblical literature in regard to the reality of this evolution and its social background (which Assmann explicitly says he is not concerned with); two, an analysis of the broader environment in exilic and post-exilic Levant to determine if a starker image of monotheism came about under the influence of Achaemenid Persia and its own religious evolution (and he doesn't wish to do that either, as his goal is a history of ideas and consciousness, a *Sinngeschichte*, p. 13). I think, contrary to Assmann, that both fidelity and truth were closely connected, as they still are in modern times, including in our languages (*Treuer vs Wahrheit*, troth vs truth, *foi et vérité*).

Have we made any progress in the kind of questions one asks about the nature and construction of the past of the southern Levant? To read Arnold and Hess, it would seem that not.¹⁹

SUNDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 2017

From Ursula K. LeGuin, a quote sent by Sarah Rabkin: “We live in capitalism. Its power seems inescapable— but then, so did the divine right of kings.”²⁰

When was the book of Exodus written, by whom, in response to the wishes of what authority? Much progress has been made in the past fifty years in the historico-literary criticism of the Hebrew Bible, archaeology of the Levant, and comparative history of the ancient world. This is especially true of the history of Aramaeans and their political structures. This progress leads to revisions of the traditional concept of the history of ancient Israel. The chronological ladder predicated or built upon the Hebrew Bible does not hold any more. Too many contradictions have finally exploded the notions of a patriarchal history, a sojourn in Egypt and exodus from it, a massive, one-time, settlement in Israel-Judah, and the idea of a united monarchy. There remain questions regarding the kind of society or societies that existed in Israel-Palestine from the LB to the IA I, how and when they became “states” in the monarchic form, very much like their neighbors were doing at the same time, and why the small kingdoms of the Levant all submitted to the same fate.

This move away from conceptions of Israel's history that privileged the embedded theological view has two major consequences as far as I can tell

19. ARNOLD and HESS, *Ancient Israel's history: An introduction to issues and sources*.

20. 2014 speech at National Book Awards.

at the moment. First, it opens up the history of Israel as being that of the whole Levant.²¹ I would go further: one may now read the history of Israel as paradigmatic of that of the whole Levant. We are actually lucky to have the Hebrew Bible as a testimony to visions and interpretations that may have been much more widespread than we think but remained inchoate in neighboring kingdoms. Second, it anchors any biblical theology in a more promising ground than a sterile, historicist and a-historical revelation. Revelation itself gets a human face.

So, in the case of the Exodus, like for the rest of the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic history, we can make hypotheses about its real social and political background. As Schmitz writes, the contemporary situation of the writer of Exodus is reflected in the text. It is not only a matter of the contradictions that modern critics have found in the book (names, etc.). More fundamentally the stories of Exodus are, as Schmitz writes, “narrative condensation of historical experiences [...]” that are not those of a slavery in Egypt, but of “foreign domination, exploitation and unfreedom, for example, by the Assyrians, the Babylonians, etc.”²² I would add that there were good reasons (antiquity, sharing of subjection by all Levantine groups, enmity that was still alive in the confrontation with new kingdoms) for the author(s) to present Egypt and its Pharaoh as the paradigmatic enemy.

In this situation the narratives of the Exodus were stories of hope that originated in the faith in a loving and just God who respected human freedom and forgave sins. The significance of a figure such as Moses or a narrative connection such as the Exodus is by no means revealed only by the fact that these can be proved as historical or that it really existed. These memorial figures have become important to the narrative community of Israel because the narratives of a possible past provide a framework for interpreting one's own identity and developing models for the interpretation of the present. The updating of narrative traditions up to the present is therefore not a one-time pro-

In dieser Situation waren die Erzählungen des Exodus Hoffnungsgeschichten aus dem Glauben an einen liebenden und gerechten, die menschliche Freiheit achtenden und sündenverzeihenden Gott. Die Bedeutung einer Figur wie Mose bzw. eines Erzählzusammenhangs wie dem Exodus erschließt sich keineswegs (nur) dadurch, dass diese als historisch erwiesen werden können oder dass es sie wirklich gegeben habe. Diese Erinnerungsfiguren sind für die Erzählgemeinschaft Israel vielmehr deswegen wichtig geworden, weil die Erzählungen über eine mögliche Vergangenheit einen Deutungsrahmen bieten, mit dem man sich der eigenen Identität vergewissern und Modelle zur Deutung der Gegenwart entwickeln konnte. Die Aktualisierung von Erzähl-

21. As I hope to argue later, biblical theology can only gain more depth from a more systematic historical inquiry that looks more broadly and without ontological prerequisites at the literary and archaeological evidence.

22. SCHMITZ, *Geschichte Israels*, 137f; quoted by DOHMEN, *Exodus 1–18*, 76.

cess, but happens several times as we can observe all through the stages of growth of the biblical narratives.

traditionen auf die Gegenwart hin ist dabei kein einmaliger Prozess, sondern geschieht mehrfach, wie wir dies an den Wachstumsstadien der biblischen Erzählungen beobachten können.

WEDNESDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 2017

Postscriptum by George Bensoussan to his *Les territoires perdus de la République* where he repeats his cry for help—help for everyone—by everyone, I mean the children, the vast segments of the population that feel abandoned, and even the so-called elites. It took six months for the initial book to be heard, or reviled. In it, he and his collaborators detailed the main reasons they saw for the catastrophic events in France since 2000 or so.

The most important reason, from his point of view, is the long, secular antisemitism found in Maghreb Islam, which became more virulent already at the end of the nineteenth century when Jews chose to be integrated via the schooling system, administration, political identity, and even army. and thereby escaped their fate as “protected minority” within Islam. The root for this (I would have to check if he talks about that) is religious: the claim that Islam, after Christianity and Judaism, makes to be the only faith with access to final truths. This antisemitism was worsened by the resentment of having lost control of their own affairs and being demeaned and abused by colonial powers. It reached new levels in the French situation especially since the nineties. The author argues in this postscriptum that even without the existence of Israel, this antisemitism would still exist. I don’t disagree completely, but I think it would not have the murderous force it has taken in the past twenty years. The policies of Israel regarding Palestine cannot be factored out. Still, it remains that the author is right to insist that one cannot explain the surge of violence by the memory of colonialism and the terribly unequal socio-economic situation found in many *banlieues*.

He sees a number of social factors at work, mixed with cultural aspects. The Maghrebi family and community model has seen paternal and male power diminished and humbled. I would tie these new forms of abasement to the historical humiliation of colonialism and modernist heyday associated with enlightenment and separation of powers. Education in public schools threatens the structure further. Girls may emancipate themselves in all sorts of ways. Integration and rationalism undercut or sap tradition. The return to a more virile, anti-rationalist, original (salafist) version of religion

and culture is tempting. Add the civic and economic troubles, the absence of jobs, the difficulty in landing one when they exist. Legal, educational, and political institutions lose completely their meaning and are replaced by criminality and violences, including among Muslims themselves (inter-gang and inter-family territorial fights).

Lastly, there has been the silence and avoidance cultivated especially by intellectuals and elites (not at the highest level however?). Out of *mauvaise conscience* regarding WW II and especially colonialism, as well as regarding social inequities? and a cheaply acquired *bonne conscience* translated by minutes of silence, Shoah reminders and plaques, etc., that become occasions of revolt and insults on the part of angry, radicalized youth. Contempt, or rather *mauvaise conscience* also regarding the large majority of the rest of the population that has to live with a feeling of *losing it*. The *Front national* has become the first working class movement in France... Elites and middle class avoid having their children in at risk areas, schools, or jobs.

Dans le brouillard, sous les branches ballantes des séquoias
sombres,
j'ai retrouvé la bibliothèque où deux livres m'attendaient :
le rêve mosaïque d'un vieux savant allemand
et le cri d'un juif français sur la faillite de la république.
Les pruniers sont en fleurs dans la cour du Pharaon
On attend les cerisiers.

THURSDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2017

I'm reading the latest ASSMANN.²³ As I've mentioned before, it separates between monotheisms of loyalty and truth. Indeed, to speak only of monotheism and monotheism as the science of religion tends to do is to miss the revolutionary aspect of the fidelity and covenant laid out as ground for peoplehood in the story of Exodus. Yet, Assmann is passing a little too quickly, it seems to me, on the fact that fidelity was also claimed by Aššur, Marduk, Ba'al, and a multitude of other gods, or rather the fact that kings of Assyria, Babylonia, Aramaean states, and other peoples, were wont to claim it on their behalf. What was revolutionary in the case of the story of Sinai is that there are no mediators, or rather that they are not at the origin of the people

23. ASSMANN, *Exodus*.

or its kings and do not provide a basis for the religiously claimed political authority of the time. The history of this idea, however, is to be found in the exilic and post-exilic realizations by various Israelite and Judaeen elites that customary religious configurations had to change: prophetic types, a whole people, as well as thoughtful landowners and royal house, priests, etc. And at that time, this revolutionary leap into the unknown—revolutionary in the sense that it proclaimed its belief and trust without the usual mediators or guarantors, and claimed direct access to the divine guarantor—cannot be separated, I believe, and this is different from Assmann's view—, from the notion of creation without intermediaries by an infinitely distant divinity. Both close care (*qorban*, *qerev* root) and involvement in all of history by the divinity in the paradigmatic story of salvation in the exodus story, *and* remoteness beyond created nature and time constituted the new, revolutionary map that Israelite and Judaeen people drew slowly and painfully from the sixth century BCE on.

The putative polarization between a monotheism of loyalty and jealousy on one side, and a monotheism of truth and exclusion or falseness, on the other, still looks too simple to me. It is hard to love the second, which centers on a creator, says Assmann. He argues that this second, universal monotheism—a secondary, broader, more common, development—was at the origin of religious violence. The argument that polytheistic cultures were not lacking in violent upheavals either is not tackled in the book. I do not see an either or, but an accompanying expansion. Both sides were revolutionary or at least expressed the need for radical changes in political and religious definitions, the side of trust and willing bond, as well as the side of truth. The notion of creation may be formidable and cold but doesn't have to be so. The notion of bonds of trust and loyalty cannot be blindly followed without examining the truth content of the trust. So, I think of a twinned revolution in the ancient utopia of an un-mediated divinity. Covenant law tends to fall into the socially possible and negotiable, while appeals to truth and theodicy fall on deaf ears. See elsewhere for a sign of this accommodation, namely the parallel or joined case of both hearing and seeing metaphors.

Aparté: What was the role of writing in the development or surge of differentiated and monarchically-organized societies in the Near East? Is it simply a sign of it, and a rising tool at its disposal, perhaps a consequence of the development of monarchy itself, or is it a cause and did it contribute powerfully to it by creating and facilitating the distance that the extension of contracts over land and labor requires when you go beyond an oral and

reciprocity-based society? It is striking to observe that it was available since the middle of the second millennium BCE to Levantine societies but was in little use as far as the evidence indicates (why no ostraca: when do they start appearing?). The evidence becomes very rich and varied from the end of the ninth century and especially in the eighth and seventh centuries, which somehow fits what we know about the local power of the kingdoms from archaeology and a critically examined Hebrew Bible. On the details of this evidence, see for instance ROLLSTON.²⁴

The question about writing and its connections with socially differentiated polities is triggered by my reading of reflections on Mesoamerican writing and political power in the last chapter of MARCUS.²⁵ Marcus' theory is that among the four writing systems she examined, hieroglyphic writing came out of the intense competition for prestige in ranked, chiefdom societies, and helped escalate this competition.²⁶ In regard to hereditary inequity, Marcus raises the issue that even astronomical or ritual writings could help elite priests connect important events to stellar objects.²⁷

A first difference with what one observes in the Near East: the focus was not on giving the names of rulers and lords, ancestors, etc. But we don't have much in the way of monumental writing, except in the conquering Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian empires, where writing was used in a similar way. In Mesoamerica, Marcus argues, the elite propaganda had two main aspects. One, horizontal, was meant for a restricted number of elites. It was done on a small scale and dealt with royal genealogy and names. The other, vertical, consisted of massive, public inscriptions that were read to the people by the nobles (?).²⁸ It is curious to see that the ferocious competition between nobles can be set in parallel with that between kings of Moab and Israel: competition (visits though in America?); battles and sacrifices; temple dedication; and stela commission.

This Philip Larkin's poem is used as a title by Sidney S. Perutz.²⁹ It was written for B. Moon, librarian under Larkin at the University of Hull, and laid by him on her desk in February 1979, on the occasion of the library's fiftieth anniversary:

24. ROLLSTON, *Writing and literacy in the world of ancient Israel*.

25. MARCUS, *Mesoamerican writing systems. Propaganda, myth, and history in four ancient civilizations*.

26. *Ibid.*, 435.

27. *Ibid.*, 436.

28. *Ibid.*, 437.

29. PERUTZ, *Strange reciprocity*.

The daily things we do
 For money or for fun
 Can disappear like dew
 Or harden and live on.
 Strange reciprocity:
 The circumstance we cause
 In time gives rise to us,
 Becomes our memory.

FRIDAY, 10 FEBRUARY 2017

About a monotheism of truth that would be detectable in later texts such as Second Isaiah, see AMMANN.³⁰ Ammann concludes (I'm following the review for *RBL* by Christl Maier) that what she sees as the first layer of Second Isaiah (40:12–18, 21–31; 41:21–29*) has no explicit idol polemics. It presents YHWH as the creator god and master of history who is above all other deities. It would reflect the exilic situation of the authors and their knowledge of Babylonian gods. The notion of false vs true god would come only very late.

SATURDAY, 11 FEBRUARY 2017

Assmann makes much of the divine concealment and ungraspable aspect from which the savior from Egypt has emerged (plus the law giver and land giver). This *emergence* is of all time and all places, however. The divinity “has made his will known to his chosen people.”³¹ Yes, but what kind of analytics can one do with this kind of language? To use the believers' vocabulary may be a consolation but prevents better understanding. It reifies changes in consciousness that must have been more dynamic and complex. On the opposition between a notion of divine revelation and that of “natural religions:” there is no natural religion in the biological sense. All religions share the dialectics of distance and presence. What is new here (and I agree with Assmann on this point) is the revelation of the dynamics at work and the effort to bypass the intermediaries and profiteers—or rather to integrate the fact that the normal intermediaries, kings and priests, had lost their standard justifications.

30. AMMANN, *Götter für die Toren: die Verbindung von Götterpolemik und Weisheit im Alten Testament*, chapter 2.

31. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 24.

SUNDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2017

Yesterday, I briefly discussed my ideas regarding trust and truth with Hayden. אֱמוּנָה means faithful, loyal and is based on the root אָמַן which means “to be firm, safe, trustworthy.” The very common *hifil* means: “to believe.” As for אָמַת, it comes from the same root-meaning of firmness and trustworthiness. So, we are not in strange territory when we think that *credo* originates in the attribution of power to others, material or not, even over oneself. This small philological sample, to which one could add other languages (especially English but also German) leads me to suspect that the notions of a monotheism of loyalty and a monotheism of truth cannot be separated as Assmann is wont to do in his 2015 book. A phenomenology of trust and truth might show that they are co-dependent, as might a study of the history of traditions in Exodus and other books of the Hebrew Bible. The notion of a divinity demanding fidelity and involved once in history cannot be separated from the notion of a creator who made the world.³² The story of Exodus shows both a sovereign creator at work (theophany, miracle of the sea, etc.) as well as the savior who notices the oppression of his chosen people.

Does the historical reality of the exodus event make a difference in thinking about the revolutionary politics of the book of Exodus? No, says OFENGENDEN.³³ On the contrary, I think it does actually make a great difference to realize that there was a real background to the story, though it is not the one that a naïve historicist reading of the Hebrew Bible has passively reconstructed heretofore. The late background, under the Babylonians and Persians, is that of the loss of political and religious power to outside forces that have their own powerful political and religious justifications. So, the story of the narrow escape from Egypt, the Sinai revelation, the acceptance of a covenant made via an ur-political, ur-priestly mediator (land vs Torah), and of the slow progress to the promised land, this story transformed the real situation (and memory, long memory of subjection) of the people and provided “them” with a renewed capacity to interpret their situation *and* to endure (אֲמוּנָה) without king, palace, temple, conquering divinity, or even

32. The modern exegesis of Gen 1:1–2:4a surely is right in insisting that this text not only introduces the notion of time but time as history, as fundamental event open to the future and in this case, that of the P writer, open to the salvation story of the book of Exodus, completed by the setting of the moving temple.

33. OFENGENDEN, “Monotheism, the incomplete revolution: narrating the event in Freud’s and Assmann’s Moses,” 300.

priests, liturgy, and images.

MONDAY, 13 FEBRUARY 2017

“Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances”.³⁴ This can also be said of early monotheism, as it developed in the shadow of small monarchies that had a vested interest in emphasizing divine transcendence and providing the necessary mediations for it. The Moses figure is a blown up fantasm of ancient kings, an impossible mediator, but still a mediator, at least in the Book.

Back to Exodus with Assmann’s book. The axial age would be the age of a discovery of transcendence, something Assmann thinks is too simplistic.³⁵ The argument, rather, is that some form of transcendence and immanence was and is always at work. In fact, the big jump in the development of divine transcendence would be at the moment of transition between reciprocity-based societies and monarchies. At certain times, perhaps there is an acceleration or more intense moments that look later like discoveries.

One main difference between the Sinai revelation and other ancient divine communications via dreams, signs, or oracles is that the latter can be repeated and are part of a continuous, negotiated, partial revelation.³⁶ I find this point very important. The revelation at Sinai is repeated once (Exodus 34) and set as a once-in-history event. I would add that there is no sollicitation or request for the revelation at Sinai, it is framed as a self-revelation to a people who have been dragged to it. I note also, however, that the “tent,” (whether in the midst of the people acc. to P, or outside according to Exod 33:7–11) the “glory,” etc., the stone tablets and scrolls, are material mediations that could be used in the older “pre-revolutionary” way in ordering society, including the possibility of the right (messianic) king who obeys the Torah or the power of the priesthood. The latter eventually restored kingship, if only for a brief time. Still, it remains that the books of Exodus to Deuteronomy as we have them now act as a powerful questioning preface to the tragic story of the kings, including that of Solomon and the dream he received from the divinity (the only king with a dream in the book of Kings).

34. Marx, *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Napoleon*.

35. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 25.

36. *Ibid.*, 30–31.

This discussion by Assmann of the Exodus as a once-and-for-all revelation reminds me of the talmudic interpretive principle which assumes that the Torah has been given once, spelled out or not (תורה שבעל-פה) and there can only be interpretations by exact reading, the gathering of allusions, the seeking of concealed meanings, and mystical readings. The efforts by such illuminati as Rabbi Eliezer to knock at the gates of revelation in the famous story bearing his name were refused by the majority.

The gold and silver that were slipped out of Egypt are perhaps an ironic take on what ancient conquering kingdoms did to their enemies' temples? The golden calf episode figures all the false gods as historical slippage, a memory or warning of a fall into facility, into politics as usual.

Miriam's song would be the "earliest piece of Hebrew poetry."³⁷ What are the *comparanda*? Hosea? Archaizing bit? There are studies of Hebrew that tackle this dating.³⁸

Old-style classical questions are asked about the Exodus by FREVEL.³⁹ The Exodus account is not historical.⁴⁰ Against the reality pointed to by the Hebrew Bible: fanciful, constructed chronology of Hebrew Bible (430 + 480!); the routes given for the trekking are contradictory; the number of people given is also unsettled, as well as in contradiction with what is possible in the Sinai desert, or with the archaeology of the region; Kadeš, Arad, Hešbon, Etzion-Geber were not settled until Iron Age IIB; finally, no mention of exodus in Egyptian sources. One could add the strange outlay of plagues, the eastern wind, the difficulty of having a thirteenth-century exodus to a land dominated by Egypt at the time. So, the conclusion comes hard: a myth rather than history.⁴¹ That way of formulating it is missing the boat entirely. The story of Exodus is fundamentally anti-mythic, but this means against historically definable myths that had a lively political use at the time of exile in the sixth to fifth centuries BCE. At the end of his pages on the Exodus' historicity, he brings up Assmann's 1998 theory of a Mosaic distinction between true and false that would be inextricably bound to monotheism and intrinsically intolerant and violent. Not surprisingly, Frevel and

37. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 38.

38. For instance COOK, "Detecting development in Biblical Hebrew using diachronic typology"; HOLMSTEDT, "Historical linguistics and Biblical Hebrew"; YOUNG, *Biblical Hebrew: Studies in chronology and typology*; MILLER-NAUDÉ and ZEVIT, *Diachrony in Biblical Hebrew*.

39. FREVEL, *Geschichte Israels*, 58–65.

40. *Ibid.*, 59.

41. *Ibid.*, 60.

others oppose to this notion of truth vs falseness the notions of freedom and fidelity as fundamental aspects of the “Exodus founding myth.”⁴² As I have said above, I don’t think it is a question of the one without the other but rather of a larger question of the meaning given to one’s catastrophic history, which is at once a question of courageous fidelity (though reconstructed as something new), of trust in a creator whose creation act cannot be dissociated from his salvation acts, and of fit (truth? congruence) with the hidden aspects of what looked like the history of “losers” (I’m writing under Trumpian influence).

Frevel’s book was published in 2016 (though the *RBL* review gives the date as 2015). He does cite Assmann’s *Exodus* book of 2015 where the latter defends a more complicated version of his Mosaic distinction, with an original, politically revolutionary monotheism of fidelity (*Treue*), and a secondary monotheism of truth, that he claims arose under the putative influence of the zoroastrianism of the Achaemenids. Frevel doesn’t mention this change, however. Assmann and Frevel are moving in the same direction, it seems.

Frevel thinks that these ethical questions of trust, freedom, and truth, however, cannot be entertained in a “reasonable” history of Israel. I’m less prudent than he is and think that questions of trust and truth not only had the capacity to lift the people, if not unify and shape it, as something broader and more significant than the conquered little monarchies of Israel and Juda could provide, but that their structuring has left traces, precisely in political and religious imagery and texts. That is definitely a large and worthwhile question for the historian.

As for his conclusion: uncertainty regarding the person of Moses but certainty about the Egyptian origin of his name = “born, child,” or “god X bore him”).⁴³

WEDNESDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2017

On loss and the limits of language. The verb is used of certain classes of people and objects. I lost my parents, two brothers, some friends, but I didn’t lose Yves Derriennic, my neighbor. I don’t think I can say that I lost Donald (Nicholl), even though he became close to me. I talked very often with him, learned much from him, admired him, and we visited each other in our re-

42. *Ibid.*, 65.

43. *ibid.*, 64; he follows Manfred Görg’s interpretation.

spective Wales and Brittany, yet it would be making too grand a claim and imply that he somewhat belonged in part to me. I could say that “in him I lost a friend,” however. “We lost Kennedy” (to violence) is possible too, for almost anyone in the world who attached to his life a messianic quality that many believers could share. As for objects: I lost keys, car, temper, etc., i.e. control of my daily life. All appropriated extensions that I claim to be part of my circumstantial self. Or, one could say that they all “went missing,” which with its absence of personal subject seems to me to reflect older, pre-subjective ways of talking about the world without supposing we appropriate and own it. In Biblical Hebrew, the main meaning of אבד is “to become lost.” The forms with a personal subject refer to destruction, in the *pi’el* or *hif’il*. Different in Greek: ἀπολλύω means to destroy, to kill, also to lose, and is fully declined, it seems. So, different views of loss in various cultures and languages...

FRIDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2017

Serious storm this morning, a tree down on Almar, power knocked out, I have to watch wires and branches above me as I walk toward the ocean.

Lost, to lose, get lost (go missing), to perish, see אבד. The *New Yorker* article on loss (February 2017) is strikingly modern in using “I.” It doesn’t realize how recent is the capacity that people have to see themselves as separate economic and social selves or units. Like properties, they could lose anything deemed to be part of themselves. As I wrote yesterday, Biblical Hebrew is less inclined to see property and propriety behind the losses experienced by people. Things “go missing” or lose themselves in that tradition. When the verb is used in the third person, it refers to the god punishing and ruining a people. On the other side of my attempt to read a modern spirit of acquisition in the article, I notice ancient Greek seems to use “lose” as we do in modern European languages. To be revisited.

Other: Amy learned yesterday that results of the blood test she did a couple days ago are a concern. Bilirubin is high (x2), AST and xxx? also very high, as is phosphatase. More tests are needed to identify the cause, including a scan.

Assmann refers to Berner’s commentary as an example of diachronic analysis, and to Markl’s as an example of synchronic one.⁴⁴ In his third

44. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 80; Christoph Berner, *Die Exodus Erzählung*; and Dominik Markl, *Der Dekalog als Verfassung des Gottesvolkes*.

chapter, he rightly rejects the old construction J-E-P, and looks for the Priestly fundamental document, at the time of the refoundation of the temple, with a theology and history spanning from the creation of the world to the creation of the *Ur-Tempel*, so ending in Exod 40.⁴⁵

SATURDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2017

I continue my reading of Assmann's second chapter of *Exodus*, on the possibility of defining a historical background. The question of historical reality leads nowhere.⁴⁶ The author's goal is not what the Mosaic tradition has kept of the real events (he says "Geschichte"), but how the traditions have answered the call of the past and transformed them, from "then" until today. So, not "What happened in Exodus" (!) or "Who was Moses in fact," but "Why is the story told, in what light, and what intention?"⁴⁷ He seeks a symbolic rather than a historicist interpretation, *etsi Moses non daretur*, as many are wont to do regarding the books of Jonah or Esther. Assmann, especially in the third chapter on the stages of development of the Exodus story, is actually keen to find the proper historical backgrounds for the different stages of the tradition. My own thought, and perhaps this is also what Assmann aims for, is that it is difficult to dissociate the historical background from the symbolic meanings. So, plenty of questions: Why Moses? Egypt (vs a salvation from Assyria or Babylonia)? Passover liturgy? The covenant? The laws as we have them? The promised land? The long trekking?

Again a bit later: if we drop the historicist search, then we can question the meaning of the tradition.⁴⁸ I agree with the critical view of historicism, which becomes an uncritical catalogue of loose "facts" recast in a simplistic theodicy. But another inquiry is possible, the one aiming at the real background of the traditions, *and* the study of the significance of the development and *reception* of this story.

SUNDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 2017

Cite Amos 9:7 in introduction to the chapter on empire and exilic period:
 הָלוֹא כִּבְנוֹי כְּשֵׁיִם אַתֶּם לִי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נְאֻם־יְהוָה הָלוֹא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל הִעֲלִיתִי מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם

45. *Ibid.*, 81–82.

46. *Ibid.*, 54.

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Ibid.*, 55.

וּפְלִשְׁתִּיִּים מִכְּפֹתוֹר וְאַרְם מִקִּיר:

Hosea rails against the adoption (*Verehrung*) of foreign gods while Amos criticizes injustice and oppression.⁴⁹ The “prostitution” with foreign gods and injustice, to my mind, are two sides of the same coin. As Assmann sees in the case of the Mosaic revolution which demands the bypassing of political intermediaries and profiteers, the texts by Amos and Hosea rail at the political system of their times (or the schools after them dared to write these condemnations), and its expansion of religious affiliations and political mediations. Two “directions,” one cultic-theological, the other social-ethical, as Assmann writes page 91. Both eminently political and economic. Both quite easy to integrate by any monarch in the name of unity and fidelity (or loyalty), and renewal (necessary in any ancient monarchy), though not imaginable as accepting of a king-less Exodus story.

Is the absence of Exodus themes in Isaiah a clear sign that this tradition was at home only in the northern kingdom?⁵⁰ This is entirely possible though the history of prophetic traditions would need to be examined. Did levitical circles spread the tradition? I think that the seventh century would be the earliest date for this expansion. The levites’ sociological setting: no property of land, small animals and herds as resource, and their work as itinerant cultic workers, locally anchored and taught, not yet unified around the priesthood and Jerusalem... So, indeed, peculiarly apt for the spreading of traditions, as much as prophets or more so even.

Rise of divinity cults as we know them from the Neolithic on: Cauvin, mentioned by Hénaff, has a wide-ranging book on the passage to pre-pottery Neolithic in the Near East, broadly understood.⁵¹ His main perspective, in line with that of Leroi-Gourhan and others, is that human ingenuity and imaginative power rather than blind economic forces need to be taken into account when explaining such things as the rise of gods and goddesses, sacrificial systems, or transformations of divine imagery.

Some things I noted. One, that the theme of a goddess on a throne of twinned panthers appears in Anatolia at the beginning of the Neolithic and lasts until early Levantine monarchies. The other main theme of the period is represented by bulls. As for orant figures, does their verticality precede or follow the agrarian turn?⁵² The beginning of humanization of

49. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 90–91.

50. *Ibid.*, 91.

51. CAUVIN, *Naissance des divinités, naissance de l'agriculture*.

52. *Ibid.*, fig. 22:1–2.

male divinity and the cult of ancestors (deposits of skulls for instance) happened in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (PPNB). The start of domestication during the PPNB would have occurred because of the existence of previous ideas of virility and domination over the animal world, not for economic reasons.⁵³ Cauvin's discussion of the rectangular house plan (vs the easier-to-build circular one) reminds me of the most important question regarding the four-room house: not its ethnic style but its relationship to family or household and work.⁵⁴ Nuclear family of four to five members as demographers of ancient agrarian societies propose, and differentiated household (helper? slave?).

MONDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2017

J'ai reçu, monsieur, votre nouveau
livre contre le genre humain [...] Il
prend envie de marcher à quatre
pattes quand on lit votre ouvrage.

Voltaire à Rousseau, 30 août 1755

Here are a few notes I took on the modern situation of university libraries as I wanted to understand why and how our research science library at UCSC was emptied of most of its books to make the whole building suitable for computer-assisted group teaching and socializing (a café). I read papers and a book by Darnton.⁵⁵ What is the future of public and digital books, and of public access to them? What are the consequences of the complex settlement between Google and publishers and authors? I feel my own background in all of this is amateurish and narrow: a knowledge of biblical books, their editing, manuscript tradition, and by extension an interest in writing systems, Mesopotamian dead and live archives (Chauvin's paradigm). More broadly, however, I have some sense of the revolutionary power of the codex in antiquity and since, Mediaeval scribal culture, modern printing, the development of private and public libraries especially in the USA (thanks to Jefferson and Madison especially), and finally the marvelous access to digital forms of Dead Sea Scroll texts, Perseus texts and im-

53. *Ibid.*, 127–28.

54. *Ibid.*, 128–29.

55. DARNTON, *The case for books: Past, present, and future*; DARNTON, "Google & the future of books"; DARNTON, "Six Reasons Google Books Failed."

ages, Assyrian archives, etc. Surprisingly to me, however, this extraordinary access to specialized documents concerns collections and topics developed in an unsystematic way. Public access to the sum of knowledge—an enlightenment ideal—is threatened by new forms of digital shaping and packaging of text. This issue is being solved by default, I fear, in a chaotic and dangerous fashion, because of financial pressures that merge with cultural changes and that shift everyone toward a rent-a-document model with temporary access and no permanency or ownership of even rights over the copy.

We seem to be regressing toward the “privilege” world of the ancien régime, with a system of rules and permissions that is subservient to dominating forces (financial power today). To be a librarian seems to be all about money and power. Yet, the university proclaims an ideal of public education and enlightenment.

The storing of text, image, and sound becomes a tool for rent accumulation. Copyrights and patents have long been issued for short periods of time. The trends have been to lengthen intellectual property rights considerably and shape access to them as short, renewable rentals. The principle regulating public and university libraries so far was public welfare before private profit. The opposite would be a Reagan-like model of private profit trickling down to public welfare. The notion of a mechanism that supposedly would be more realistic and neutral in its effects is actually driven by a moral choice: priority to financial accumulation. Limits are supposedly removed by saying that greed and efficiency are open to all. The market fantasy. In this model, the inherited, unpaid (gifted?) science of past generations is put at the service of capital. It is less spectacular than Trumpian era’s raids on everything public in education, health or environment, but the same logic is at work.

Copyright was created in 1710 (statute of Anne) to encourage learning and discourage monopoly. It was set at fourteen years, renewable once for a total of twenty-eight years. It was enshrined in 1774 and adopted in the US with the twenty-eight year limit. In 1998, following the Sonny Bono copyright extension act (or “Mickey Mouse” Protection Act), the right was extended to the life of the author plus seventy years. Most books published since 1900 are still not in the public domain. In practice, 1 January 1923 is the cutoff date for many books because this is the date when books became subject to copyright. The decision makes it possible for companies to digitize their properties and rent out copies for short-term use on the basis of the number of users and time (annual fees?). Subscriptions to journals are paid by the institution, which in turn raises fees and tuition or charges depart-

ments and research funds (multiple times to UC campuses, for instance: to “groups”). The costs vary according to the capacity of the branch of knowledge to make money: medical journals are expensive, chemistry publications much less (ten times less?). The content of journals costs little or nothing to journals: it advances knowledge (?) and careers. One result on the holdings of libraries, according to Darnton, is that 25% of libraries’ acquisition budget is spent on monographs, instead of 50%. University presses are also feeling the pinch: see University of California Press.

Still, it is astonishing to contemplate the difference between the access we have today to enormous knowledge repositories and the large initial cost. Problem: how can we digitize things fully and work toward wide public access? Congress is apparently not interested in defending the public interest (latest aspects of this question: the defunding of National Endowment of the Arts and Humanities; the push to come regarding modulated paid access to digital goods; and the introduction of the profit motive in education as elsewhere).

Darnton then explains the role of Google in all of this. Fortunately, the settlement of Oct. 28, 2009 did not hold (Book Rights Registry, with Google getting 37% and other distributors 63%). But the worm was in the fruit. De-duplication, such as that seen at the Science Library, does increase the opportunity for oligopolies (Wiley’s, Elsevier, Bertelsmann, and a very few others) to charge rents for the foreseeable future.⁵⁶ The combination of much longer copyrights and digitization, with the absence of “first sale” rights obtaining for print materials acquired by libraries, creates a golden-egg hen. A print copy, on the other hand, is acquired by a library for a very long time, hundreds of years, if no “weeding of books” occurs.

About our present situation at UCSC: Was the algorithm used for the weeding correctly designed? Why the haste? Was the haste part of a plan to make sure there would be no objection to the removal of books? Was external advising sought? Which? Is Hathitrust.org planning to make access open to non-paying public libraries? We need a correction to the failure of Congress to digitize and create a National Digital Library. Darnton thinks it is too late now. The openness of stored knowledge is not determined by private suit.

56. Two conditions I see needed in the future: the total sum of these rents should be commensurate with the present expenses for library collections and even staff (not building) since these should tend to zero; secondly, public access should be negotiated by university consortia, since there will not be a National Digital Library, by Congress’ default.

Darnton gives six reasons why Google Books failed in the end (Judge Chin's decision of 2011):

1. The original plan for search was abandoned. It made opponents partners.
2. The opt-out possibility was a mistake;
3. Competition was not in place for orphan books; the legal protection worked exclusively to the advantage of Google;
4. There was also the problem of copyright holders outside the US;
5. There was a problem with the class action suit, it was not inclusive;
6. finally, there was the problem of info gathering on readers.

Tonight, Amy receives a message from her doctor at PAMF regarding her new blood test, recommending the postponement of travel plans until the doctor and a gastroenterologist have had a chance to see her and determine what is happening. It seems that it could be autoimmune hepatitis, origin unknown. Very good news later, when the results of the echography come back: everything seems normal (liver, veins, gallbladder, pancreas, kidneys).

When Lucie saw me this afternoon on screen, she waved her hand and said "tadkoz" twice, clearly enjoying making a bond. She has been "talking" a lot, especially saying a long Hi.

TUESDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2017

Warfare was endemic in Mesoamerica, usually for the acquisition of tribute, material resources, and labor (or hostages to be sacrificed).⁵⁷ The timing of battles was arranged by astrologers who picked dates that did not interfere with harvests.⁵⁸ The four societies studied in that book seem to have gone through expansionist cycles of about two hundred years. Fragmentation was also cyclical. See especially her chapter 12 for an anthropological theory of writing.

Amy has an echography test of her liver today. There might be a biopsy later, after visit to her doctor tomorrow, and visit to a gastroenterologist. We may need to change our travel plans, from this Friday to next week or later.

David Brooks' column today pretends to discover that the anemic rate of production (labor productivity and GDP?) and the vague lack of a sense

57. MARCUS, *Mesoamerican writing systems. Propaganda, myth, and history in four ancient civilizations*, 433–34.

58. *Ibid.*, 434.

of adventure are the sources of our social and political ills. He hardly mentions inequality nor does he question the notion of growth. Growth of what? would be a crucial question. The key issue is the recognition of our interconnectedness, the expansion of our notion of neighbor to the whole world.

Continuation of notes on Assmann 2015, who sees four main stages in the development and writing of the Exodus tradition:

1. the myth, that he detects in Hosea and Amos, whose dates are close by the Assyrian conquest (730–10).⁵⁹ It is a story of slavery and liberation with demonstrations of power, whose echoes would be incorporated in Exod 1–15. He would add the choice of the people, the covenant, and the idea of promised land, because the original myth is hardly thinkable without a beginning (liberation), a middle (the covenant), and a solution or end (the gift of the land). I don't see why one couldn't have the liberation story alone...⁶⁰
2. The development of Deuteronomy, in two ancillary stages: under Josiah's reign (2 Kings 22) and in exile. He makes an interesting comparison with the end of the old kingdom in Egypt, at the end of the third millennium BCE, that was followed by a literary flowering. *Deut is close to Jeremiah. Ur-Deut emanated from circles that were opposed to palatial politics of compromise, especially submission to Assyrians (in their period of weakness), and the penetration of Aramean or Assyrian practices and ideas.⁶¹ Assyrian weakness and the very youth of the king (a child) may have provided the opportunity for opposition circles to link the future of the people, in a dire situation, to its trust in the god's covenant and laws. That implies that laws were already collected in some form?

WEDNESDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2017

Frances sent us an email today regarding a Quaker advocacy group opposed to more Pentagon spending that visited Sen. Feinstein's SF office yesterday:

Our Santa Cruz Advocacy Team made a lobby visit to Sen. Dianne Feinstein office today to talk about our opposition to an increase in

59. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 88–91.

60. I would especially expect a story of divine punishment to be first—Deuteronomy like—, a “I told you,” followed by the story of liberation out of divine mercy.

61. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 92.

Pentagon spending in the new budget. Members, Mimi Edgar, Nora Diane, Eva Leuthold, Betty Devalcourt, Cathleen O'Connell & Carolyn Levering visited with Tom Paulino, the Field Representative in the San Francisco office of Sen. Feinstein. We brought a wealth of information about the issue of Pentagon Spending to share with him. We shared articles that documented the waste, fraud & abuse of taxpayers' dollars within the Pentagon. The Pentagon suppressed an internal report that found \$125 BILLION in wasted over five years, according to the Washington Post. The Pentagon wastes more money in a single year than the entire budget of other cabinet agencies. *It is the only cabinet agency that is unable to audit its financials.* Yet there is a law that was passed in the 1990's that requires all agencies to complete an audit. Besides it is morally wrong to increase Pentagon spending while programs that allow Americans to meet their basic needs face deep cuts. We ask of Sen. Feinstein to oppose any increase in Pentagon spending until an audit of its department is completed. If you would like to know more about our work on this issue, any one of us would love to share our wealth of information on this affront to our Quaker values. Of course we would welcome you if you chose to join us. (My italics)

Notes on Assmann (contd.). Check the reasoning Ska makes on the switch in the naming of the land and soil. Assmann detects echoes, however faint, of the Hyksos and the Amarna period (Akhenaten), echoes that would have resonated among Canaanites or Israelites for a long time.⁶² He is asking much of memory. No influence, however, from Akhenaten's monotheism (or henotheism). About the *hap/biru*, he notes that oppression at the hands of Egypt did not only occur in Egypt but also in Canaan.⁶³

Conference on "Digital space and difficult history: Curating the African American and holocaust museums." The presenter on the National African American museum gave a historical overview. It is a strikingly long story beginning in the early twentieth century and only recently brought to conclusion. John Lewis introduced a bill every year, struck down and opposed by the likes of the infamous Helms.

62. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 62–66.

63. See HENDEL, "The Exodus in biblical memory," on the long-term effects of this colonization.

THURSDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2017

John Lynch, Gary Miles and I just watched B. Ehrman lecture on the post-resurrection stories (resurrection has a meaning all its own, cosmic, not simply a lifting or raising). Ehrman insists that christianity as a movement starts only from the belief in the story of the resurrection. The event pointed at by the stories is not an object of history. Only the reports or stories can be replaced in a historical narrative. The visions that seem to have played a most important role can be explained (one can try at least). It is not enough, however, to examine them by themselves and dismiss them as neurological noise (Ehrman doesn't say that, but he reduces them to the status of common event by comparing similar events in the history of religions mode). I think the important historical question is whether (and why/how) expectations might have led to early visions or hallucinations, and—separate cause—stories of further visions influenced by literary and religious customs of the time. Did Jesus' intensity in actions and words, the trustworthiness of his life, and the awareness of a larger meaning of his death, cause these stories of recognition after he died? The one cause pursued by Ehrman is the apocalyptic *Weltanschauung* that he thinks was shared by Jesus. That reason alone, however, is external and doesn't explain the absence of a longer enduring movement after John the Baptist's death, or after other messianic or prophetic figures mentioned by Josephus in the decade or so leading to the first Jewish war.⁶⁴

According to Cauvin, domestication did not happen in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (PPNB) for economic reasons but rather because ideas of virility and domination of the animal world preceded.⁶⁵ *L'esprit précède, l'économie suivra*. See my "notes" on domestication in *Labor and gods*. I think I already noted this argument earlier.

More notes on Assmann's *Of god and gods*. He seems to think about ideas of transcendence as breaking through episodically, thanks to trauma of one kind or another.⁶⁶ I see it as a basic part of human life: a constantly renewed dialectics whereby with language, tools, social relations, and values, one creates and structures a distance such that all our efforts to reduce it to "being natural" fail and have to compensate for this failure with "figures of style." Otherwise I'm agreed with the author on the revolutionary

64. I am not convinced that the Mandaean were or are such a movement, as has been argued for instance by BUCKLEY, *The great stem of souls*; BUCKLEY, "Mandaean view."

65. CAUVIN, *Naissance des divinités, naissance de l'agriculture*, 127–28.

66. ASSMANN, *Of God and gods*, 79.

effect (effort and quality?) of the seventh to fifth centuries. The covenant theology bypasses the usual politics in response to Israel's trauma, shared eventually by Judahites.⁶⁷ In this paradigmatic story Egypt is the figure of false politics. There cannot be a political representation of the divinity after these events.⁶⁸ The separation of "church" and "state" occurred only under Babylonians and Persians. Priests were in charge, however, with a temple at the center, at least from the end of the sixth century BCE. So, though Israel became enlarged by its new definition (at least potentially)—its limning by the acceptance of the covenant—it still remained ethnically defined for the most part.⁶⁹ And the old politics of religious representation would come back under the Hasmoneans and the Herods, though not full blown.

The radical change of view was not so much anti-state (Assmann 86) as anti-king, or at least against the king as religious figure (except as a mythic messianic figure, later on). Hence: writing was entrusted to other hands (with the two vivid examples of Josiah in 2 Kings 22 and the anti-king Moses' direct access to divine writing);⁷⁰ Moses and the laws as mediators; the temple before palace and above it; the divinity visible to all; the dispensation of customary laws, however limited, without a royal mediation = a covenant directly made with the people; and no image that could be beautified and manipulated in the interest of extracting wealth by powerful kings and elites. That is, the unity of the people preceded their installation in the new land and the differential accumulation of wealth by different groups.

The invisibility of divinities was encouraged, however, as the state developed, and their presence "channelled" via protected temples, liturgies, personnel.⁷¹ This distancing by self-removal (astralization?) was key to chiefs, kings, etc., who therefore arrogated to themselves the role of mediators and

67. ASSMANN, *Of God and gods*, 83.

68. *Ibid.*, 86.

69. Note for myself: Egypt was a convenient foe in the story of Exodus not only because of the old memories presumably circulated in northern Israel and Aramaean states from old, but because the actual oppressive empires were two and soon three in the immediate *Erinnerung* of the new Israel. Assyria's or Babylonia's oppression were not old enough or typed enough in memory, and all too fresh to serve a mythic purpose, though Exodus is all about them.

70. I correct myself: it was the authority behind writing that was at stake. The writing circles haven't changed, but they developed a different notion of the authority behind what they did. This too may have had an effect on the diversity and abundance of theological writing.

71. ASSMANN, *Of God and gods*, 87.

guarantors of a necessary presence (with the tithing system, it works as a kind of rent). Assmann does not sufficiently see (here?) that transcendence itself was *shaped* by kings and state elites. All efforts to channel it in richer images, temples, liturgies, and myths, contributed to this progressive dialectical deepening of an absent/present divinity. The key issue in the story of Moses and the golden calf (with Aaron in charge!) was not the dynamics of absence and presence, which is a capacity that defines all humans, but its mediators: kings, temples, prophets, priests, or even the Mosaic text.

On sacrifice: Once more, with Hénaff and others. A little-discussed and important aspect of sacrifice is that the animal that is offered is from a domesticated species, “à quelques exceptions près.”⁷² Animals belonged to the household: bull or ox, sheep or goats, donkey or even horses (but the latter not sacrificed in Levantine societies). What was the logic at work?

As Hamayon, quoted by Hénaff, shows regarding the Buriats of Siberia: domestication implies appropriation.⁷³ Immolation is made in a relationship to spirits (ancestors especially) to repay a debt. Better rain and thicker grass are expected for the future herd, in an investment that unfolds in time. There is a vertical stratification, and a new category of spirits, the ancestors (what are the marks of this cult?).⁷⁴ How do we explain the passage from ancestor spirits (another kind of transcendence, I’m convinced, as we see in several cultures) to broader, more transcendent gods? Larger, monar-chic societies? I suspect it is neither the economic factor nor the religious one, considered separately, but the interaction of what we poorly glimpse and attempt to capture via those two words. The notion and culture of ancestors seem to have brought about a coeval social stratigraphy, a hierarchy. Interestingly, filiation became more important and replaced, at least in part, alliances that were based on kinship. Consider in this light the vocabulary of “house” that appeared in all first-millennium Levantine kingdoms. Filiation became important because what had been acquired needed to be transferred within the household rather than just the group. What autho-

72. HÉNAFF, “Repenser le sacrifice. Nouvelles approches anthropologiques,” 264; see also TESTARD, *Des dons et des dieux: anthropologie religieuse et sociologie comparative*, 73–74: “On ne sacrifie jamais que ses dépendants”, not because of weakness but because they are part of the person who sacrifices. The animals have been appropriated, self-same(d). What does Testard say exactly? I find that Hénaff is insisting on important aspects but somehow too theoretical about them.

73. HAMAYON, *La chasse à l’âme*, 737.

74. DESCOLA, *Par-delà nature et culture*, 413–14.

rized that? The appropriated product of labor needed to be *protected* and kept in the narrowly conceived group. So was this the fundamental dynamics of ethnic division in LB to IA, still?

Another consequence was a greater distance from the non-human world, especially wild beasts, assimilated to foreign enemies. Domesticated animals became part of the family (see house plans again). Sacrifice then was the offering of something of oneself, life as then undissociable from its animal enablers (explain in detail).⁷⁵

This offering of self needs to be fleshed out in terms of hours of care and amount of risks run by ancient farmers. Questions remain: Why immolation? Why violence? Why not thanks and request but also expiation? Why communion? And why did sacrifice disappear eventually?

Many stories imply that the power over plants and animals was “stolen” from divinities. I do wonder if the divinities themselves and their area of domination were enlarged by the same token, that is, by the telling of such stories. So, there would be a need to negotiate with these divinities, attribute to them the need for a house, food, etc. Self-giving and abnegation were an investment whereby more technology, services, etc. were invested toward a better future which often consisted above all in a guaranteed continuation of existence. I suspect that part of the logic of gift and counter-gift was the enlarging or broadening of the gods’ sphere and an excuse for reshaping society. It was done as *debt*. Immolation meant that no immediate return was expected, no profit realized. But what of the old problem of communion and sharing?

H. underlines two aspects of this problem. a) Domestication was done to provide meat to humans. I don’t think that it was the main function except in case of famine. Even the *pecus* provides wool, milk and cheese, skin, horns. Animals were an integral part of agriculture, they are a continuum with the human working force. How is one to kill them? How is one to eat such closely related affines?

Is it because the animal becomes divinized or part of the divine world in sacrifice, and it then can be gifted by the gods and shared? What of Girard’s idea, at least the spectacular representation and the avoidance of violence

75. HÉNAFF, “Repenser le sacrifice. Nouvelles approches anthropologiques,” 268. Regarding his note 3 on human sacrifice: contrary to Hénaff, I don’t see it as an exception, for a society where domestication of animals that were needed to help with the survival of agrarian groups could not happen (verify). H. notes that Mesoamerican societies with human sacrifice were agrarian and did not have domesticated animals. I think that the same logic was at work.

or its channelling? No, I think that *envy*, so problematic in societies partly structured by honor and shame (class differentiated as appropriation proceeds), can be at least *tamed* or managed by both aspects of sacrifice: whole offering and communion. I explain elsewhere what was at issue: *capital*, a capacity to ensure and provide as much life as possible.

Hénaff doesn't ask the theological question regarding the end of sacrifices: all is given and pacified (paid)? Without remainder?

FRIDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2017

Assmann's thoughts on the nature of myth and its dynamic difference from canon are thought provoking.⁷⁶ The driving element in the selection of the story is not unity but a binding force Assmann doesn't explain. I assume he means the community's members' faith in each other. What then of the unity of monotheism as a structuring factor? The unity is dimly perceived, *heard*, therefore "canon" can only be an arrangement.

Assmann has a clear discussion of the "message" that the setting of Genesis and Exodus stories in a continuous tradition implied for the people by the end of the sixth century and the beginning of the fifth. Two important aspects:

1. The Exodus traditions of salvation and election (I would add of covenant and cult) are set in the light of the creation and its unique agent. Assmann speaks of *creatio ex nihilo*, but this interpretation, however old, may not go back to the sixth-fifth centuries. Indeed, Exod 1:7ff uses the language of Genesis 1–3. Both stories came about co-dependently and reacted to each other.
2. The Genesis' story of the forefathers founds and frames the (late) notion of an allochthonous people who are not part of the autochthonous people. The wandering Israelites would not have anything in common with the settled people of Canaan. It explains the separation that occurred under the Persians (a third stage in the development of the Israelite consciousness, after that of the monarchies, then the broadening of the concept of Israel as sharing a special trust, under the twin shock of the conquests of both kingdoms).⁷⁷

76. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 101–106.

77. See SLOTERDIJK, *Im Schatten des Sinai*.

I think this framing of Genesis and Exodus might be even more complicated. The separation of Abram from his family and fatherland is also an unconscious return westward toward a land given once, the Edenic land, an allegory for an idealized ארץ from which everyone has drifted eastward.⁷⁸ Abram prefigures or rather underscores the “return” of Persian-period Judaeans and Israelites to a physical and allegorical *arets*.

As I have already said a couple of times, I don’t think a “monotheism of trust” can be conceived apart from a “monotheism of truth” and its rejection of other gods. The coming out of Egypt and the desert crossing, in Hosea style, are at the same time a story of liberation from all political intermediaries and profiteers, as well as a story of separation. It would be in error, according to Assmann, to think that biblical monotheism developed from a narrow monolatry to a universal form.⁷⁹ I think that the notion of direct covenant with the divinity and faith in that god were natural developments, however revolutionary they were at the same time. The key issue is to trace the moments in the development of this radical, “apolitical” or a-monarchic, salvation story that defines the rest. I don’t think it likely that the notion of creation of the world and human beings “in the beginning” of time by a single divinity would be secondary. To my mind, the stories of creation and exodus are two sides of the same coin, the accepted fall into an open history, as vs a mythic view where one is stuck at the origin and its reenactments.

A question to be located perhaps in the chapter on debt: should the evil eye be part of my discussion of reciprocity and debt? See John Elliott.

SATURDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2017

Sur le sujet brûlant de l’Islam et l’islamophobie. Le Michigan est un état où il y a beaucoup d’immigrés arabophones, chrétiens, musulmans, et autres. Je viens de parler à Leslie qui se demandait pourquoi un vieil ami chrétien de sa famille s’était mis à envoyer des messages haineux sur l’Islam pendant la campagne électorale (sur facebook, je crois, entre autres). Il a voté pour Trump et semble d’accord avec Bannon et autres. Pour expliquer ce genre de réaction, je pense tout de suite à une explication de l’aspect chrétien de la question, et surtout à la possibilité que nombre de chrétiens

78. On *arets* and *adamah* see Ska’s remarks.

79. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 112.

abandonnent la dialectique de la faute et du pardon pour n'en retenir que la faute qu'ils ne peuvent supporter—qu'ils ressentent comme l'abandon d'un idéal—et qu'ils s'empressent de voir dans les autres. Le christianisme devient un aspect culturel, superficiel, bien qu'encore puissant aux Etats-Unis et lié aux institutions et à la "mission civilisatrice". Mon explication ne me satisfait pas, cependant, car comment lire dans le secret des âmes ?

Quant à l'Islam, je constate qu'il lui est pratiquement impossible de faire sa propre critique historique dans les circonstances actuelles, depuis le dix-neuvième siècle. La critique historique lui vient de l'extérieur, dans les cartons, camions et trains de nations plus ou moins post-chrétiennes que le Coran affirme avoir laissées derrière lui puisque d'après sa vision théologique le judaïsme et le christianisme, bien que basés sur des révélations que l'Islam tient pour vraies, se sont éventuellement fourvoyés. Et on peut être assez d'accord, puisque toute religion instituée et auto-proclamée ne peut être qu'une sorte de déraillement ! Mais ça ne peut pas servir d'excuse ou de justification pour l'absence d'auto-examen de l'Islam, ce qu'il a tenté de faire à sa façon, dans des mouvements sociaux ou spirituels que je ne connais pas malheureusement, via des organisations comme les frères musulmans, quoiqu'on pense de leur politique.

J'ai l'impression de vivre un monde à deux ou trois vitesses. La dignité des hommes en prend un sale coup en Islam depuis les débuts de sa confrontation avec le monde moderne des deux siècles derniers. Ça n'est pas une excuse pour ne pas exiger des Musulmans le respect des lois dans les états où il y a séparation des religions et de l'état. Cette dignité est bien fragile aussi aux Etats-Unis où on peut observer le sentiment d'inégalités économiques et culturelles qui vont s'aggravant, le rejet des élites, le raboutage de la dignité humaine (du travail en particulier), la difficulté du patriotisme dans un monde global. Ça explique le vote pour Trump, je crois, sans l'excuser. Les raisons que je viens de donner pour le vote Trump me paraissent être très proches de celles qui agitent le monde musulman, d'où son antisémitisme, son mépris pour les cultures modernes. les violences internes et externes...

SUNDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2017

Many notes after further reading of Assmann's *Exodus*. Interesting remark by O. Keel regarding the Canaanites as personifying the past of Israelites. Hosea and Deut/DH try to excise their own past via a claimed separation

from contemporary conditions.⁸⁰

Good paragraphs on labor, in comment on Exod 1:6–14.⁸¹ Compulsory labor or *corvée* was as normal as military service in modern times. Monarchies monopolized construction and artisanal work.⁸² *Corvée* was a kind of tax, as were rents and other fees. This forced labor was especially important during the three to four months of flooding of the Nile. Priests were exempted. So we are talking about the domination by a higher class of the vast majority of the population via forced labor, rents, and taxes. Harder work was even imposed on prisoners or Semites from Palestine in stone quarries especially. Compare the story about Solomon:

King Solomon conscripted forced labor out of all Israel; the levy numbered thirty thousand men. He sent them to the Lebanon, ten thousand a month in shifts; they would be a month in the Lebanon and two months at home; Adoniram was in charge of the forced labour. Solomon also had seventy thousand labourers and eighty thousand stonecutters in the hill country, besides Solomon's three thousand three hundred supervisors who were over the work, having charge of the people who did the work. (1 Kings 5:27–30)

I note that the stories concerning “Egypt” or Solomon and Rehoboam are not extraordinary but reflect realities of ancient labor exploitation. Story of the vengeance by the “people” in 1 Kings 12:18.

Exod 5:6–9: genuinely Egyptian?⁸³ I think it was common. Egypt used sun-dried bricks for construction. So did Mesopotamia. And the same technique, with the tempering, was used for pot making. The story of harsh forced labor would then lead to demands of justice and absence of exploitation: Deut 15:9; 24:15. Human slavery would be impossible for God's *servants* and the release from bondage would become a practice. See Deut 15:12–15; 16:9–12; Deut 5:6–21 on sabbath. A desire for freedom and independence from obligations to neighbor is affirmed. But this could already be practiced by kings, at least temporarily, for all kinds of reasons. It was enshrined as a near-right at enthronement of new kings, at least in Mesopotamia. It is clear that a post-monarchic leadership (see Nehemiah) has

80. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 116.

81. *Ibid.*, 125–26.

82. This reminds me: write a few pages or at least paragraphs on *avodah's* meanings and its tilt toward *service*. Write especially on the uses that taxes and rents were put to: building of palatial and temples, undissociably linked;

83. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 129.

been redefining *brotherhood*. Many commentators think that it was narrowly constructed in terms of ethnicity, but one would have to take into account the sharing of the Exodus-based belief and trust as ground for this ethnicity-in-being. See Ruth's story for an interesting commentary. The laws of gleaning are also (re)shaped with the story of slavery in Egypt in the background. But these were old customs under the kings, kept and broadened (or rather: put on another basis) after exile: Exod 22:20; 23:9.

All in all, it seems to me that the details on work in Egypt are perfectly at home in Israel (monarchic Israel but not only) as are the so-called "Canaanite" religious customs.

As for a foreign origin as claimed by Deut 26:5–11. [note first that the "foreign" element here is subverted by divine authority and call to Abraham and Moses]. I think that the idea of a *promised land* is radical indeed but turned into an even more compelling argument of the antiquity of the ownership of that land by writing and enshrining it as an ancient divine law, so justifying the return as well as the rebuilding of the temple at the end of the sixth century. This argument worked particularly well in the ancient world where the politics of allegiance to power centers were fluctuating (the territorial limits of ancient empires appear hazy in comparison with the scientific mapping of modern empires). In other words or from another angle, the length of years of presence on the land, if not supported by spelled out divine authority and conquest (tantamount to divine blessing and authority or will), was no argument for possession.⁸⁴

MONDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2017

The empathy and mercy to be shown the poor or foreigners were now framed as a necessary component of the exilic political situation, whereas it had also been practiced by kings though in a narrower and somewhat unjust situation of domination, in a race with competing elites. Note that the story of exploitation by Egypt sets things in hoary antiquity and conveniently in a country that the Achaemenids found difficult to govern and keep in their power.⁸⁵ Assmann is too ready to see the declarations

84. In this regard, Cataldo's analysis of a *golah*'s priestly desire for authority and power over land can be reshaped and broadened.

85. I note that the other two periods that can arguably provide the background for stages in the development of the Exodus story were the end of the eighth century (interest of northern Israelite king in defending himself against this close neighbor); and the end of the seventh century, developed above, when Assyria was weakened and Egypt was rebelling

regarding the foreigner as *urbi et orbi* declarations when in fact they concerned the “foreigner within your walls or house,” i.e. the classical case of *metoikos* situation, a standard difficulty of the ancient world, veering quickly into slavery if no protectors were found. The exploitation of Canaanites in the legends concerning David and Solomon do not seem to pose a problem, on the contrary, for the story-tellers, who can be trusted to be late narrators-theologians aware of the Exodus story and Deuteronomic law.

Assmann spends much time talking about historical Egypt even though he knows that the real exploitation by Assyria and Babylonia of people contemporary with the writers is what the myth (or remembrance) of slavery in Egypt is pointing to.⁸⁶ Rash optimism at the top of page 138: *only as a self-reflecting society*, like that of ancient Israel binding the story of its origins to the notion of justice, can present humanity become an empathetic society and thereby push through human rights as well as deal with the challenges of globalization. It is interesting to reread this in light of Gauchet’s book on *Le nouveau monde*.

Discussion of Moses’ childhood and Sargon’s myth pages 142–43. Assmann mentions the reversal that the story of Moses’ birth does of the common legend of hidden royal origins.⁸⁷ Moses would thus be a sort of Sargon, chosen by God to rule over His people. One would expect Moses to be enthroned. Significantly, however, he is not. The exposure saves Moses from the king’s murderous order. While Sargon is apparently exposed to protect his mother from shame (she was a high-priestess, a virgin therefore?).

Assmann doesn’t see another aspect of the story, the ironic displacement or reapplication of the traditional frame. This structure engages us to think of the Levite parents of Moses as the royal house (or palace), the pharaoh as the vicious, unjust regent, and the pharaoh’s daughter as the humble water-drawer Akki (or gardener, forest inhabitant, etc.).⁸⁸ There is no Oedipus-like meeting with the unknown father (unknown also in Sargon’s story: son of gods?), but a double meeting: first as the killing of an Egyptian who stands for the usurper/tyrant, which triggers a further separation from home, in the non-watery desert, where he discovers he is the one

and putting pressure on its “glacis.”

86. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 137.

87. *Ibid.*, 143.

88. Though she is the ultimate palace insider. There is an ethnic dimension too, I think, to this setting of Egyptian women as attracted to Hebrews, as in Joseph’s story.

to save “his” kingdom. He himself is a kind of Akki, water-drawer, מוֹשֶׁה. Second at the burning bush, where Moses doesn’t become a king but remains close to the divinity and is its direct expression, in writing (!).⁸⁹

Assmann also cites the seventeenth to sixteenth legend of a secret prediction made to Cheops regarding the royal destiny of three children. Triplets are born after divine conception by the wife of a high priest. A servant woman is about to tell Pharaoh about it but falls in the water and is eaten by a crocodile. The rest of the missing story can be partly reconstituted. Three kings of the fifth dynasty stopped the previous tyrannical regime of pyramid builders and switched to a divine-inspired regime, with the construction of the sun god temple. The end of the papyrus probably told how Cheops tried to get rid of the three and failed.

This story leads to a discussion of the building aspects of the reigns of Cheops, Ramses II, and Herod.... I would add all kings! Assmann seems to abandon the notion of a precise historical background and roams free through centuries. The point is well taken but should be systematic, i.e. applied to all ancient monarchies and theorized (e.g. it should cover David and Solomon in the legends constructed around their reigns on the basis of seventh or sixth centuries’ contemporary knowledge). Josephus cannot help but supply the missing “prophecy” to the (bad) king that would destroy Egyptian kingship and make Hebrews strong, supplying the motif of evil king or tyrant.

Concerning Moses’ name, A. mentions the meaning given in the story and based on the verb *mashah*, to draw. The problem seen by everyone is that the form *Mosheb* would mean the “puller,” not the “pulled.” He denies this easy etymology by saying: “Of course, we know today that the name is Egyptian and simply means “born,” from *msj*, “to bear,” and occurs usually together with a god’s name.” Precisely the problem. Assmann struggles with this naming issue: he suggests that the story-teller found the tradition of the thoroughgoing Egyptian name and tried to adapt it. I think the explanation is that there was an awareness of Egyptian *msh* endings as meaning “born” but the real driver of the story was the legend of a hidden royal birth, a presaging salvation by a water-drawer (here the inverted Pharaoh’s daughter), and the ability of the name-sound to evoke and play both sides, the royal and humble beginnings in inverted form.

In my interpretation therefore, the story’s ironical reversal extends to the naming. When the Egyptian princess thinks she is giving an Egyptian

89. Only writing offers the possibility of a tradition bypassing kings.

name to Moses (from the Israelite point of view), she inadvertently gives a “Hebrew” name that is in fact a program, as ancient names were wont to be. It serves as a kind of announcement or prophecy for a “puller,” a kind of midwife.⁹⁰ While the divinity got the people out of Egypt, Moses “pulled it,” as Psalms 18:17 says. I add that the philological attempts to maintain an Egyptian origin for the name Moses, however justified by the *couleur locale* given by other names in the story, appear to be motivated by historicist claims (or some after-effect). They fail to understand the literary element, its inversions, and the meanings the story had for the ancient audience.

On the promise of the land.⁹¹ Assmann addresses the question of self-definition of the people only by covenant but a) doesn’t sufficiently insist on the singularity of an *ethnos* that was defined before being in a land, yet coming from that land. He does see the *allochthony* but doesn’t see that the ancient Israelites were actually *autochthones*.⁹² b) he doesn’t notice or remark—as far as I can tell—on the fact that the divinity appears outside of “its” land, which is spectacularly abnormal though became a possibility in Ezekiel and after. This appearance of the divinity outside its land doesn’t preclude the need for a “house” (or tent), though of course not built by kings. The rules of support of this “temple” and its personnel are set in hoary, a-monarchic, antiquity.

Name of God: Assmann suggests that the root הוה, meaning to blow, is the root of its name.⁹³ Still, apt remarks on the philosophical potential of the LXX’s ἐγὼ εἶμι ὁ ὢν, and the living, historical aspect of the “name” transmitted to Moses in Exod 3:12. Huizinga: history as accountability over a society’s past. Archives and annals don’t do this. Neither does journalism, or rarely so. I don’t see much of it in Israelite history either, except prophets.

Final thought: to transform the meaning of work, I mean the indignity it often incorporates, into service to a greater good, that is what Exodus aims for, and the gospels even better in its wake. This seems to me the only possible answer to modern economic forms.

Callum’s birthday. Amidst our play this morning, I found myself explaining a little figurine representing a mediaeval soldier and going into silly unneeded details regarding the weaponry. At another moment, Lucie goes

90. See the work by this name.

91. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 158–63.

92. This defense of a special kind of allochthony was a convenient way for priests in the *golah* to set their own authority, following divine will, over quite material aspects of the society. Here, I’m in agreement with Cataldo.

93. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 168.

to the play train, touches one of the trains, and says “mine” clearly while turning to see the effect on Callum.

TUESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2017

Assmann goes a little far in evoking Thera, an Israeli novel on this event and its consequences, after Velikovsky...⁹⁴ More puzzling and open to all sorts of interpretations: “The truth of this story [sci. the exodus] does not reside in the factuality of the recounted past but in its meaning for those who tell the story.”⁹⁵ The ostensible facts are not to be found. But there are certain social and historical facts that the writers live, feel and even see around themselves and that they point to obliquely. The key issue was the necessity of bypassing the politics of monarchy which were politics of accumulation. The monarchy and its ruination were facts. To invent a society without monarchs and pharaonic figures was a wish or dream. Hardly believable that the writers did not refashion the story and knew they were doing so. Choices made: the whole people are involved (vs only priests, elites, royal family); the Moses leadership; the story in Egypt; the idea of direct covenant; the packaging of 22–24 code; the design of pre-temple tent and priesthood; the view and use of writing as guaranteeing permanency of the law. It feels like a program.

About the definition of the Israelite ethnos (called then the Hebrews, which is even broader), three things mean that the late writers were both reacting to their situation and transcending it.⁹⁶ a) the proclaimed, direct choice by the divinity (maker of the earth!) of this people, not via kings or other mediation; b) the promise of a land where this people may dwell, so not according to the usual derivation of propriety and derivation of one’s “culture” by the haphazard chances of one’s geography; c) finally the offering of the covenant and law to everyone. The circumstance, however, is not a free choice: this people is in the desert, saved from oppressors, between a rock and a hard place!! This people is called to be a holy people, a people of priests, i.e. a people strictly separated from the paradigmatic seven peoples that constitute the real pre-exilic past that the Israelite and Judaeans monarchies shared with them. Deut 7:6: **כִּי עַם קְדוֹשׁ אַתָּה לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּדָבָר | יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְהִיּוֹת לוֹ לְעַם סְגֻלָּה מִכָּל הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה:**

94. *Ibid.*, 192.

95. *Ibid.*

96. *Ibid.*, 230.

I'm much less inclined to see a revolution here than Assmann is. The holiness and priestliness of the people is a claim that follows from the new political situation that consists of bypassing kings who used to channel and capitalize on this holiness and access to it. Theoretically yes, Israel in Exodus becomes the avant-garde of piety and justice in the world, but practice didn't change regarding other peoples, and inside Israel only prevented or suspended (or put pressure on) the elite's attempt to be the mediators.⁹⁷ The reflection and struggle on what this holiness consisted of would continue for centuries. The history of Christian and post-Christian nations is bound to it, though indirectly.⁹⁸

Other matter: in response to Murray B. who wants to get dates right on his own version of the development of Jewish Studies at UCSC—the investiture speech he gave on the occasion of the chair named for him—I wrote the following:

We met in Kibbutz Mizra. I got there on my own in June 1971, the 19th I believe, and knew no one. I was gratified I could be in the Ulpan and work in the kitchen or farm. The reason why I got there is a long chain: I had not gone back to the grand-seminary to continue toward the priesthood after I came back from Palestine where I taught kids in the Jerusalem La Salle Brothers' college near the New Gate, from 1966 to 1968. I was an "auditeur libre" at the École Biblique at the same time and found a passion for ancient history. Upon returning to France, I stayed in my parents' farm and helped them—they were tenant farmers—, while teaching and doing odd admin jobs in a local agricultural school. 1969-70 saw me resuming my studies in history at the Rennes university, travelling back to my parents' farm to help while trying to keep my distances from the extraordinary, tumultuous social student movements that were still in full swing as an unfurling of May 1968. By 1971 (second year of my studies) I felt quite lost. I didn't know what I was going to do, I knew the seminary was not for me but I still thought of some form of intellectual and priesthood service, though not through the Jesuits or the Dominicans. I also didn't trust the social movements I saw and to which I was deeply sympathetic. I studied Marx quite a bit. That is what led me to try to find a non-religious, non-francophone kibbutz, and Mizra was a great find. My meeting with Amy was on September 7, after I spent a while in the kibbutz,

97. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 230.

98. See MANENT, *Les métamorphoses de la cité*, on Augustine; and more recently, WALZER, *In God's shadow: politics in the Hebrew Bible*.

still wondering about my “vocation,” and finally realizing that my “call” was to take another form. One might call it a series of zigzagging blessings!

Bruno C. sur Trump:

Vous avez hérité d'un sacré numéro : mélange de Ieltsine et d'Amin Dada ! Je ne savais pas que Lénine avait des racines juives et surtout Mongoles. Il a la troisième paupière de Gengis Khan ! On parle d'enterrer sa momie. Le communisme russe est la conséquence de 3 siècles d'impérities des dirigeants. Abolition du servage en 1865 ! Je comprends le mépris qu'avait Marx pour son “état de mode asiatique de production” ! Un général du K.G.B. écrit sous Poutine “ Nous sommes des barbares asiatiques”. Passer d'Ivan le fou à Poutine est une hypothèse gratuite. Ils aiment encore Staline ! Leur addiction à l'alcool va jusqu'à boire du Kérosène ! 5 heures sur le centenaire de ces fous, barbares et de leur révolution : je vais dormir après avoir vomi ! Bruno

Je lui réponds:

On va enterrer Lénine ? Cela m'étonnerait que ça se fasse vite : le peuple a besoin de toucher des reliques, même à Washington dont la machine politique (chambre + sénat + maison blanche + agences + éminences grises) entoure le Mall, une sorte de cimetière de héros ou de références aux héros (musées), avec le cimetière d'Arlington pratiquement visible de l'autre côté de la rivière. Le système politique dérive sa force de cette proximité des morts érigés en batteries d'accumulateurs ! Les catholiques ont toujours su ça... Les protestants croient être au-dessus de ce culte des saints, ils y sont retombés en pire. —Gildas

3 March

THURSDAY, 2 MARCH 2017

Back to Exodus via Assmann. The author is right, I think, to say that a different notion of time and history arises in light of the belief in the story of Exodus and the covenant. I would add that the same is true of the story of Genesis 1–11. The story of the kings cannot remain annalistic but becomes subjected to judgment. This was done by Assyria also but under supervision of the palace. This sense of a value of history, especially the history of a people, must have gained some of its intensity also from the notion of a creator outside of time and space.

FRIDAY, 3 MARCH 2017

Judaism and Christianity share the notion of an exclusive, exacting bond with a just, demanding, and caring God, but differ on the extent of its application: a people chosen from the nations, for Judaism, and a universal call across nations of the world for Christianity. They also share a sense of duality in political life, since all members of the covenant can be divided, right through the individual soul, as living divine commands and love, or not.¹

Or le projet chrétien, si je puis dire, vint à se déployer dans un monde où les « nations », toutes les nations ou presque, se trouvaient déjà réunies politiquement dans le cadre de l'empire romain. De sorte que l'Église chrétienne, quelle que fût son indifférence ou son mépris pour le « monde », se trouva fort dépendante pour son action missionnaire d'un développement politique spécifique, singulier même, en vérité extraordinaire, et tout à fait de ce monde, à savoir la constitution de l'empire romain.

1. MANENT, *Les métamorphoses de la cité*, 292.

On glory and Trump: the principle at work in pagan politics is glory, that is, public praise and shame. In Christian and post-Christian polities (see Hobbes regarding glory), it is conscience, and it should be enough.

While reading Assmann, I realize that Albertz has recently finished a two-volume commentary on Exodus. His first volume of 2012 is listed among the commentaries the author used.²

SATURDAY, 4 MARCH 2017

Lucie is definitely understanding much of what I say, both in English and French, and I have to be careful about it. She names all members of the family pretty distinctly.

MONDAY, 6 MARCH 2017

A healthcare plan is in the works. What is kept of the private-insurance scheme passed under Obama? Previous conditions cannot be gamed by insurance companies; children can be kept on their parent(s) plan until age 26; cross-state insurance kept? What is changed in the House plan:

1. eliminate the employer and individual mandates, that is, get rid of penalties for people not purchasing insurance, but increase cost of insurance for people letting their coverage lapse. The smaller size of the pool and the likely sign-up for insurance by older and sicker people will bring about higher premiums, allowed in any case by the differential between older and younger people—see below—).
2. insurance companies will be able to charge up to five times higher premiums for older people—especially age 50 to 64—than for younger people who can be expected to pay the same as now, something like 3,000\$/yr,
3. there will be health plan tax credits up to a certain revenue, although 45% of working-age people supposedly do not pay taxes,
4. give limited block grants to states for Medicaid insurance (for poor people) from 2019 on and thereby trust that states dominated by conservative politicians will renege on support of people who need it most,
5. eliminate support for Planned Parenthood,

2. ALBERTZ, *Exodus 1–18*; and ALBERTZ, *Exodus 19–40*. Both reviewed by Johnstone for *RBL* in 2015 and 2017.

One wonders what health insurance companies are thinking. I presume that from their point of view, the main question will be whether the higher premiums and payments that they can collect on older people who are more likely to get insured, paired with pickier, even more complex and unfathomable plans, will be worth losing access to a larger pool, since poor and younger clients who are presently in the pool thanks to Federal Medicaid payments and IRS penalties will drop out or be dropped from it. The Congressional Budget Office cannot be of any help since it was not asked, contrary to usual rules, to provide a financial analysis. According to conservative estimates, between 8 and 12 million people would lose their coverage (The Affordable Health Care Act expanded coverage to about 20 million people more). I hope it is dead on arrival, even if thanks to ultra-right representatives' opposition. The reactions on the right and extreme right, however, may be to bemoan this new plan conceived in the dead of the night as Obamacare 2.0, eventually pass it with even worse provisions, and turn around against it as something inherited and unfixable. In parallel to this wreck of a health plan, a tax project is in the works, a so-called destination-based tax plan, probably dead on arrival also, though a cover for more tax decreases for capital.

TUESDAY, 7 MARCH 2017

I received another crazed comminatory mail from BC, presuming to explain his insulting mails to Pierre Toulouse (who helped him some in the past, or could have), denying any role in the tragedies of his family (and who could pretend to know the concatenations of feelings and despair?), and fantasizing about my silence, Amy's lack of response (he doesn't know her address, I don't read her the mails I receive from him, and she fortunately wouldn't respond anyway), or what Rémi and Callum should be doing. Dreams upon dreams. The most interesting aspect is the uninvited denial of drug use, whereas I am fairly certain his main downfall was drug addiction, an addiction I witnessed in Santa Cruz, during his summer visit of 1991 with Andres and Hugo. I answered:

Je n'ai pas été choqué et n'ai pas commenté puisque je ne connais pas Pierre Toulouse.

Quant à Rémi ou Blaise, cela fait assez longtemps que je ne me fais plus de souci pour eux. Et j'espère encore plus ne pas leur en causer. Il m'est arrivé de m'en faire pour Rémi quand il faisait ses auditions et que le nombre de clarinettes en orchestre payés un salaire correct

me paraissait – et encore plus à lui ! – minuscule (60 dans le monde entier payés correctement ? Combien prennent leur retraite chaque année ? 300 candidats au top niveau par place ? C'étaient les données du problème).

Je viens d'avoir mon frère François au téléphone. Il va aussi bien que possible. C'est un grand soulagement de le savoir en France et non aux USA où les politiciens se tâtent pour savoir qui peut être le plus cruel et le plus corrompu dans la destruction de ce que nous sommes bien obligés, par défaut, d'appeler notre système d'assurance santé.
–Gildas

François actually sounded okay. I was glad to have an echo of his and Julie's voices. As she said, it was magical to be able to talk to each other at such a great distance.

[Assmann notes continued. See 28 February for previous notes]. Assmann is right to note that a different notion of time and history comes about in light of the exodus and covenant theology.³ Egypt's oppression was not presented as a punishment of the sins of Israel and Judah but as preceding all of that. It followed the "fall into history."

This was done in the prophetic style (but why were the prophetic texts we have so uncritical, most of the time, of the kings?). The history of the kings did not remain annalistic but was subjected to judgment. Assyrians too developed a sort of history, from or for divine consumption, but at the hands of the palace scribes. I have the sense however that this notion of time cannot be separated either from the concept of creation and particularly the ectopic situation of the creator. With this kind of idea, the world and what it contains were likely to be imagined as having a "beginning" and "end", or points of origin and end. Texts for this in the HB?

The divine history of Israel is separated from that of the nations: a holy people vs nations (Exod 19:6; Deut 7:6; and see also Num 23:9). The notion of a people not defined by kinship, land, language, monarchy, but by divine law (or will) is new.⁴ It was prepared by incremental steps. Heine's "portable land" and this recognition of Israel as prototype of humanity are more radical because of the fall of the second temple and the enshrining of a people without political means at the heart of Christianity for centuries. Freud's definition of Judaism in 1935 was wide off the mark: *eine Schöpfung des Mannes Moses*. Wide off the mark? Except in that its notion of creation

3. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 231.

4. *Ibid.*, 232.

is the right one, though it needs to be taken into a different, more precise historical direction. An objective genitive, as in the creation of mosaic humanity?

But what does the concept of a direct bond between its god and Israel mean? A unique bond god-Israel, separated from all gods and from all peoples. Assmann repeats his historical staging theory with an earlier monotheism of trust and choice (with many other gods in the background) and a later monotheism of truth.⁵ I repeat that this is too radical a difference in my opinion. There are passages in Exodus regarding the creator. And the warnings concerning the other gods in Deut already supposed their emptiness or lack of power and lack of truth (as able to deliver the goods: our idea of truth and beauty have evolved also). The power of the divinity in the book of Exodus can be assumed to be coupled with that of the creator and the notion of a plan (as is clear from Genesis 1–3, P also, if a different date).

On the notion of ברית.⁶ Of course, if the god is the direct partner in the bond (without kings and his court or attached military and landowning elite), as he is in the stories of Noah and other patriarchs, a “cement” needs to be supplied: the love command, where love may be better translated as respect?⁷ Note that the election is one way: the god chooses the people, they don’t shop around, and it is a male electing a female (note *adamah* in Deut 7:6), who is threatened with punishment in Deut 6:5, etc... In all of this, the land, even in exile and afterwards, remains most important. The “portable land” metaphor has its limits, even after Heine, in modern times.

Torah as remembrance.⁸ He goes back to Nietzsche’s view of natural memory (remembering and forgetting as necessary partners), and a “memory of the will.” There would be no memory without blood, martyrs, or sacrifices? Suffering would be the greatest help to mnemonics. Nietzsche, Freud, Mann, Hobbes, offer pessimistic views of human nature, against modern anthropology, and the biological necessity of bonds of empathy at an early age. But the tendency to forget is a given, so an effort to stabi-

5. *Ibid.*, 233.

6. My note: It was normally given freely (part of *hesed*?) or expected as trust and fidelity, enforced too (honor code, the close watch of neighbors in kinship relationships). It was in danger of being systematically abused in politics, since the latter consists for a great part of increasing one’s symbolic and physical power over as many people as possible. It therefore entails a distance from networks established by more traditional networks such as neighbors, kins and tribes.

7. There is a discussion of the meaning of *ahavah* to be referenced.

8. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 235ff.

lize systems (? language, social grouping, ways of working, values or norms) needs to be done: memory. What of a bond with a divinity?⁹ But knotted in two directions, as in Deut 6:5 and Lev 19:18? Is there a priority of one over the other? Not in the story of the Samaritan in Luke 10.

Important: the remembering of the covenant triggers thanks, which in turn may release others from their bonds. Here comes in view the problem of the modern world with its absence of thanks and graces. They are seen as superfluous to direct economic, access to one's life support and more. The prior covenant via palace and temple(s) was broken by history. A sham? Owing to the *forgetting* of the central god. As Hosea 8:14 says: וישכח ישראל את-עשהו ויבן היכלות ויהודה הרבה ערים בצרות ושלחתי-אש בעריו ואכלה ארמנתיה And in the same realm of thought, Deut 6:10–12, according to which any conquest is due the god. It could be the Assyrians talking, except for the claim regarding Egypt.

Then an account of the *Deuteronomy find in Josiah's temple, and the "realization" of a complete, collective, massive forgetting. It explains the catastrophe of 587. The Deuteronomy would be the escape from a massive forgetting. It would be the justification by exilic elites of their own steadfastness and hope of salvation. The length of time explains the need to insist on *remembering*. It becomes a definition of the people that can be enlarged to "Israel."

Assmann briefly compares this situation with that of the Greeks.¹⁰ No myth? But in Greece we have a similar political revolution and the development of social laws directly voted on (according to the later traditions on Solon), instead of laws collected by elites and scribes, and still assigned to divine will. Versus scattered myths in Greece and no collective ethnos?? It is actually a perfect example of a parallel development.

Aside suddenly on the memory of the Shoah narrative and how normative it has become in the past thirty years.¹¹ I think habituation has also become stronger, and a memory of the memory is complicating things. Assmann seems more positive regarding not only the avoidance of other genocides but the positive development of human rights. The superabundance of marks of memory doesn't equate remembering. Many forces are at work that chip at this capacity and willingness to remember, including the drawing of moral credits (by the Israeli right especially) for immoral benefits.

9. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 237.

10. *Ibid.*, 239–40.

11. *Ibid.*, 240.

In the same discussion, I notice this unfortunate expression, *traumatischen Erfahrungen*.¹² Trauma alright, but “experience?” “Undergoing?” All of this, in spite of the best of intentions, is allowing a false memory. According to Assmann, the practical fallout of the memory of the exodus (i.e. the life together under the covenant and the revolutionary definition of a people) would parallel the translation of the memory of the Shoah into the development of new norms of humanity and justice. Perhaps. One may wish for a new Jesus who would soon remind the elites of their failure to live truly in the memory of the events. So, as for Christianity later, the text, commentaries and liturgy do remind people of a broadening but practice doesn’t necessarily follow.

Note on monotheism of faith and truth:¹³ most of ancient religious actions were driven by expectations, but trust that if humans kept their side of the bargain (however determined: mostly cultic), the gods would too. The importance of faith or trust correlates with the perception of power and authority (Zeus, Marduk, and kings attached to these gods). The notion of creator of the universe (with no gods attached to it) introduced something new. The other gods were part of the world, however “eternal” and “upon high,” and arrangements with them were networking affairs, negotiations. In other words, the notion of creation cannot be easily separated from that of trust and faith. With a single creator god, endowed with absolute authority, there is a rupture in the relationship. The salvation event and covenant are not only a matter of one-way choice, but the relationship can only be under great tension since the remembering and hearing or obeying can only be partial...

Hosea, Ezek 16:3–22, Jer 3:1–10, figure Israel as a young woman born to be engaged and married to YHWH, but who erred and prostituted herself. Whether we are in a polytheistic or monotheistic world, not only fertility is everything, but its control is paramount. The covenant in this case is one way, and can only be breached one way too, and severely punished by casting out the woman / people on the land. This looks like a pre-stage of the exodus story, but seen from a people who have been in the land for however long they can remember.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*, 244.

WEDNESDAY, 8 MARCH 2017

Callum went to his routine medical exam this afternoon and passed with flying colors. He got two shots and did not complain much, according to Leslie and Amy who went with him. He was able to read all the letters when his vision was being checked. His size and weight are 3'5" and 39 pounds (61 percentile). I stayed home with Lucie. For her nap at around 1:30pm, I went through the little ritual we have in the evening: some reading with the light on, then light out, singing and "marking the spot..." There was a little crying sometimes, but also the surprising sitting up after I finished singing "au clair de la lune" in order to clap! Later on, after her one and a half hour nap, as a powerful wind was blowing through the tree canopy, she and I went for a walk. I kept my head up, worrying about branches. She understands the French words and sentences about "voitures, la lune et les nuages, les branches des arbres..." and a few verbs like "tu viens?"

Assyrian treaty model (Asarhaddon, 672) was applied by *Deuteronomy writers to the relationship between YHWH and his people.¹⁴ Is it realistic to imagine this copying or modeling under kings, Manasseh or others, if the king's role was done away with? The king, who represented both the god's will to the people and the people's interests to the god, is eliminated from the Israelite covenant theology. How early was this possible?¹⁵ It is not sufficient to say: "The covenant concept makes kingship superfluous." Again, who could or would spell this under Manasseh? And even under Josiah, how could this be done, presumably by a group of elites concerned about the military and economic situation, without antagonizing the whole palatial apparatus, and leaving some trace of the conflict? The interests of the royal house, would be directly threatened. It is difficult to imagine how the absence of the king in the drawing up of the covenant could occur with enemies at the border. Its *Sitz im Leben* is rather the complete loss of palace and temple, meaning the radical impossibility of even returning to kingship after the peripatetic changes of 620 to 587.¹⁶

It is regrettable that Assmann does not ask questions about the social

14. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 250.

15. See ASSMANN, *Herrschaft und Heil: politische Theologie in Altägypten, Israel und Europa*, 63–71.

16. Give the detail of military action and changes in the royal house. A possible background for the eliding of the royal role in covenant theology, however, would be its origin in northern Israel, as argued by Assmann and others, and the influence of such ideas on Judaeans by the second half of the seventh century. Still...

and political background of the initial *Deuteronomy. It leads him to think that it was a “new, particular, emphatic, and precisely democratic people’s concept.” Two circumstances prevent this remarkable change from being democratic as the author proclaims. One is that the enemy was at the door, or rather (my view) completely dominated the kingdom and as usual removed most political and military elites, though not all. Some of those left may have been responsible for *Deuteronomy. The second one is that the whole story of the exodus is far from being democratically inspired, or oligarchic for that matter. The people’s main role in the story has been “to groan,” to which the divinity eventually responds. We are to suppose that for many generations, this god did not express any concern about the people, its lack of proper laws, customs, or rituals. So, the people discover that they have a leader, are pushed and pulled into fleeing, do recognize the “voices” of the theophany, half believe in the promises or the durability of Moses... But where is it indicated that, befitting a democracy, the people chose or debated the laws and customs, or especially their “election?”

The priestly authors were certainly not democrats as this word is usually understood. What were their social situation and interests, including their concern for the people? Without a royal house or a temple, they discovered that they (how many were not exiled?) could imagine a religious and political form broad enough for all YHWH believers, able to incorporate the best of the past (laws and rituals), likely to distinguish themselves and endure in the vast empires of post-exile(s), and not in need of kings (since governors were given after all). Fast forward three centuries to circa 200 and the question of an independent political leadership shows clearly that the religio-political regime was not a democracy but rather something all its own, a theocracy, as Flavius Josephus wrote, with kings who could such or were cagey about it.

The people act as the other partner of the divinely-initiated pact, not Moses, the elders, Aaron or the Levites.¹⁷ And indeed the role of the families and small networks was crucial for the continuation in exile of laws, rituals, customs, calendar, etc., as Alberty showed in numerous works. But the need for leadership is assumed as an undercurrent of the story of Exodus,

17. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 251. Hence the Hebrew word for covenant, ברית, which means link, tie, bond, from the verb *baroh* (= to bind or tie) was translated as διαθήκη. This kept the idea of inequality between the partners. ברית could have been translated in any number of ways: by συγγραφή (written contract, tie, partnership); συγγραφοδιαθήκη (wedding contract signed by both sides’ representatives); or διάθεσις (command, disposition, as in “disposition of property” through inheritance, “will” or custom); or ὁμολογία (agreement).

whether Moses', Aaron's, elders', Joshua's, and they are presented as divine delegates at one point or another, so at least superficially, they are not so different from kings. But if there is no change in the intensity of power, there are significant differences: the palace is gone, *the temple and the priesthood stand on their own*—which is even more radical than the doing away with kings—there is no image, and perhaps even more crucially, the writing of laws and even annals or wisdom, now impossible under the authority of palatial structures but presumably still done by the same schools of scribes, is claimed to be of divine origin.

The metaphors of brideship and sonship were common and very ancient.¹⁸ [Here Assmann reviews the spectacular rites and myths used to naturalize the divine authority of kings and prevent their questioning].¹⁹ I think the notion of farmer and his (wedded) land has to be examined (see monographs on topic), and perhaps there is something to be gained by a study of the Hebrew Bible's use of land (earth to nation) and soil.

In ancient Near Eastern kingdoms, sonship was presented as a matter of choice, not of simple generation (“dynastic right”).²⁰ The Egyptian model is that Pharaoh was the son of the highest god. Gods chose for themselves kings in their sons.²¹

[NB: speculative idea: when did the notion of messianic, just king return, or did it never quite disappear, even in the sixth century? The book of Chronicles provides a clearly rosy view of David et al. What circles were behind this restoration?] Was there an evolution of thought in expression of the divinity's election of people as “son” (not daughter)? Negative in Hosea, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel, positive in Exod 4:22–23, though in the context of Pharaoh's first-born, and for the service of the god. Of course, not as a part of curse-blessing dynamics, since the writers know the curses are in another scroll... Israel as chosen, first-born son, instead of a king's son? No, rather the logic continues: YHWH is king, direct rule, everything else stays

18. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 251.

19. See LAPINKIVI, “The Sumerian sacred marriage”; also PONGRATZ-LEISTEN, “Sacred marriage and the transfer of divine knowledge.”

20. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 251–52.

21. Sociological translation: the harsh authority of the father could be renewed and the divine love and compassion, especially toward an ‘abandoned’ or ‘exposed’ son—of one of the many wives in the royal house—was expected to be demonstrated in the new reign, especially at the beginning, through forgiveness of debts and some defined “felonies”. The son, still, also represented and continued the existing kingship inasmuch as it was the source of order, in imitation of the stellar powers in the universe.

in place, including the son who is a vicar, or executive of divine will. A corporeal sonship, with a metaphor of brothers, and compassionate laws that are anchored in divine will. They became marks of “sonship” and “brotherhood.”

So, in practice YHWH became king and governed people via justice and laws, while the people became also king, when choosing to be YHWH's covenant partner.²² This remark seems hasty, when there is only a passage for such a “choice.” As for the expressions of a holy people and a kingdom of priests, how exactly is the genitive to be read? possessive or descriptive genitive? In any case, the choice goes one way. The whole chapter 19 delineates the conditions of access: there are clear divisions, even without a king. In two words: no proximity. On the contrary, the distance is greater and the proximity or mitigated presence as difficult of access as before. The approach of the source of authority needs to be negotiated by new intermediaries: the temple and its limits, first of all, and Moses and the *text* that stands for him. A consequence of the covenant and law giving at Mount Sinai is that the divine kingship has no reenactment and no second giving of the law (copies or second editions are possible, however, from Deuteronomy to Mishnah). Hence exegesis and commentary became necessary.

There was a theological transformation of law into *ius divinum*, rather than retaining the customary structure, namely, that law was the purview of kings and administration.²³ Right, “the thought of external, timeless laws was unthinkable.” It was a practical, changing matter of great importance to the palace, a most important task and privilege that kings would not relinquish. Indeed! How could one believe then that Josiah's court did so (I insist on the corporate form of ancient social structures)? Most important is not the transfer to YHWH of the law-giving role but the social reorganization this *ius divinum* entailed.

Assmann insists that benefactions, care of the poor, empathy with suffering people, the needy, widows and orphans, the weak, slaves, and foreigners, were a new development.²⁴ I see all of this differently, more in the nature of a progression. Yes, in the post-monarchic period, there is a recollection in the law codes of the most positive (salvific) aspects that were expected of kings, and an extension on a more systematic basis, without the el-

22. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 252–53.

23. *Ibid.*, 253.

24. *Ibid.*

ement of social and economic advantage that was pursued by kings through their benefactions. But these benefactions did exist though they couldn't be but quite limited, under kings and in post-exilic imperial provinces. Yet, indeed, nothing could be like before, but the socio-economic realities did not change dramatically as Neh 5 shows clearly.²⁵ Assmann claims that these aspects of kingship were part of ancient wisdom and not of law. But what of proclamations of freedom from debt and other social measures? They were "law" as pronounced by kings upon enthronement for instance. Kings were not simply looking for social harmony as part of wise ethical concerns but used these declarations bound religiously to their salvific powers as part of practical calculations of future wealth (or maintainance of revenues). The removal of the kings of small areas by empires takes care of that level of exploitation. The social laws of the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy clearly expand the prophetic call (develop), but the conditions of life under empires until 164 BCE and again after 63 BCE do not mean practice of those laws was ideal.

Assmann quotes the critics regarding the existence of these social commands in ancient wisdom and the fact that they did not appear suddenly thanks to monotheism.²⁶ Assmann's answer is that their being anchored in divine right gave them much more strength. "Thus is introduced a vertical axis in the moral fabric of human life together." Yes indeed, but what was the reality?

Another aspect of kingship that was transferred to YHWH was the *particularity* of his act of salvation—not as a creator bringing universal redemption.²⁷ He is a national god and the people are "his." Not a god outside of the world but an engaged one who dwells among his people.²⁸ This presence or in-dwelling makes kingship superfluous. Again, I disagree with the author's conclusion and formulations: this is making virtue out of necessity. I'll repeat myself: Once the kings were irremediably gone (twice, and at length), and once the temple was gone—for a long time, before its re-establishment—, one either slowly disappears in new social formations *or*

25. Actually, as I argue elsewhere, and to the difference of ancient small kingdoms, there was little reason in an empire to set breaks on accumulation by competing elites as long as they didn't threaten the political center and actually helped tribute collection and cultural acceptance or public order.

26. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 254.

27. *Ibid.*, 255.

28. I still detect a tension between the creator and the savior, which was resolved locally for the time being.

finds an explanation for the events and a way to continue a tradition outside of what cannot be brought back, i.e. kings. To have one's traditional god as king, however, a god so powerful that he used kings of other powerful nations to clean up a history gone wrong, is not quite a democratic move, pace Assmann. It is *revolutionary*, granted, and definitively a story of hope for oppressed Israelites and Judaeans.²⁹ So, when A. writes that "Diese revolutionäre Konzeption konnte erst aufkommen, als es in Israel keinen König mehr gab," the revolutionary element must be tempered by the reality of socio-economic life under kings and later under empires. This revolution, then, is a model for modern world religions only if it is broadened to its universal dimensions.³⁰

On the ten commandments... There is a caesura between the ten commandments (Exod 20:1–21) and the law code (20:22–23:33). The first are heard by everyone, the rest is transmitted through Moses. So, the ten commandments are more binding. The laws are not "revealed" but given.³¹ Finally, a passage where A. remarks that *אמת* refers to both truth and trust. And I agree, *auctoritas* and *veritas* are indissociable here. Why separate them earlier in the whole first part of the book, except to avoid criticisms of what was read or misread in his previous book as his binding of intolerance and violence to monotheism? Still, it remains artificial. It is possible to provide another answer to the critics.

Indeed, the story of Exodus and the covenant is a *revelation* of a future hidden to the people, more exactly the world.³² Again this idea of above and beyond the horizon, hidden ways in the present (given the complicated relationships). Revelation not so much to the knower as to the believer? About the stone tablets of Exod 31:18. Two sides, one regarding duties to the divinity, the other to fellow people.³³

29. Again, on this god as a lord of history: how can this be without a change in his powers as creator?

30. Page 256. I think Assmann would agree with this idea.

31. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 256.

32. *Ibid.*, 259.

33. That is how it was believed, but there is only a human side, except that some of the laws were obvious though still "arguable."

THURSDAY, 9 MARCH 2017

Assmann repeats his argument regarding the monotheism of faith (other gods are an option), vs that of truth.³⁴ He refuses the term “monolatry” for this monotheism, because it obscures the unique case presented particularly by Exod 20. Monolatry may have existed here and there, including in the background of Israel’s monotheism of faith, but the latter is new and unprecedented.³⁵ The other gods do not simply disappear from view, they are forbidden.

[Again, the socio-economic reasons for this exclusiveness should be examined. I find it significant that the Egyptian gods are not mentioned: another sign that the writers were only concerned with “Canaan?” Even pharaoh is simply called king.³⁶ The Israelites (or Hebrews) in the story are oppressed slaves but have no religion until Moses discovers their god in Exod 3:6 (god of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) and calls on Pharaoh. How does one explain the rhetorical ploy that *the whole of Israel* was in Egypt? Exod 1:1: the house of Jacob, eleven houses, seventy heirs to Jacob (plus the two of Joseph): the whole lot. The verse about political change in Exod 1:8 is puzzling. The people of Israel are supposedly constituted as one, 1:9. The reality of the seventh to sixth centuries was different: the people were not united, yet submitted to the same horrible history, with a common anchor in the faith in YHWH. It was not only an elite movement. Nothing could be done without the people, who may have had the stronger belief. How did the faith (trust) in Exodus salvation and covenant story spread among the people? The role of Levites (and priests) must have been the *major* force, as Assmann and others have suggested. But how and why did they themselves have this conviction? One element of the answer may have been the previous (prophetic) criticism of multiple alliances (necessarily struck with other gods), which may have been strong among elite landowners as well as commoners. The other element could have been the oppression at the hand of political and military societies that were clearly non-yahwistic and polytheistic. Their victories could only be explained from inside Israel by YHWH’s will (anger, punishment, salvation).]

So, a covenant between one god out of many with one people out of many?³⁷ Not quite so dramatic. This god out of many has more power and

34. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 263.

35. *Ibid.*, 265.

36. Check where king, where pharaoh.

37. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 265.

uses other powers to his ends. On images: my first thought is that images and statuary were removed in war. Second thought: this divinity enjoys a much greater roaming space and realm and is at a greater distance from his people. The “presence” is now a masked image, behind a cloud (ארפל or ענן), or behind a veil (Moses’ and temple’s). So the expression “all images” refers to other gods? It will get the broadest of understandings in Islam, a fairly narrow one in Judaism (depending on the period and context), a very narrow one in Christianity where the divinity is conceived of as fundamentally the *word*.

The covenant cannot have *mediations*.³⁸ Assmann defends “zeal” or “jealousy” as part of divine love... This is completely understandable as projection of reactions to the situation of the seventh to fifth centuries, but there is no reason to defend it on theological grounds.

The Deuteronomy is stronger than Exodus in promoting Sabbath rest.³⁹ Deut connects it to the liberation from Egypt and turns the Sabbath into the sign of the new society. The Exodus version attaches sabbath to divine creation and rest, makes it part of the cosmic order, and turns it into *imitatio dei*. Hence the work of six days would be an echo of creation.⁴⁰ In Exodus, Sabbath is part of a new myth, with human creation and rest framed as an imitation of divine creation and rest. It would give meaning and dignity to life. But again: what of work as punishment? And isn’t Gen 1 actually about a society without work? And more problematic: the divinity doesn’t work, he creates or makes, and the human pair is to lord it over other parts of the creation.

Okay, the non-priestly Deuteronomy version goes in the opposite direction.⁴¹ Oppression and slavery were historical realities, not mythical ones, and they or the liberation from them were not to be forgotten. P is more recent than Dt. P’s interests from Gen to Ex are: the world’s and people’s development, with the creation of the world and that of the temple as book-

38. For political and cultural reasons: that is how kingship functioned, *by managing presence of authority at a distance*. Assmann addresses this question elsewhere: ASSMANN, *Of God and gods*.

39. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 267.

40. Think about this issue. Note the Babylonian rituals attached to new moons. Note also the punishment attached to work in Gen 2–3: why was that element kept? In Exodus, the priestly version is indeed quite different from the version in Deut. Did “work” here get new meaning? Did this story of Gen 1–2 precede the writing of Exodus or come about at the same time?

41. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 268.

ends. Assmann notes the Deuteronomic bend of Jesus in Mark 2:27–28 (καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· Τὸ σάββατον διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐγένετο καὶ οὐχ ὁ ἄνθρωπος διὰ τὸ σάββατον· ὥστε κύριός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τοῦ σαββάτου.). The Sabbath was unique in the ancient world.⁴² The word comes from *shab/pattu*, full moon festival in Babylonia. It is an exilic development in Israel (see Albertz). The Sabbath *command* is not simply a suspension of work, it is a command *not* to work. It is framed as a positive command, however: Remember or keep! Respect! It was the most significant command in the shaping of Judaism.⁴³ The Sabbath became a kind of portable temple.⁴⁴ Note that the first commands in the ten commandments come with commentary, as would befit new laws, whereas the “social duties” do not need any justification.

Assmann tackles head on the issue of *herem* war and violence.⁴⁵ Both Exodus and Deuteronomy share the notion. Is (was) violence exacerbated by monotheistic faith? Moderns have finally felt that they need to re-evaluate wars of conquest (their own long series of...) and have reflected back on the *herem* wars declared on Canaanites as if it still concerned them. The modern passion in this question is driven by the feeling that religion must be separated from war. Both modern believers and non-believers agree on as much. Religious wars of the past are condemned as an abomination (a reversal of *herem*!) by Enlightenment critics, or explained on another basis by modern believers who have swallowed the historical bug. So, for instance, Canaanites can be explained as recent interlopers who were much less deserving of life than older Israelite claimants (this is Michaelis’ thesis), or they were simply so far behind civilization’s marks that they deserved to disappear (Herder). Both of these recent avenues reflect notions of peoples and races that would have a long, noxious posterity. Or even better, Israelites were simply doing what the divinity wanted... All options are still alive in the modern Israeli-Palestinian conflict.⁴⁶

On the faithful god of Deut 7:6, אֱלֹהֵי הַנְּאֻמִּים. Faith or trust are the central value of such passages. [NB the religious declarations on neighboring peoples could not be put in practice, in reality, and it was safe to howl after Canaanites: not a mythic brand, but quite a product of the imagination, it

42. On the history of the Sabbath, see GRUND, *Die Entstehung des Sabbats*.

43. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 269–70: follows Benno Jacob.

44. GRUND, *Die Entstehung des Sabbats*, 185.

45. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 278–79.

46. ILANY, “From divine commandment to political act.”

seems] I agree that the rhetoric of elimination is partly to be explained by the cultural situation of competition in the empire(s). The notions of enmity and friendship were transformed and hardened by the new definition of divinity and relationship to him.

The context of the sharp, aggressive exclusive attitude was shared by Deut and Exod.⁴⁷ The religious aspect explains the conflict, as the re-structured faith finds it necessary to separate itself from customs that were its own or close to its own in pre-exilic Israel, especially under the kings.⁴⁸ This was especially true of returning groups who found it essential to avoid mixing in order to redefine identity. The expressions of violence can be understood or excused—from the easily demanding modern point of view—as the will to gain self-respect and resist culturally and religiously the oppression at the hands of powerful kingdoms.⁴⁹ Yet, what of the economic aspects, namely, the moral authority over access to YHWH—corporately defined, though not by king—but nevertheless critical?⁵⁰ So, I agree, violence was the cost of an “energetic and finally successful search for a refoundation of Israel after the catastrophe.”⁵¹

[NB the fact that this kind of violence was absolutely impossible against the new masters may explain a transfer of hostility against neighbors, however theoretical it was (as EzNeh indicates). The stories of rebellion in the desert against Moses’ authority were not fanciful in this regard: dignity or safety, food, and water? Order in the provinces was paramount (framed as demonstrable trust, by the way). In other words, the enmity triggered by the separation of “friend and enemy” could only be exercised toward close neighbors, insiders really. They were not needed as potential help or friends

47. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 280.

48. See ACKERMAN, *Under every green tree*, however, about the complexity of practices and beliefs. Exodus and Deuteronomy were the ideals of elites and these new beliefs and practices spread only slowly?

49. This is what the elites shared with the “people,” and made the story of Exodus the only possible myth or “program.”

50. There was no attempt by Assyrian, Babylonian, or Persian kings to change culture and religion, as Holloway and several other writers have shown. I do not think the cultural pressure came from those kingdoms. Or rather, the economic and military pressure of empires needed at least the tacit help of local elites and religious bodies (priests and scribes). The separation from immediate neighbors continued an older criticism (the YHWH movement) that had social and economic reasons. It also provided increasing authority and even political cover to elite groups whose interest in the community at large (write “large” as a faith open to northern Israelites) reinforced their own social and economic interests.

51. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 280.

as they could be under kings. In the new dispensation, they were enemies or potential enemies, not potential friends. Yet, how does one explain the status of the *toshav* and the *gêr*?] So yes, polarization was one way of self-defining the people, and there was no need for an indolent god.

In chapter 9, Assmann raises the religious dimension of the question of belief vs unbelief, whereas M. Walzer gave a political interpretation.⁵² I think the proper approach is not to separate the political and religious interpretations. The question of trust, especially in enduring (secular) imperial conditions, remained a paramount aspect of daily life.⁵³

FRIDAY, 10 MARCH 2017

One needs to think about the issue of mutual aid in exilic and post-exilic situations. Nehemiah 5 is only one of the elements that needs to be evaluated. Another one is the list of so-called social laws, no matter the practice. Did the priestly and landowning circles share with the rest of the people not simply a negative desire to separate themselves from other nations on a new basis, but also a positive one in this new revolutionary project, as Assmann has it? This would be for three main reasons, as far as I can tell:

1. to endure in dignity, that is, to continue to keep to customs and beliefs that were deeply shared and which exile showed to be different from those of other peoples (dignity stemming in this case from values chosen on their own terms).
2. for elites to retain a type of authority and mediating power that would be needed by the imperial powers, or be useful to them, yet could not be easily targeted or abused (because of their corporate nature).
3. to protect the people from abuses of power by re-threading or basing networks of trust on a new basis. Practically speaking: mutual aid made it difficult for outsiders (governors primarily) to penetrate local society. Trust was needed at all levels because of the distances, the different cultural conditions, and the difficulty of measuring economic outputs.

Further note: How broadly and quickly were the books of *Exodus and *Deuteronomy accepted in the sixth to fourth centuries?⁵⁴ I assume they

52. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 306–7; see WALZER, *Exodus and revolution*

53. On trust and power, see LUHMANN, *Trust and power*; and HOSKING, *Trust: a history*. See my journal for 2015, 25 October.

54. Start with CARR, *The formation of the Hebrew Bible*.

were authored and circulated by very small groups at the beginning. In this case, did the conditions seen by Van den Toorn as essential to the re-writing process apply and how so? These conditions were the existence of a motive, the decision or protection of authority (normally a king), and a practical occasion (such as the wearing out and disintegration of a scroll, or more radically, come to think of it, its loss or purported loss). The motive was clearly there: to provide both an explanation of the exiles' situation and reason to hope, with a promise of renewal or re-foundation. The authority, however, could not be the king or the Achaemenids (unless one accepts that the Persian administration wanted the "law" properly edited and copied). Could it be divine authority and its supernatural need for revelation? What was the occasion? On the problem of dating the origin of the main books of the Hebrew Bible, and their late dissemination, see my notes and remarks in Journal 2009, under Schenker, Toorn, etc. These texts became scripture only much later (late Persian or early Hellenistic period). A question that it will be important to consider is the role of the temple in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE in shaping the holiness of people, priests, calendar, and texts, by contiguity or metonymy.

Final reflection on Deut and the law.⁵⁵ Exod 21:12 to 23:9 is a collection of laws that it was the prerogative of kings previously to define, proclaim, and enact or defend (I would add cultic laws). Since De Wette in 1806–7, it is accepted by most that the book found during repair work on the temple was the Deuteronomy. This however does not mean that the present book of Deut or even an older version of it is to be dated to 622 BCE. Both the date and the story can be a pious fiction. In any case, Deut represents accepted revelation and a theologized idea of justice. This book effects the passage from royal to divine justice. Whereas royal justice and kings' codes were ad hoc constructions and proclamations (eminently guarded domain of kings), divine law is universal and eternal. Nothing is to be added or removed, as Deut 4:2 proclaims, with a change of voice (the lord's commands vs I):
 תִּסְפוּ עַל־הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם וְלֹא תִגְרְעוּ מִמֶּנּוּ לְשֹׁמֵר אֶת־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
 אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם.

Assmann reviews at length the repeated revolts and mutinies recounted in Exodus and Numbers. My own views follow, in response to his. The worst rebellions are not those brought about by hunger or thirst but those caused by political strife, such as Num 14:2–4 and Num 15:39–16:3. The first revolt involves everyone against Moses and Aaron and is based on the fear

55. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 290.

of military destruction. What the people wish for is a leader that would take them back to slavery in Egypt. The second story is potentially a more dangerous example (from the elites' or priests' point of view) as it involves self-appointed groups that claim authority by questioning Moses' and Aaron's. The solution to the first story's problem is political and worldly: destruction and fear, relenting after Moses' intercession, then a mix of mercy and radical punishment. The punishment and destruction of the mutinous groups in the second story are even more extensive. The power of the "revolutionary" state cannot be divided.⁵⁶ Assmann's discussion of Moses' death and burial outside of the promised land is on the mark: a) no further role as law mediator once it is complete (no change); b) no grave known, and therefore no relic cult for the super-mediator, and I add no descendance either (though one could argue that the Aaronides are such). As Assmann says, the story implies that the divine presence accessible through temple and text were enough.⁵⁷ This idea of a divinity that dwelled in the land may have entailed the thought that there could not be any further imparting of the divine will via a mediator who would likewise live in the land.⁵⁸

Assmann speaks of a problem of belief and unbelief, but the stories of rebellion in the book of Numbers are actually reflecting the political dangers of being left without kings or clear mediators after the kings' demise. The nature of the stories indicates to me that the political discussions priestly groups of the sixth or fifth centuries could have about their situation were not about democracy as Assmann argued before (page xx?) when discussing the revolutionary transformation of the relationship of the people with the divinity, but about the proper mediation between an authority considered to be invisible and his people. These were expected to be holy to be sure—that is, without defect or failure—, but still needed to be led like a lost flock throughout the story. This is not a revolutionary metaphor at all but a classic way that kings had and have of representing people under their authority. It seems to me that priests and elites hadn't moved very far from a monarchic regime. The mediation, though invisible in name and erased from the stories, had concrete instantiations that could

56. In the story. What authority could actually be exercised under the Achaemenids, after the temple was rebuilt in Jerusalem?

57. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 318. His parallel with Solon who left Athens for ten years after his radical reforms is off the mark, I feel. The real originators of Exod 20–23 were not gone, nor were their descendants by kinship or status.

58. End of prophecy, therefore. See ANTHONIOZ, *Le prophétisme biblique: de l'idéal à la réalité*.

cause repeated problems. The looming question of trust, so fundamental in all political regimes, was indeed completely reshaped by the Exodus and Torah writers. What was revolutionary, however, was not the doing away with kings since they were replaced by other authorities (who had to be careful not to be claimants), it was the possibility presented to every believing member of the covenant to continue to live a life of dignity and reciprocal responsibility. This new, meaningful life was guaranteed by the communal approach via temple and scripture of a god who, while dwelling among them, was universal and powerful enough to be the mover of the chaotic history both Israel and Judah were going through.

SATURDAY, 11 MARCH 2017

Three years ago, JF passed away at his desk. I'm 71 today, another prime, and feeling more strongly this sense of pouring out my body into streams of letters. We went out for lunch to "Sweet Lorraine" with Dale and Gail. Tonight, we are having dinner with Dale, Gail, and David at Rémi's and Leslie's. Pete Seeger is on and Callum is intently listening at his song on whaling.

Françoise-Thérèse called today. She is in her new home in La Roche, a comfortable apartment with three little rooms and a terrasse, close to friends and family. They (she, Aziliz, Paco, and Alana) are going to the Nice area ("arrière-pays") next week and visit François Éliès who lives in this region with his companion and children. He calls regularly and considers Françoise-Thérèse and Benoît his in-laws. She also found a handyman who will finish the tiles and woodwork in her Runan house.

SUNDAY, 12 MARCH 2017

Monotheism was the secret engine of history for Goethe.⁵⁹ It led to intolerance, conflict, opposition and violent repression, still according to Goethe after Hume. For Goethe, the history of unbelief began with the story of Exodus.

Freud:⁶⁰ The central tenet of Freud's idea of the beginning of all religions was that it consisted of the guilt and need for reconciliation that arose out of the murder of the father figure.⁶¹ This was applied to biblical mono-

59. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 324.

60. *Ibid.*, 327–29.

61. Spelled out in *Totem und Tabu*, 1913.

ing of books, the destruction of Jewish places, and the destruction of Torah scrolls, but not of the Christian bibles. And it is not monotheism that was the main drive behind the Shoah or other horrors, but the fact that its demands, via the gospels, were unbearable, and its living representatives (in negative image) reminders to be gotten rid of.

MONDAY, 13 MARCH 2017

Three to four inches of snow this morning. “Znow” said Lucie. We learned today that Rémi “matched.” He will learn Friday where he’ll be for his internal medicine year—a requirement of all dermatology departments—and where he’ll do his specialty. For the single year of general medicine, he applied to hospitals in the area. It will give them time to prepare for the move they’ll presumably have to do in a little more than a year.

TUESDAY, 14 MARCH 2017

Assmann (cont.) comments on Num 9:15–20.⁶³ YHWH’s presence among the children of Israel means that traditional means of privileged access to the divinity were not anymore necessary: dreams, apparitions, revelations. To me, it is the mobility and the fact it is presented as happening in the desert, outside of YHWH’s land that is remarkable. This presence is modulated as a combined *מִשְׁכָּן* and *אֹהֶל הָעֵדוּת*, habitation or dwelling and tent of witnessing, both together forming the holy temple, *הַמִּקְדָּשׁ*. I add that both roots of *mishkan* and *’ohel* point to the mobility associated with tents, but the verbal noun *mishkan* has taken over some fixity, as Num 9 makes clear which associates it with staying, or dwelling, inhabiting. Its meaning remains short of the *bayit* and the *moshav* (from *yashav*, to sit), enthronement.⁶⁴

Assmann remarks that the Exodus myth was at home in northern Israel—with the notion of *mishkan* and *’ohel*—while the Zion royal ideology characterized Juda.⁶⁵ The story presents the desert’s mobile holy tent as original and preceding the real *fixed* temple of history to which the kingdom was attached. Of course, the reverse was the case. We have evidence of the same radical move being made in Ezekiel, which Assmann does not use in this regard. The *shekhinah* theology, Assmann writes (after

63. *Ibid.*, 354.

64. Assmann notes that the Semitic root *shakhan* was borrowed into Greek as *σκηνή* for tent, hut, stage.

65. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 355.

Janowski et al) is much more recent than the Zion theology—which may date to the tenth and ninth centuries—and is a transformative consequence of the loss of state, city, and temple.⁶⁶

Assmann doesn't use Ezekiel much, surprisingly, since it is where these themes of mobility of divine presence, departure and appearance outside its holy residence, desert, and Egypt appear. Other writers venture comparisons between Exodus and Ezekiel, as if they had been written centuries apart, and without realizing Ezekiel makes sense not only as very close in themes but in historical background to the book of Exodus.⁶⁷ In particular, Idestrom (after McKeating) doesn't see that the theme of divine mobility, though a classic one, is given extraordinary importance in both Ezekiel and Exodus and needs to be explained as a single phenomenon and interpretation.⁶⁸ Idestrom, however, raises the issue of the dating of the books of Exodus and Ezekiel in her conclusion.⁶⁹ She rejects the possible anteriority of Ezekiel over the priestly source of Exodus, suggested by LUST.⁷⁰ She also presents Zimmerli's suggestion that both P and Ezekiel drew on a common priestly tradition, and the closely related view of McKeating.⁷¹ Review this relationship of Ezekiel to Exodus, especially Ezek 20 and 23, after Zimmerli.⁷² Review also the problem of Ezek 40–48, the program of restoration particularly studied by Levenson.⁷³ Exodus 20–24 and Ezek 40–48 (the only laws in the Bible not placed in the mouth of Moses, as noted by Levenson) are closely related: see BLENKINSOPP.⁷⁴

WEDNESDAY, 15 MARCH 2017

Hebrews 11:1: "Ἔστιν δὲ πίστις ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων. *Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.* Perfectly rational definition of any religion, of any ideology promising delayed gratification. Now, if one could show how this works in the day-to-day relationships of people and why it is necessary to have "di-

66. Assmann refers to JANOWSKI, "Ich will in eurer Mitte wohnen."

67. IDESTROM, "Echoes of the book of Exodus in Ezekiel."

68. *Ibid.*, 500.

69. *Ibid.*, 506.

70. LUST, "Exodus 6: 2-8 and Ezekiel.□."

71. ZIMMERLI, *Ezekiel 1: A commentary on the book of the prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, 52.

72. *Ibid.*

73. LEVENSON, *Theology of the program of restoration of Ezekiel 40-48*.

74. BLENKINSOPP, *Ezekiel*.

vine” guarantees (or at the very least why secular guarantees are not sufficient).

New books on the Frankfurt School, Habermas, and Adorno, reviewed by Samuel Freeman in the March 23, 2017 *NYRB* (pages 63–64). What is the nature of the alienation of workers who do not own or control “the means of production?” They are alienated from their labor, the products, other people (their neighbors), from themselves? How can this be? How can it be hidden from those who work, or accepted by them? In ancient society, the masking was made by a religion of salvation and punishment. When reading Exod 32 on the episode of the Golden Calf, I’m reminded of a sentence in W. Benjamin’s thesis VII: *Es ist niemals ein Dokument der Kultur, ohne zugleich ein solches der Barbarei zu sein.*

One may condemn the cultural industry from a safe distance as Adorno and others did, but for what purpose? Or more broadly one may criticize our alleged freedom to choose food, clothing, housing, work, transportation, health, education, pleasures, as being ersatz, illusions... I do agree with Adorno’s criticism of the modern ideology of the self and its related claims on authenticity at the hands of Heidegger or Sartre. The social realities, now and then, are to be taken much more seriously. Historical circumstances and material or social realities play a much more important role than is usually tolerated in theories of the formation of consciousness. The self’s constitution of reality is not a free game, as if it was a super-agent that eventually tosses the dice.

Theoretical discussions of capitalism bring me back again and again to the possibilities opened by our on-going economic and technical development. In brief, we are freed from Egypt, that is, from the shackles of a very constraining society in which survival is everything for the group, be it village, family, nation. Hundreds of million of people are being led out of Egypt in that sense and taken to the anonymity and freedom of large cities where their sense of value and fidelity to kin and friends can still be exercised for a while, until they or their children cave in and serve ... the golden calf. One would like to believe that modern capitalism is not by itself a moral corruptor and further believe that it is possible to escape the “emptiness of consumerism” and save “true human values” from the corrosion of desires that are freed from moral judgment and made to serve the machinery, à la Ayn Rand, Ryan Paul, or Trump. The high road would be to see beyond appearances (top of Sinai, beyond the clouds, or long painful meditation in the desert) and peel away what is presented as a perfect exchange of value symbols. It would be to reexamine needs, reshape demand and production,

and rebuild the exchange on an authentic basis.

Habermas, according to this article, chose communication and discourse rather than labor as the distinctive feature of humanity. I don't see a need to rank capacities that are of the same nature and, with Gagnepain, I would add as belonging to the same plane our capacities to suspend, restructure, and re-invest structure person and value, over and over again.

We just saw *Ma vie de courgette* at the Royal Oak cinema, a remarkable film that made me think of François' children and Amy's students.

THURSDAY, 16 MARCH 2017

Assmann cont. Another innovation was the change from a case-by-case closeness to God, as in the patriarchal stories, to a permanent presence that was formalized by the existence of a sanctuary, priesthood, and cult. This seems very close to other peoples' practices, or a continuation, except for two differences: a) no king is in charge of defending ritual laws and coopting the "powers", and b) the self-criticism of the state institution is embedded in the story. No image, no name even, no capitalization of metal and wealth in metallic form.⁷⁵ The divinity continues or rather expands its role at the center of the society, in space and time (though both temple cult and Sabbath take a new dimension). But there is still a table of sacrifices, furniture, an image of absence in a separated room (holy of holies), and a calendar. In the stories about patriarchal times, there are altars and sacrifices but no temples.⁷⁶

Sanctuary, priesthood, and cult were an *innovation*, says Assmann.⁷⁷ So that kingship will then be presented as an "act of normalization" in regard to other nations in 1 Sam 8:5.⁷⁸

75. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 355.

76. At least not obvious, but the allusions in Gen 22 are clearly focussing on Jerusalem.

77. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 356. In this sense, there is a continuation of everything we know about ancient agrarian societies, and a return to what existed before the end of the palace-temple institutions, but on a new basis.

78. gh: On the face of it, it would have been counter-intuitive to present sanctuary, priesthood, cult, as innovations under any imperial regime concerned about local political leadership. How could something so fundamental to ancient political authority be presented as something new under the Achaemenids? All ancient regimes tried their hardest to keep the "old" going or to re-found it. The solution to this problem is that the Moses' story places the basic events of Israel's identity and structure in hoary antiquity. It makes everything original and the source of everything else by virtue of being bound to a Egypt. Hence perhaps the unnamng of the Pharaoh, which has puzzled commentators occasionally. Cynical: Egyptian archives could not or would not be consulted to check the claims,

In the priestly story, the temple has no precedent except the *creation* in Gen 1–2:3a.⁷⁹ The construction of a fixed abode is even delayed and removed from royal prerogatives as much as feasible (gh: the mythic Solomon is tolerated for it). I agree with Janowski and Assmann: P aims to bring divine presence closer to people, without king intermediaries (controllers), without prophets (attached mostly to kings), as a permanent in-dwelling presence. Yet, it is still a dialectics of presence and absence, with both terms deeper or more encompassing than ever, managed from that point on by priests. The Biblical evidence is clear (Ezekiel, Numbers, and Leviticus) that priests' material conditions were considerably improved after the exilic period.⁸⁰ Both creation and tabernacle (in Exodus) share a number of structural features (six days and a seventh, all work completed, Moses sees the work, etc.).⁸¹

Why did this “true” religion differ so little from heathenism (or from “that of the nations?”).⁸² Am I disconcerted by the notion of *in-dwelling* (that is, closeness, binding of divinities to locality)? On the contrary. It is highly conditional, first of all. Secondly, priests and elites were limited in the changes they could bring. It is not local democracy that they are bringing or shaping, especially given their situation in the Persian empire. Indeed, as A. writes—and I have written before—there is an intermediary other than the king, and that is the Levites (Num 18:22), as well as the temple, cult, etc. even the *torah* is an intermediary. *Egalitäre Ideal eines « Königreiches von Priestern »*:⁸³ Hardly, as A. recognizes: there is a hierarchical principle still at work.⁸⁴

Discussion of heathenism or *Heidentum*.⁸⁵ It is a cult of inworldly, im-

while Cuneiform archives could?

79. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 356–57.

80. See de Vaux in his *Institutions of the Old Testament* on this, as well as Schürer, vol. 2.

81. Surprisingly, Assmann does not ask why P presents creation and temple in this way, as bookends to its story. It does take care of a political problem: justifying temple without palace or kings, while embedding it in a most ancient story reaching back to the origins of the world or the old (failed) wisdom of Egypt.

82. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 358.

83. *Ibid.*

84. With substantial benefits in terms of dignity, power, and economic subsistence, as I suggest in the previous paragraph. Assmann does not address this issue at all, though he mentions Fried and others.

85. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 359. Etymology of “heathen” not settled, according to *OED*. Possible origin in Greek *ethnos*, via Armenian, which scholarship has shown influenced Ulfilas, and passed from Gothic into other Germanic and Saxon tribes where the word

manent, local deities.⁸⁶ YHWH in the sanctuary full of his *kavod*, is concrete, visible and manifest (symbols as Pascal would say). Divine demands are quite concrete, בתוך בני ישראל, not on top of Sinai or in heaven. *This contradicts the notion of an image-less, invisible, transcendent divinity.* Lots of figures and materials! Where is the difference?

Assmann sees the difference in the particular conditions that the divinity has required for his in-dwelling.⁸⁷ These conditions were: a) the holiness of the life-changing statutes to be kept to form a “kingdom of priests;” Rules of purity and obedience of commands...⁸⁸ A sort of *unio mystica* was being conceived?⁸⁹ b) the other condition is absolute fidelity.⁹⁰ The story of the Golden Calf makes this clear.

The golden calf represents people’s attempt to ensure divine proximity on their own terms.⁹¹ Moses gone, the contact with the divinity is lost, there is a need for sacrifices (making the divinity), rejoicing, etc. The cult of forbidden images is equivalent to apostasy.⁹² Note that Exod 32 has “your gods” in the plural (prudence). Summary of religion in this chapter: image of needed intermediary of power (steer), altar of sacrifices, and feast. Exod 32:26–29, one of the prooftexts used to bind violence to monotheism.⁹³ Fidelity to the covenant preempts kin relationships (so do material interests, as David or Herod show).

Only the memory of real suffering has staying power (Nietzsche). Assmann does not remark on the fact that Moses’ call for destruction goes to the Levites, a kin system. It looks like them vs the people: levites as holy

appears everywhere with the meaning of *paganus*. The connection with “heath”, peoples living on the heath, was made at some undefined point.

86. I’m reminded of the dressing of the statue of Mary in the Guingamp basilique: local women were clothing, washing, dressing the statue. The question is that given a dialectics of presence and absence at all levels of development of a person and society, how is one to describe the particular formation of the exilic and post-exilic period, and why it was peculiar to Judah and Israel?

87. But we do know that other gods could become unhappy with their care too, at the hands of kings, and migrate, at least temporarily.

88. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 360. I note that rules of purity may still involve social ranking.

89. No, the distance and means of presence were kept and still managed, just differently, with different mediations. It was not so much idealistic and utopic as a practical answer to a condition of servitude and threatened disappearance that would indeed threaten priests who already had a sort of central definition under the later kings.

90. I note that this was exactly what Achaemenid kings required of their elites or agents.

91. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 362.

92. *Ibid.*, 363.

93. *Ibid.*, 365.

warriors, though only within their own nation.⁹⁴ On the steer image in Bethel, see UEHLINGER.⁹⁵ YHWH was not only an astral, weather symbol, but also lord of state, kingship, and land. But was it bound to the Exodus liberation theology? Anyway, it was abandoned in post-exilic time, when the lord of the land was the king of kings. YHWH became the lord of the world, covenanted to Israel.

A. does not make much of the passage about Moses' request to see the divinity face to face (Exod 33:20).⁹⁶ This passage is about the new form that the intermediaries between the transcendent divinity and its immanent appearances will take. Formally, little has changed, pace Assmann.

On the formula, רב חסד ואמת.⁹⁷ See also Num 14:18; Ps 86:15; Ps 103:8; Jonah 4:2; Joel 2:13. The last word is translated as *fidelity* as well as *truth*. The author seems to force things, given his elimination of "covenant of truth" as the intolerant and more violent aspect of monotheism, when he tries to show as here that in "biblical theology," *faith* and *truth* correspond. Of course they do, and not simply in biblical theology, but in the deep, etymological sense of truth in English, as well as אמת in Hebrew, which goes back to the notion of steadfastness, duration, in other words fidelity as well as truth as in true to one's word, and especially in the built-in and assumed truth of whatever one "believes" in.

Discussion of a "book of the temple."⁹⁸ The comparison of Ezek 40–48 to Exod 25–40 by Bark.⁹⁹ Assmann thinks of the post 720–670 period in Egypt (four Assyrian invasions) as background to the "book of temple" that would be similar to Exod 25–40. The P book is edited (?) at the end of the sixth century, with the third part of Exodus projecting the new foundation.¹⁰⁰ There is a double modeling: the image of the model shown to Moses by the divinity, influenced by the Solomon's temple (also a literary development), and now behind the reconstruction. Justifications of the situation? Only the people's guilt could be considered (not that of the kings in Exodus... except as extensions of Pharaoh): either sins, forgetting of the laws (DtH) or idolatry (by the priesthood and P, Hosea, Ezekiel).

94. Special corps as in Deut 33:8–9.

95. UEHLINGER, "Exodus, Stierbild und biblisches Kultbildverbot."

96. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 372.

97. *Ibid.*, 373.

98. *Ibid.*, 382–87.

99. BARK, *Ein Heiligtum im Kopf der Leser*.

100. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 386.

Assmann's conclusion:¹⁰¹

1. **On narrative, historical and performative truth.** Today we are not in the position of Freud looking for a historical background for Moses. He is for us a fictional or literary figure and the question of his historicity or ethnicity can be laid to rest. He lives in the head and heart of people (not only Jews). The same goes for the story of the exodus. The reconstitution of its date, a fleeing, perhaps an annual commemoration, have little to do with the Exodus of the Bible. The proper question is about "the historical circumstances of its literary growth" (390) and even its enormous influence over centuries [gh: since Christianity started].

A fictional or literary approach of the story is not helpful either. Fiction is too period-bound and relaxed to entail the kind of transformative action that the story of Exodus has had until now. The literary approach, if it means an aesthetic sense, that doesn't befit the prophetic books (391). And even less the Torah part, which is to be understood as an unmediated revelation of divine will to Moses. This text founds Judaism (and other religions), which constitute a truth that doesn't depend upon archaeology.

A. adopts the concept of performative speech, which transforms reality in the performance itself of the story.¹⁰² The story telling provides a foundation in the making (391). It provides an identity.

2. **Revelation.** By this revelation, *Exodus* introduces a new thoroughgoing idea, not of the type characterized by its intermittent occurrence, as divinisation or other expressions of divine will (singular or plural). Rather it is meant for all times, for each and all. The absence of a Hebrew word (vs a discourse) for Revelation is not fundamental.¹⁰³ Five steps in the deployment of this revelation:
 - a) the name and the call of Moses at the burning bush;
 - b) the ten plagues as display of power and the miracle of the sea;

101. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 389–402.

102. gh: tautological? He doesn't speak here of liturgy, but my argument is that the major transformation of ideas came within the ritual Paschal enacting of the Exodus story for centuries done first at the Jerusalem's second temple, and much more importantly in thousands of churches, not in the knowledge or reading, even by exegetes or lawyers, of the book of Exodus.

103. As Assmann says, there is no word for freedom either though the story of the exodus is first of all about being freed from slavery.

- c) the revelation of the law and the covenant at Sinai;
- d) the revelation of the tent sanctuary;
- e) revelation and renewal of covenant after the crisis;

The first two occur in Babylonia and Egyptian political regimes. The third one, which presents a secular law code and customs as a direct divine revelation, without king or prophet, is entirely new and without parallels (393). This central act places the life and constitution of a people at the level of absolute, eternal truth. This proclamation is not directed to Moses but the people.¹⁰⁴ The theophany underlines the directedness of the revelation (not really via Moses). The three great law codices depend on it: the covenant law, law of holiness (Lev), and Deuteronomic law. This act or revelation is as fundamental as the act of creation of the world by divine word.

How to make sense historically of this step? This is the real historical question, not the historicity of the exodus itself. It requires the end of the kingdom(s) (394), the loss of state, kingdom, and sovereignty.¹⁰⁵ The *pre-P didn't know the Sinai-pericopes. Its narrative must have spanned the stories of exodus or freedom, election, and entry into the promised land. They belong together. The story of the covenant at Sinai, however, probably didn't precede but took time to develop after the fall of the kingdoms. It helped maintain the identity of the exiled community in Babylonia, and could help with the search for some autonomy.¹⁰⁶

The theologizing of law must have taken a few decades (394).¹⁰⁷ Two distinct traits: the radical difference between royal proclamations of law and divine law, and the difference between law and wisdom (or ethics). The idea of divine justice existed, but conceived as ethics, social responsibility, care of the poor or afflicted, solidarity. For all the rest, kings were in charge (395). After the fall of the kingdoms, the royal law or jurisprudence was integrated into divine social and cultic law.

104. gh: hm, it is clearly for the people, yet one-directional; and not *basisdemokratischer Direktheit*.

105. gh: I would add temple and prior roles for priesthood and prophecy.

106. gh: Ezekiel's visions and re-imagining of the law and temple support the idea of a long development of the notion of direct revelation.

107. How many? Was the most important trigger the rebuilding of the temple ca. 520 BCE, or rather in the early fifth century? The question is disputed.

These transformations come from the goal of autonomy (395) under the conditions of Babylonian exile and Persian lordship. The solution found was to transform ancestral laws and customs as divine law. Autonomy passed through theonomy.¹⁰⁸

3. **Out of Egypt.** If the theme of *Exodus* is revelation, why then the theme of emigration from Egypt?¹⁰⁹ Because Egypt represents the past one leaves behind. This has three dimensions:
 - a) *Political* in that it is a revolution, i.e. violent exodus from sacral kingship and birth of the chosen people of God and new form of political society.¹¹⁰
 - b) *Religious*: the relinquishing of poly- or cosmo-theistic world based on the embedding of gods and men in the world,¹¹¹ and an irreversible movement toward a new form of symbiosis of transcendental and singular, the chosen people.¹¹²
 - c) The letting go of a given *mythic time order*, in which the past

108. gh: the ideological change and adaptation to new conditions had three potential aspects: a) it served to keep the people bound to each other on a new basis, including even northern Israelites (this because of the past shared history and theological evolution); b) it allowed an implicit critical view of the overlords' ideologies without threatening their immediate interests in any way; c) finally, it potentially redefined the ideology of an elite of priests who were in a new and challenging situation. They shared with other elites the criticism of past kingship at the same time that they were instrumental in helping with the subjection and tribute due their new overlords. Assmann's position, page 395, seems naïve: *Man war zwar Vasall des persischen Großkönigs, lebte aber doch in der Freiheit des göttlichen Gesetzes*. That would have been true perhaps for priestly group redefining themselves as in charge of the religious and political mediations. And perhaps it was perceived as a source of pride and dignity by the people who worshipped at the temple in Jerusalem, when they compared themselves to neighboring peoples in the Achaemenid kingdom.

109. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 395.

110. I note again that this "revolution" is imposed by history, and that the election of a people out of many nations indicates that a cosmic worldview has been assigned to that god.

111. Note the change in notion of sin from that point on.

112. I note also that these religious and political aspects were inseparable. I frame it differently: Exodus moves from a politico-religious order in which the political has long been masked by a religious ideology of divine presence managed by the palace, to its separation and therefore its critical status as a sphere of judgment by the god and its people. In other words, this is the reversed situation from the old ideology in which kings and/or gods did the judging. Assmann expresses this, quite unfortunately to my mind, as a move from *historia divina* to a *historia sacra*. The political aspect becomes separable. With Christianity, as Manent writes in his 2010 book, the problem will become even larger and deeper, as any citizen is under pressure to respond to two allegiances.

is in front, and the future “behind,” at the origin, toward a historical time (a destiny) with one’s future in front in the shape of a *promise*.

4. **Exodus as political myth and model for ethnogenesis.** Three aspects also (decidedly!): as emigration from an imperialistic state; as election for a special mission; and as occupation of a promised land. The Exodus myth [myth in the sense of a future turned into a perfect past] is the basic political motive behind nineteenth-century nation building, which is bound to the notion of ethnic delimitation and special purpose in the world.¹¹³ The idea of chosen-ness is somehow in play for every nationalist movement.¹¹⁴ In modern times, the national state became a theological idea, though often without the theos (but replaced by a hypostasis of the people). The idea preceded the state, whereas ancient kingdoms were consolidated as religious ideas (post-fabricated).¹¹⁵ No word for “people” in Egyptian, but two in Hebrew (however, this note by Assmann is questionable, as he reverses its direction in his argument about freedom or revelation: no word for this in Hebrew, yet a firm reality!).
5. **Exodus and monotheism.** The Exodus has deployed a fundamental myth of monotheism.¹¹⁶ A. insists again on the existence of two types of monotheism: the one in Exodus doesn’t deny the existence of other gods, to the contrary.¹¹⁷ Its leading idea is fidelity, loyalty to the liberator from Egyptian bondage. Other gods use those that they “freed” for their own service.¹¹⁸ This monotheism emerged out of the related ideas of *election* and *covenant*.¹¹⁹ Not the natural and uncan-

113. See Weber (*Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* 239) = WEBER, *Economy and society*, 241–45.

114. SMITH, *Chosen peoples. Sacred sources of national identity*.

115. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 398. Obvious in the structure of palaces and temples: see Assyria.

116. *Ibid.*, 399.

117. The idea of election or choice on the part of the people would lose its sense.

118. Assmann doesn’t expand on this anywhere that I see. Ancient kings spread the divine domaine (or distance)—including their capacities as liberators—in order to exploit people who didn’t fit into the local framework of clans and local reciprocity. They did this in parallel with their conquests of larger territories occupied by necessarily foreign peoples, or at least un-attached to the original conquering ethnos.

119. Hmm. Israelites chose $\Upsilon\eta\omega\eta$? Was there really a choice when history was so catastrophic? Or rather doesn’t the choice reside in the fact that Israelites didn’t succumb to the neighboring cultures and kept “faith” in their own god, for a number of reasons, regardless of appearances of failure?

cellable matter of creation but love (engagement?) between YHWH and people.¹²⁰ “The entrance in the covenant presupposes the exodus from something else.”¹²¹ I.e. a separation: exodus and covenant belong together. This is different from the notion of creation indeed. *Incipit exire qui incipit amare* (Augustine). I wonder now if this notion of chosen withdrawal and expectation (exodus) is not *also* the counterpart of the notion of expulsion we find in Genesis 3. Theologically, it allows the unending negotiation over punishment and hope in the actual politics of Israel.

Wrath and treason/sin are like shadows to light. The monotheism of fidelity has remained the dominant element in all kinds of developments in all Abrahamic religions.¹²²

The notion of creator, differently, precedes everything and makes all depend on it.¹²³ The old myths of Israelite cosmologies [supposed to exist. Scraps?] were reframed by P. But for Assmann, the meeting of Babylonian and even Persian theologies of creation influenced the priestly version.¹²⁴

No fidelity or wrath in Genesis.¹²⁵ Assmann compares the Egyptian idea of the “one god” from which everything has emerged (*hervorgegangen*). This is different from *created*. “Emergence” indeed means that everything has its place and that no freedom exists. The world *as is* precedes. *Creation* on the other hand allows a displacement and a

120. Note: the notion of creator as applied to Genesis implies a choice, with the creation of human beings in that story very different in spirit from that of Babylonian stories. See Romans 13:1–7 for how it might affect the citizen who believes in the one god.

121. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 399.

122. I am convinced that what is at stake is the dialectics of distance/absence and presence. Fidelity and truth are the rail-guides in this risky expansion without kings.

123. ASSMANN, *Exodus*, 400. But the cosmic myths of Mesopotamia and Egypt were very different from Genesis. The story in Genesis incorporates a tradition other than the priestly one. It is closer than Gen 1 to the cosmogonies of the neighboring peoples. But inserted (or kept) in a P framework such as given in Gen 1–2:4a, it becomes a story of choice also. A sort of reverse of Exodus, in that the expulsion and movement eastward from Eden is due to the choice of non-divine will. I’m pushing here, because Eden is a womb-like place, and the movement toward knowledge is that of a child exploring the world and separating from parents and home. “Sin” as a missed target and the better recognition of the “target” as such, as well as the possibility of better approximation, is constitutive of human life. BTW see new work on writing of Genesis, on history of traditions.

124. It is surprising that he does not see that the idea of an outside creator and of a different purpose for humans can be seen, as much as Exodus, as a counter myth.

125. Obedience to divine voice in Gen 2–3? Abraham in 12?

return without its being a replication or an absorption into the “one.” Perhaps the Egyptian theology of creation can be called a “cosmogonic monotheism.” The monotheism of Israelites, a late formation, was very different, even radically so. Assmann seems to think of the creator god as a superfetatory monotheism of truth that would have been an extension of the other monotheism, that of fidelity.¹²⁶ It would be an *absolute*.

The book of Exodus draws a narrative arc that leads from the worst misery to the highest form of election [with the nuptial metaphors in the background], from godlessness of Egyptian oppression (?) to unity with the god (?). For priests, instead of an entrance in the promised land (pursued in other books of Num and Josh), the next step was the tent-sanctuary, the entrance of YHWH into dwelling with and among his people (with a house, clearly, but with a story that could justify the dwelling as an action rather than a building). This was contrary to other cultures where gods resided in “god cities” [add gh: under the watchful eye of kings], and provided local and social order. In P, temple and cult were set as unmediated presence of the god.¹²⁷ Instead of a temple-city, there is tent and camp; instead of a fixed order, there is *mobility* and to be “en marche,” and there is direction (toward the promised land).¹²⁸ Instead of cult images, the living and in-dwelling of YHWH in the form of his glory among the people. Yes, but...

P combined Exodus, with its outward and inward movement, to the book of Genesis.¹²⁹ Both books form a grand arc from creation of the world to the temple as a second creation or its completion. The temple reflects the experience of the exile: a) by not being attached to a place (to a text?), but rather to a people who form the holy place, allowing YHWH to reside in them or among them [that is certainly the logic]; b) as sealed books, this YHWH also lives in the mind of the

126. To avoid the criticisms his first book was subjected to by theologians and especially Jewish scholars such as Richard Wontin of NYU or is it Columbia?

127. Temple? Priests? No kings were of course possible in the sixth century. See my other notes on mediation and its new forms.

128. Note that A. makes little of the fact that the people is defined before being in the land. Assmann thinks that all cultures have a sense of migratory origins and therefore does not see allochthony as actually revolutionary.

129. Inverse movement as I say above.

reader or listener and enables diasporic Judaism.¹³⁰

This concept of religion has spread and changed the world.¹³¹ Religion became ineluctably separate from culture (politics?). Greatest story with richest of consequences.

FRIDAY, 17 MARCH 2017

Leslie and Rémi went to Wayne School of Medicine's matching day event. Rémi got into his second choice residency program, in the department of dermatology at Washington University's school of medicine in St Louis. This year, he will be doing his transitional year at Henry Ford Hospital, ten minutes from Ferndale. We babysat the kids most of the day. They are in the hot tub at Gayle's and Dale's, while it's snowing.

Why was Egypt chosen as the focal point of a story of the remolding of politics and religion? A few ideas:

1. There were old Canaanite and perhaps Phoenician traditions circulating regarding Egypt's cruel domination. The best evidence would be iconographic.
2. Egypt represented more fully and distinctly than other kingdoms and cultures the mythic and cosmotheistic spirit that all ancient kingdoms shared in various ways. Egypt was *the* perfect touching stone for an analysis of exploitation, military interests, blood-thirsty royal house, and mind-spelling religion and culture (particularly its culture of ancestors).
3. Babylonia, Assyria, or Persia even more problematically, were too close historically and less recognizable as culturally integrated units to be *typical* enough.
4. Add to this the requirement of hoary antiquity as implying authority. The revisionist or revolutionary priests that wrote the story of Exodus do not (or cannot) do away with the basic logic of mythic thinking.)
5. More directly, there were episodic resurgences of Egypt's threatening and oppressive role from the end of the ninth century to the end of the seventh century. Add to this its numerous revolts against the

130. I would add a most important aspect: the importance of liturgical reenactment, as no amount of reading would change perceptions in the massive way paschal rituals have over centuries of practice.

131. Which would have been impossible without Jesus and the development of Christianity.

Achaemenid kingdom, and the possible cooptation by Judah of a anti-Egyptian role on the far-western border of Persia.¹³²

SATURDAY, 18 MARCH 2017

Flocons de neige épais depuis ce matin, les trottoirs couverts de neige fondante. J'ai dormi dans la chambre de Lucie ("overnight"). Elle se réveille vers 6h00, se rendort jusqu'à 7h15 environ, se parle ("whale," da ba da...), s'aperçoit que je suis dans la chambre et me tend les bras pour sortir de son petit lit. Elle avale à pleines cuillerées, de la main gauche, des flocons d'avoine préparés par Amy (Babi-sh), qu'elle aime beaucoup à cause des raisins secs coupés en petits morceaux.

I need to explain how *sacred kingship* worked in the past. Classical topic. One needs an account of temples, priests, prophecy, as practical ideology that builds and shapes the distance from the gods, the more to mediate their power in the present time for the "believers."¹³³ State and gods were equated (need other words). Examples are the king of Babylonia and Marduk (see Francfort, Holloway, etc.), the king of Assyria and Aššur. With passages and transactions as kingdoms expanded or changed populations. The gods themselves were cosmic forces, parts of the world. These forces were chosen because they represented order (or they were shaped in that direction). Egypt is a perfect example according to Assmann 397: cosmotheism, equation of god and world, immanence of divine forces in the world. Assmann does not explain at all the movement of transcendence one detects in the evolution of pantheons. Limited transcendence perhaps, before Exodus, but still dialectics of transcendence vs immanence. Inescapable even in Exodus.

Assmann concludes that the book of Exodus brought new ideas regarding god and man, man and society, and time and history. Indeed, Exodus and Genesis are revolutionary, though within limits...

132. I'm thinking of Fantalkin's thesis: FANTALKIN and TAL, "The canonization of the Pentateuch I," and FANTALKIN and TAL, "The canonization of the Pentateuch II."

133. The gods' transcendence and power are represented and emphasized by expenses that are capitalized out of the exploitation of labor of people who believe in these gods' power. Namely: those seeking a basic security in production and reproduction. In passing: reflect on the nature of myth; the golden age is at the origin, decrepitude in the future, so not cyclical repeats as much as regenerations that are never quite the same? The example of Augustus and the celebration by Horace and Vergil of his golden age is studied by SCHREIBER, *Weihnachtspolitik. Lukas 1-2 und das Goldene Zeitalter*, 30-32.

On autochthony and allochthony, see Assmann 398: I am surprised he does not see that defining the people qua people before they have a land is a remarkable step for people who have lost the land they presumably thought as having always been theirs (or not having had to ask themselves the question as property of land was highly dependent on the larger investment of labor made in a denser demography). He seems to think that all people thought of themselves as having recently migrated (he is perhaps influenced by the modern situation). The evidence from classical Greek stories is that they seem to know they have moved from somewhere else but talk of their land as an Ur-possession. See Loraux. The problematic Romans with their Aeneid and migration from Troy is pointing to the survival of an ancient divinized culture, not the revolutionary exodus of an enslaved people. The myth of Trojan origins takes a different meaning with late antiquity nations converted to Christianity...

SUNDAY, 19 MARCH 2017

Overnights again, with Lucie complaining several times during the night, perhaps because it was too hot?

MONDAY, 20 MARCH 2017

Last night, as I'm going back down after reading a book on trains to Callum and I hesitate a bit at the top of the stairs, he tells me from his bed, "Be careful, tadkozh." I answer that I'm always careful in stairs nowadays, especially steep ones, to which he responds, "I was just giving you advice, tadkozh." Today, another remarkable expression from him: we are together outside in the lot near the house. He is playing with the articulated shovel that is left there year round. He was attracted to it today because he has just seen tractors and mechanical shovels working in the large site near the market where he and Amy did light shopping. As I stand near him, he suddenly tells me, "I want to be alone. I would like a little bit more personal space." The adult formulations come shaped by the loving, supportive, and respectful rapport he has with Rémi and Leslie. He learns from their speech and its relation to the world.

Twice or three times today, he has talked about his regret we cannot stay longer. I find it admirable he can talk about it without being prompted, and that he is grasping much better the distances in space and time, while beginning to understand they can be bridged "in the heart."

The political world looks worse than ever. The liberal papers relentlessly pursue the mechanics of politics and revel in drawing attention to the absence of rules, the chaos, lying, corruption in the new government. Agreed, but where is the analysis of the situation in broader terms? It does give some space to analysis, for instance to defenders of a single payer health program. But it doesn't provide systematic study of the problem and clearly shies away from calling for such, exactly like the leadership of the democratic party.

TUESDAY, 21 MARCH 2017

Detroit airport and plane. The garbage men waved at children glued to the windows. Lucie waved back, but a bit late. The bright sun melts the last snow eddies (?). Callum comes down at 8am. I close our door so he can knock on it. He asks us several times to stay, another day? At one point his eyes water. We both are moved. I go to him and kiss him on the forehead, as Rémi did on mine earlier this morning on his way out to the hospital. I tell him we all live in each other's heads and hearts: a direction for the future, our small exodus toward a promised land...

Back home at 8pm after sharing a wonderful dinner (soup) with Susan and Noreen.

THURSDAY, 23 MARCH 2017

Checked mail, paid car insurance, and entered 2017 realistic figures for this year's budget. The lilac is in full bloom, the irises about to burst out. We missed our "facetime" session with Callum and Lucie tonight (about 5h30 when it is 8h30pm over there), because we were busy visiting with John and Sheilah Lynch, going to the bank to cancel unused credit cards (my "business" one), biking to the university to go and get a book on Roman law and Babatha's archive, etc.

SATURDAY, 25 MARCH 2017

Copy of my card for Amy today:

Dear love,

This twenty-fifth of March 2017, discreet violets have returned to the garden, as have irises, scented lilac, and creamy cala lilies. Luminous blossoms cover the library's cherry trees. You reappear every moment of the day and year. Your eyes, voice, spirit and name, they give joy and hope to all around you, eternally so.

TUESDAY, 28 MARCH 2017

I'm taking notes on Lemaire and others.¹³⁴ Lemaire is exceedingly precise and useful in specifying chronology of events and reigns, as well as calling attention to basic problems in the evolution of consciousness, such as monolatry and monotheism, relationship of outside communities to Judah, literacy in Elephantine, and social situation in al-Yahudu. His bibliographic notes are exhaustive and up to date (to the minute, including a number of items slated to appear).

Liz broke a clavicle in a biking accident during a race in San Dimas on Saturday (early afternoon?). Blaise was still racing at the time. She was taken to a local hospital's emergency room. The pain was taken care of (morphine?). At the time they thought the bone might need to be reset, but they decided to drive home that night. Soon, however, they decided to stay in a hotel room and drive home Sunday. They did that, got to an ER in the evening, and were able to secure an appointment for today with an orthopedic surgeon at Stanford. Blaise told us last night that he played the bad patient's role. Amy told him it was called being a patient's advocate. We are in touch with Pat and Mike. We are waiting to hear from Blaise.

FRIDAY, 31 MARCH 2017

NYT article on "The strange persistence of guilt" by David Brooks. Under the borrowed authority of MacIntyre's *After virtue*, he begins by bemoaning the lack of metaphysical underpinning of modern morality. By this he means, I think, the absence of an external authority (and presumably its human surrogates), as well as a will residing in that external agency. We have the feelings of right and wrong, but no organizing system left: no religion, and no enlightenment or post enlightenment ideology. He thinks it led to moral relativism. Yet, at the same time, he is surprised, or feigns to be, by two things: one, ethical issues generate great emotions, and two, a sense of guilt hasn't disappeared and actually seems to have become even more diffuse.

134. LEMAIRE, *Levantine epigraphy*.

4 April

SUNDAY, 2 APRIL 2017

Lots of weeding today, which is still doable but becoming harder. Reading of ELAYI.¹ The rural economy of Phoenician cities was still little known in 1990 (31). Note that the dating of sources is much less important when describing the economy. Sources, as always, are inscriptions, archaeology, and comparison.² I note an interesting remark, page 53, on the Tyrians having supposedly attached their statue of Apollo with χρυσᾶς σειράς (Diodorus Siculus 17.46.6). It might discourage the occasional robber but not invading armies (gh).

Did the Jerusalem temple have its own domain? In a 1969 presentation published in 1974, Doeve argued that Cyrus allowed Judah to become temple territory and that this situation explains the subsequent history of Judaea.³ Note that Roland Boer seems to accept that the Jerusalem temple, even before its conquest by Neo-Babylonians, controlled much land. The weakness of Doeve's argument is apparent from the comparisons and notes he makes in the first two pages of his essay. He speaks of all ancient temples in the Orient as owning domains that provided them with revenues.⁴ Later on, he supposes that the restoration of the temple meant that a fairly large share of the temple domain (?) was put at the disposal of the people.⁵ He gives no evidence such as contracts of rent, etc. The rest of the article details the subsequent history of the second temple without saying anything more

1. ELAYI, *Économie des cités phéniciennes sous l'empire perse*.

2. For Judaea and Israel, of course, one needs to add the Bible.

3. DOEVE, "Le domaine du temple de Jérusalem," 118–27.

4. *ibid.*, 118. Note 4 compares their situation also to that of the Church. But then he fatally weakens his own argument when he says that "le temple de Jérusalem s'appuya surtout sur les apports des croyants, tandis que beaucoup de temples païens eurent recours principalement à la possession et à l'exploitation de biens immeubles."

5. *Ibid.*, 120, n2.

about the nature of this supposed temple's domain.

When did the palace economy of Sidon and other Phoenician cities lose its prominence?⁶ *KAI* 14.2.18–20 provides clear evidence that the king's palace and city institutions were not separate. In the early seventh century, the royal economy of old was still in place. For the re-foundation of the temple, however, ca. 520, according to Esdras 3:7 (but isn't Esdras to be dated 398?), the political and economic authorities were not the Tyrian or Sidonian kings but the "Tyrians and Sidonians," for whom would be provided food, drink, and oil.

Under what conditions and how did the city emerge as a leading body? Was it mainly caused by the decrease of royal authority, itself brought about as a consequence of military loss and subjection to Assyrians, Neo-Babylonians, and Persians? Furthermore, partly in reaction to this major continuous pressure coming from Mesopotamia, did the colonization ventures in the western Mediterranean involve citizens much more because these projects couldn't be undertaken by the king alone?⁷ Elayi mentions the uncomfortable position of the king of Sidon and his mother under Persian power. They needed to show their power to the Achaemenid administration, while their real authority in Sidon was limited (I would add: precisely because they needed to show more power to the Persians than they actually could claim). Question therefore: were there changes in religious affairs? Did temple authorities, normally subject to kings, emancipate themselves as they did in Judah?

See Elat, note 11 page 61, about the impact of tribute and booty on peoples under Assyrian power.

Two large questions are touched upon at the end of the booklet. 1) the kind of sea commerce (export? import? transit?) and especially its role in the transport of agricultural production (grains from Phoenicia proper and even more from the neighboring areas: Galilee, Sharon, Judaea). 2) The evolution of the economy of Phoenician cities in the Persian period? Elayi concludes that a demographic and economic expansion took place. She gives the examples of Sidon and Tyre especially.

6. ELAYI, *Économie des cités phéniciennes sous l'empire perse*, 60–61.

7. See Bondi, quoted in *ibid.*, 61, n10.

TUESDAY, 4 APRIL 2017

Again, back to the question: did the Jerusalem temple, before or after the exile, control (own?) land?⁸ The most obvious texts concern the subsistence of priests-levites after the exile. These texts very generously provide them with a substantial portion of offerings and sacrifices made at the temple, while forbidding an “inheritance,” or land-holding. Was that meant globally, as an ideological part of the theoretical division of the land into tribal land-holdings, or were levites really prohibited from owning land locally as families? These texts are: Deut 18:1–8; Num 18:20; Ezek 44:28 about priests-levites: וְהִיתָה לָהֶם הַנְּחִלָּה אֲשֶׁר נִחַלְתֶּם וְאַחֲזֶה לְאַחֲתָנּוּ לָהֶם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר אֶחָזְקֶם. The Vulgate reads the verse as follows: *erit autem eis hereditas ego hereditas eorum et possessionem non dabitis eis in Israhel ego enim possessio eorum*. Two different words used also in LXX, corresponding to *hereditas* (κληρονομία) and *possession* (κατάσχεσις). Zadokite priests were part of all levites but somewhat separate, charged with greater closeness to YHWH, and entitled to a greater share of sacrifices and offerings, according to Num 18:17–18. See Lev 25:23–34 on the redemption of land property (including farmsteads in villages, considered like land, Lev 25:31). Houses in walled cities were subject to limited redemption rights, and could be owned in perpetuity. Levites, however, had permanent redemption rights on their houses (in their cities, no walls mentioned), and on the grazing lands “depending from their cities” (i.e. on which they had grazing rights?).

WEDNESDAY, 5 APRIL 2017

The support of Israelite temples, their control over land production, and the support of their occasional and permanent personnel (priests), were part of the religious and political structure. They changed as the structuring of power changed. Archaeology and textual analysis of the Bible suggest an outline with three main periods: a period without kings, from about 1200 to 950, the two to three centuries with kings, from 950 to about 600, and the period of incorporation into large kingdoms, from 600 to the Hasmonean

8. See remark about Doeve, previous day in this journal. See MILGROM, *Leviticus 23-27*, 2186–88. Note about Milgrom’s considerations on YHWH’s perpetual right to universal property or limited to the land of Israel: the expression of divine land rights, revolutionary for a subject former kingdom, was also a convenient way for priests to assert their own rights on the on-going production of crops and herds, while defending a complex popular ideology of punishment and protection (salvation and redemption).

period. For classic exposés of the evolution of temple installations and their priestly personnel, see de Vaux and Schürer's accounts.⁹

The first period was characterized by the modesty, diversity, and plurilocality of religious installations. See archaeological studies on temples in Arad, tell Dan, etc. Problem: thinness of evidence as specialists have recovered, so far, little evidence of religious buildings (hard to interpret). Were there priests? How can one avoid the romanticism of Robertson Smith and Wellhausen about the pristine nature of Israel's beginnings? Or is it the latter's Hegelianism one should bemoan? Hegel, à tout prendre, needs to be reconsidered. [Aparté: a short conversation with Nathaniel D. this morning reminds me that today's political discourse needs to examine or return to the question of human nature (and I don't mean its neurology, though this is part of it, but rather its potential as thinker, maker, and moral person), while returning to Marx and his dialectics. Macro and micro levels at once.]

The word "control" that I used above is not quite appropriate because it supposes a one-way, willful political direction, when the evidence indicates that things were actually more complicated. What I think needs to be described is the structuring of power along a continuum palace-temple that provides some good to its "people", in terms of perceived fertility and security.

THURSDAY, 6 APRIL 2017

Message de Françoise-Thérèse:

voici d'autres photos de mon appart je reviens de Runan où un ouvrier me fait qq travaux de finition dans la maison, installation poêle à bois, carrelage, et aussi des réparations dehors. Nous avons passé une très belle semaine à Breil sur Roya, tu peux visionner un album photo sur le site "l'oeil de paco". La semaine prochaine, vacances scolaires, Alana passe quelques jours avec moi et ensuite je pars une semaine en Irlande avec un groupe familial.

Je vous embrasse, FT

Dernier couplet d'un sonnet attribué à Lupercio ou à Bartolomé Leonardo de Argensola:

9. VAUX, *Ancient Israel: its life and institutions*, around pages 380 and after; SCHÜRER, *The history of the Jewish people*, chapter on priests, with an interesting first page that follows Wellhausen.

Porque ese cielo azul que todos vemos,
ni es cielo, ni es azul: ¡lástima grande
que no sea verdad tanta belleza!

WEDNESDAY, 12 APRIL 2017

In the plane to Dublin and Paris, after Amy drove me to the SF airport. It's an Aer Lingus flight, cheaper by about \$1,000 than the usual airlines like Air France, United, American, Delta, and others, that charged about \$2,700 at this busy time of the year for the roundtrip to Paris. We bought the ticket yesterday as I decided to go and see François in Rennes. His condition has worsened since Friday. According to Julie's call on Sunday, he hasn't been eating and has a bronchi infection on top of his urinary infection. He felt pain in his abdomen and tried to cough but couldn't. I suppose this is caused by his Parkinson. Monday, the doctor decided to continue the antibiotics (stronger ones?), strengthen the pain control (morphine?), and continue to hydrate. She said a kidney had failed and they were going to make sure he is not in pain. He hasn't been eating since but now can rest. It seems unlikely that he will be able to come out of this episode, and if he does he will be greatly diminished.

Memories of François (I have recorded a number of them in this journal). I remember him plowing the field behind the Ti-Ru with three horses. I was looking at him from the entrance to this field giving on the covered "hallier" we used to get to two of our fields, or to the Le Berre field a little further. This path continued westward and made a right angle southward towards the farm of the Pennecs. All of this has become a "plain."¹⁰ How old can François have been? 16? 18? which means that I was 7 or 9? I think the old talus in the middle of this field had been already removed by hand, not a tractor. I have a short memory of seeing the removal of this talus, and it must have been before seeing François' ploughing. It had taken the work of several men, many days, and probably a considerable number of bottles of cider to disperse the earth of this talus. No treasures were discovered.

The *seder* Monday evening with Noreen, Susan, and a few other

10. Aside: how does this erasure of "talus" ("arusement de talus") help people in any way? Does the extra production brought by the symbolic use of huge machinery—pace its costs and reframing of agriculture as the ground of dislocated desires—justify the removal of all trees and environments in which I observed birds and a somewhat uncultured series of trees and bushes? How can zoos or botanic gardens foster the same recognition of the cultic vs the uncultivated?

friends, was a serious affair. Susan had redone her old *haggada* and made a wonderful document with photographs of important national, local, and family events. She asked me to speak a little about Exodus. I started by answering the question, “What is different that night/tonight?” I started by mentioning the effect that the celebration of Exodus and its liturgy—a broader category than the family *seder*—have on the memory of the people. No amount of reading by intellectuals, exegetes, or even homilies will engage and shape memory by themselves. Next, I recognized the theme that we are more likely to discuss in our times, the liberation from slavery. I said that the other themes were as revolutionary or perhaps even more so when one considers their consequences in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The powerful divinity and covenant revealed at Sinai and its relationship to the promised land are essential parts of the story of liberation or rather salvation. It is a revelation through history. The main text was written by people concerned about the meaning of the catastrophic events in ca. 700–600 BCE. What was the role of the divinity? That of the kings? There was no Torah to answer these questions and it is the raising of such vital problems that led precisely to the formulation of Deuteronomy, the so-called Priestly document, and Genesis.¹¹ Their answer (partially) was to remain faithful to something that had been hidden and needed to be brought out, though through many struggles, sometimes violent, as the story implies. This fidelity and trust were the only way, they thought, of surviving and making sense of the collapse of state and temple, which were the two main institutions that conveyed divine will and purpose until then. Furthermore, the eventual re-foundation of the temple couldn’t be done on the same basis as before, which was the relative satisfaction of needs for fertility and security by kings doing “the divine will.” Without kings, or rather with more formidable kings far and above, the temple needed to be re-invented as the center for a new polity renewing its trust in an even more supreme king, the divinity, directly.

Kings used to be the obligatory, jealous mediators of this divine will. They controlled inspiration or revelation (prophetic utterances), cultic matters of great importance for everyone because they were believed to bring and protect life. They administered justice (or were responsible for those aspects considered to be public), and ensured order, including military defense.

The story of Exodus is revolutionary in that the forbidding presence of

11. I chose to follow Schmid, Römer, et al, rather than Van Seters.

the divinity is not “managed” by a king and “He” chooses the people directly. It is mediated by Moses but even he disappears at the end of the story and has no direct descendant. Aaron (his older brother) will be the ancestor of the priesthood but is not given the limelight. The divinity reveals itself directly, the law is also given directly and broadened as being a fundamental part of the existence of the people, not as the product of a religious and political negotiation. Writing, that is, the writing of the law, is either divine or human, but not under the control of kings or similar authorities. The people are promised a land conditionally. They do not become a people because they have a land and a biology from which they spread—though in reality that is what happened—, but because they became engaged in the process and promised to remember and obey laws and rules that were meant to establish justice and peace as envisioned by the deity, not by kings. The vanishing of Moses at the end of Deuteronomy—like that of Elijah and especially Jesus in the tomb—means that the “founder” cannot be turned into a source of relics and approached or transformed into a king-like mediator of sorts through his later worship.

I note also that the king-less politics demanded a new calendar: not the tax year or the king-enthronement year (check if this was always in September or October), but a year shaped by this revelation, with the meaning of its sacrificial rituals reframed. That theme also (to be checked) is related to the sustained attempt to go beyond biology and set kinship networks.

What to think of this question about the role of the priesthood in ancient Israel, triggered by the reading of Assmann’s commentary on Exodus: Why would the priesthood of Judah develop the idea of monotheism (modern frame of the question: reveal or have access to hidden powers of the deity, in ancient parlance?), and turn the royal mediation into a covenant? And why not neighboring peoples?

THURSDAY, 13 APRIL 2017

The Dublin airport is empty most everywhere. Perhaps because it’s around noon? The exception is the gift shop and eatery area where there is some movement. I’m at the gate for the flight to Paris which is due to take off in about one hour and we are two passengers in the waiting room. The plane from SFO to DUB was not quite full either: two empty seats near me and in the row above.

My challenge, once in CDG Paris, was to find a cell phone store and check prices: US reflex. I discovered I could buy the *Orange mobicarte holiday* at

any “bureau de tabac” for an imposed price and did install it immediately.

I call Amy and Julie. Julie suggested that we go and visit briefly François immediately as soon as I arrive. She has a pass to the hospital, given the situation. It took us a while to find the right door at the clinic (a medicalized facility for Parkinsonians, Alzheimer patients, etc.). He was sleeping and semi-comatose, resting on his left ear. His breathing was regular. He is getting oxygen, antibiotics, and is being sedated (morphine) and hydrated, as described above.

FRIDAY, 14 APRIL 2017

Je lui ai rendu visite ce matin. L'hôpital est bâti sur pilotis et je découvre à la lumière du jour qu'il y a un petit étang sous les bâtiments. Les colonnes ne sont pas exactement parallèles, ce qui fait penser que la construction s'est faite à la va-vite, mais l'équipement hospitalier semble très correct. La chambre de François est bien isolée. Les soins sont très bons, l'esprit des soignants excellent, me semble-t-il. Sa respiration était encore régulière. Cet après-midi, alors que Julie et moi sommes avec lui depuis 14h00, les choses ont évolué un peu.

Presque 15h00 ce vendredi saint aux Chênes Blancs, chambre 154, et François respire un peu plus irrégulièrement que hier dans la nuit lorsque je suis arrivé de Paris, ou ce matin. Il y a des petites pauses dans sa respiration. Il reçoit déshydratation, paracetamol (tylenol pour la fièvre), morphine et antibiotiques (ofloxacin). Julie et moi avons parlé d'arrêter le traitement antibiotique puisque l'infection ne semble pas être maîtrisée et que l'espoir qu'il s'en sorte est infime. Nous sommes d'accord qu'il n'est pas nécessaire de continuer et François avait dit à Julie de ne pas continuer si une telle situation advenait. Nous en parlons aux infirmiers, puis au médecin qui ajoute qu'il faudrait alors aussi diminuer l'oxygène et l'hydratation. Il y a messe maintenant en bas, dans la “salle de culte”, messe en remplacement de la messe de Pâques qui est dite le dimanche. Un peu plus tard dans l'après-midi, le prêtre vient rendre visite. Il connaît François depuis qu'il a été hospitalisé en septembre dernier. Visite aussi un peu plus tard d'un jeune infirmier stagiaire qui s'est pris d'affection pour François les dernières semaines. Il vient dire au revoir car il va en vacances et doit travailler dans un autre hôpital. Amy me dit un peu plus tard au téléphone que François pourrait vivre encore deux ou trois jours au maximum.

Because of our sense that F's breathing was becoming irregular, we decided to relay each other tonight. Julie would go back after a short meal and

I would replace her after sleeping a few hours. I slept a bit after 8pm and then heard a car door slam. I thought she was back. She had forgotten her keys and called me. It was about 22h00. I went down and we embraced. He passed away at about 19h45, very shortly after she went back. A doctor came to certify the death. We began making a list of things to do tomorrow. Julie has texts prepared for the obituary, the church, and the mass. She wrote them six years ago when both had cancer.

SUNDAY, 16 APRIL 2017

After finishing typing the liturgy Julie wants to use for Tuesday's ceremony, I go for a walk at 6am, towards the Rennes railway station that is being rebuilt. The streets are still deserted. The birds, especially magpies and turtle-doves, are singing everywhere. Wherever there is a bush, a wisteria in bloom, an arbre de Judée, even a TV antenna or a chimney top, birds are singing. Their chatter, cooing, and chirping echo off the tall buildings or walls of houses, through the streets. I'm almost thankful for the existence of these hundreds of walls that act as a gallery for birds.

Long day yesterday. There was an appointment at the funeral home with which François and Julie made a contract a few years ago. It took care of everything, including putting an obituary in the *Ouest-France* paper. The hardest part for everyone was to see the "dépouille mortuaire" in the late afternoon, on the eastern side of Rennes. François was recognizable, but the mortuary mask was disturbing to Julie, and his hands looked very white, plastic like. I thought of Yvon's bruised head, the stone quality of a body rolled by the waves at the Royau. There we were, Julie, Christophe, Halima and Ilias, Jean-Christophe and Nathalie, and a couple of visitors. Strange place where Bach concerti played in closed loop, doors were locked with codes, and one did not sit in the nondescript sofas and chairs. The old custom of the wake (*la veillée mortuaire*) has become completely unnecessary, especially on a paschal weekend of resurrection when very few people will come.

Julie and I went to the Paschal mass celebrated in the Saint Benoît church right near their house. The assembly was diverse: Africans, people from the Middle East (I think I heard Arabic and Turkish), Spanish-speaking people. The liturgy was conducted by a couple of old priests and women who led the readings and singing. After lunch, I went for a brief moment to Pierre Corbel's for dessert. MG's mother was there, very *digne*.

MG's use of *vous* to address her reminded me of our Breton custom in the Hamel family.

We went back to the mortuary chapel around 16h00. No one was there. Julie fussed about F's *costume*, the knot of his tie, his hands.

In the evening, I called Nicolas because I was concerned that they would all feel constrained to come to the funeral, as Christophe fired an SMS asking Cédric if he would be coming. Nicolas didn't know who would be coming and said they would have to decide the next morning. I tried my best to put him at ease and not to pay too much attention to C's objurgations, that we understood some had to work and school was back in session in their region. The next day, he called to say that he and Elodie would be with us and to ask whether we could put them up at night, which indeed was easy to do.

MONDAY, 17 APRIL 2017

I bring my computer to *La maison de la copie et du secrétariat* and have to get help to arrange the pagination correctly on my four-page pdf. I have a hard time focussing on the task. We now have about a hundred copies for the liturgical part and twenty or so for the cemetery. I'm glad I can use my typographic skills. I go back with a friend of J and F to the mortuary chapel. He is a very religious man who was part of a prayer circle with them. The face had changed color a bit. I simply follow Julie and help her as much as I can. The best moment today was the preparation of tomorrow's ceremony with two older women and the priest, Paul. Julie was asked to share a few things about François. She told elements of stories I knew but her recounting of the adoption of C and JC revealed many new things to me.

Everything is closed today. We think there won't be too many people, perhaps one hundred?

Rue de Penhoët, temps gris, âcre odeur de tabac, boutiques et cafés, filles ou garçons habillés de manière si dégagée que c'est inimitable. Malek Taouk en face fait breton. Grande bande affiche des PoutineBro qui vendent poutine, burgers, bagels.

TUESDAY, 18 APRIL 2017

Nicolas and Elodie arrive ca. 11h30. We go again to the mortuary chapel for the *levée de corps* and then proceed *en cortège* through the streets to the St Benoît church. Many members of the Hamel and Gourhant family have

come from quite a distance. The liturgy is a proper background to the most important moments, especially the moving testimony by Christophe, who is speaking in public for the first time. We motorcade to the cemetery, together with the many cousins: Jeannette, Jean-Yves Hamel, Alain, Hervé Queffeuilou, Guy, Henri, their wives...

Notes on SCHIAVONE.¹² The author makes many suppositions at the beginning of his book, in a detached tone that is fitting for our secular world. He shows awareness of the political machinery and the military calculations. There is little social analysis (i.e. of the purpose of the occupation and the social structures) but a re-situating of it at a hopelessly refined and culturally meaningless level. For instance, he speaks of the encounter of “Hellenism and Hebraism, with the Roman power in the background.”¹³ In the same page, he supposes that if both Hellenic and Jewish cultures had not been more receptive to each other, the course of the West would have been different, as well as the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. There wouldn’t have been a Christianity, actually. *Or*, in fact Jewish and Hellenistic-Roman cultures met, and that is *why* we had Christianity.

Schiavone repeats the old (Josephus) saw that Herod’s building projects “met the needs of the urban proletariat!”¹⁴ Was Herod really opposed to the Sanhedrin? He married early into royal/priestly families. He hellenized what could be hellenized! The full return to regality was impossible, especially for priests, given the criticism of monarchy inherent to the Hebrew Bible.

The Roman prefects of Judaea “had inherited from Herod the power to appoint the high priest.”¹⁵ All were usurpers in the eyes of many (including priests), according to any interpretation of the Torah. Good analysis however of the difficult position of the high priest.

Regarding the function of the harbor of Caesarea: Schiavone doesn’t say clearly enough that it was a port facilitating extensive military movement, like Ptolemais.¹⁶ He misreads the popular reaction to the episode of the standards in Jerusalem as “wily,” orchestrated.¹⁷ Rather, the people were responding to a provocation. Schiavone follows Josephus closely in his description of the non-violent or submissive and sacrificial posture

12. SCHIAVONE, *The end of the past: ancient Rome and the modern West*.

13. *Ibid.*, 70.

14. *Ibid.*, 73.

15. *Ibid.*, 79.

16. *Ibid.*, 81.

17. *Ibid.*, 87.

taken by the demonstrators. He adopts the Roman point of view on culture *and* order.¹⁸ Though he often follows Josephus naïvely (? or perhaps there is an ideological side I don't see clearly enough?), he also misreads him at times when convenient. About the *testimonium flavianum*, he thinks the sixteenth-century editor, who removed it, was prejudiced.¹⁹ What about the nineteenth century editor, who restores the text but is critical? According to Schiavone, the fact that the passage is present in all extant manuscripts, aside from its style, is sufficient to establish its genuineness. He doesn't mention its absence from Origen. There is no reason to suspect Tacitus text, but there is very good reason to suspect Josephus and separately the manuscript tradition of his works, as they were preserved only by Christianity—for its own purpose, a point made by Vidal-Naquet in his preface to the French translation of *the Jewish War*—because of the Deuteronomistic and [fake] prophetic tone.

On Jewish theocracy:²⁰

Theology and politics thus welded into a single “machine”: the “theopolitics” of the Jewish people, *which permitted human power only in subaltern forms.*

He sounds like Nietzsche but misunderstands a main driving point of the Pentateuch, namely not to let kings and elites set the agenda by claiming direct or semi-direct access to revelation. Or framed positively: look for true sources of authority and life. The final version of the Torah at the hands of P made virtue out of necessity. It rendered kings or monarchy impossible. Hence the problem of Hasmonean transformation into ethnarchs at most, and the problem of Herod, nomination of high priests, etc. All the latter claimants to authority were contravening the vision set forth in Exodus. Human power, therefore, could not be *over other persons*.

For Jesus,

the Romans are not the oppressor of his people. The question is foreign to him, and this is one reason why the catastrophic outcome of the revolt of 66 did not sweep away the nascent Christian tradition.
(p. 118)

This is how the gospels present him. Jesus indeed is not a zealot. He sees beyond the high priesthood, Herod Antipas, or Pilate. It's all and the same

18. SCHIAVONE, *The end of the past: ancient Rome and the modern West*, 91–93.

19. *Ibid.*, 93–94.

20. *Ibid.*, 110.

to him. More generally, however, the messianic beliefs about Jesus began early (long before the revolt) and took another meaning and depth in the crucible of the war (I imagine). The question of Roman oppression was not foreign to him or his disciples later: it simply took a local form, or was grafted on a long history already mapped politically and very severe regarding any claimants to unjust profits. Other thing: necessary death of Jesus, as in John? I just don't agree. The life of Jesus and its end, one may easily argue, has a logic to it, but who is to tell that it is not a story of complete trust, complete belief in life, yet driven also by heroic courage in the face of compatriots who became enemies?

Pilate would have miscalculated the degree of hostility that Jewish temple authorities had for Jesus?²¹ I don't think so. It is about the temple and the nature of the authority over it. Both Pilate and the temple authorities were on one side, no matter the presentation and defenses in one's or another's favor. The question is why Jesus was perceived to be more dangerous than Barabbas. In Jesus' call for a permanent displacement of divine presence (its extension, properly), the authorities were right to think that the temple structure, their power over the people via their appointed care of it, and the benefits they drew from that position, were at stake.

At last something I can wholeheartedly agree with: the ancients' rationality was "granular" "compared to the totalizing force of modern reason." One needs to pursue the thought of modern reason as owing much of this totalizing force, precisely, to the Christian view or, put in other words, to the reframing of transcendence and immanence.²²

"John, who offers the most reliable, rich, and detailed reconstruction of the passion" (page 164): rich and detailed indeed, but reliable?

WEDNESDAY, 19 APRIL 2017

Long conversation in the morning with Nicolas and Élodie, prodded by pictures and especially the copybook where François gave a few years ago a summary of his life (I made a scan). Elodie is wonderfully open. She is doing well but concerned Nicolas tends not to express his feelings and keeps things inside. I talked to her about this summer and said it was not the ideal

21. *Ibid.*, 140.

22. *ibid.*, 151; on this topic, compare the absence of this particular theme in the otherwise detailed analysis of the role of reason in the rise of modern industry: Musso, *La religion industrielle*.

time for us as Leslie and Rémi are in transition. It would be nice to arrange it so Chloé and Callum could use each other's language!

Lunch together, with the family of Jean-Toph. Williams is quite handsome and funny, really doing well; I worry Marine doesn't get the same attention and has self-image problems, Nicolas, Elodie, and Julie. Christophe came later with Ilias. Ilias is a handful, very remuant! He and I became quite a pair. Afternoon Christopher, Ilias, Julie and I went to the cemetery for a visit.

Then, I borrowed the car to go and see Bruno for an hour and a half before going back to Julie's, take my things and go by VAL to the gare where I took the train to Guingamp (Aziliz came to get me, with Alana). Nicolas and Elodie left at about 3pm, when we went to the cemetery. Bruno can barely walk. He asked me to go with him get the papers and food at the nearby Intermarché, because it would mean taking the car to go about 300 meters. Mind going strong of course. I left him just in time to get back to Julie's, get my things and take the subway...

Train at 18h30 for Guingamp, where I have a long and strange conversation with a woman who has just come back from Cuba. She speaks very softly and I have to guess what she says from her expression and the little knowledge I have of Cuba. I'm happy to be picked up by Aziliz and Alana, and I eat a wonderful, light, quiet dinner with them.

I feel so relieved to be here and know I'll take a long walk when dawn comes, in about an hour and a half. I'll call Julie because I felt she was under great stress yesterday. The obsèques were perfectly organized, more people came than we expected, in spite of the vacances de Pâques. I helped a lot and went along with what Julie wanted, or always made sure everything we did was what she or François wanted. Lots of moving moments. She has friends and possibilities (I asked her about them), but she needs to rest right now and takes things more slowly.

THURSDAY, 20 APRIL 2017

I had my first good night of sleep even though I woke up early, at 4am. I went to bed early last night. I like FTH's apartment a lot: modern, convenient, large bathrooms, two bedrooms upstairs, a living/kitchen downstairs, a nice office that can double up as a small bedroom, full bath upstairs, shower downstairs, up to date in terms of insulation and heating... I'll take pictures.

Today, some work at the café in La Roche where I meet Hervé le Gardien. I began typing François' copybook. Then long walk to Tréguier, with some pleasures such as listening to magpies and admiring the bright-yellow fields of "navette," but also the unpleasantness of walking some of the way along the highway. Back at the apartment, I'm tired, go to rest for what I think will be a moment and wake up at 19h00, as Aziliz and Alana are at the door, ringing the bell...

FRIDAY, 21 APRIL 2017

To Lannion in the morning, Gwalarn where I'm to meet a student, then lunch at Guy's and Joëlle's, and in St Quay at the Cotels in the evening. Guy gives me a copy of an *Ouest-France* article on our grandfather: on the grainy picture, I can recognize many of my cousins. We talk about the family, especially children, and the tragedies that happened. Tante Jeannette (his mother) drowned herself in the Lannion river (the Leguer) at eighty, a couple years (check) after her twin sister Yvonne did the same. Yvonne had come to stay with her for a little while. One morning, she couldn't be found... Much to tell about her too. In case I haven't already written what I know: tuberculosis bout in her teen-age years, she meets her husband Yves Queffeulou at the sanatorium of Trestel, they have five children, Yves begins to drink heavily, no cash in a very small commerce of coal, fertilizers and other agricultural goods, he dies at age 44, the children eventually leave for Paris, the Alps, or unknown places. Religion gone, friends and family gone, her twin sister Jeannette her only recourse, but she too deeply miserable.

Notes for now: Jeannette not allowed to remarry by her husband's family after he died near Cherbourg. A freak wave (lame de fond) sunk the military ship on which he worked on maps. He almost made it to the coast but died of exhaustion. She is left with her baby twins, Guy and Yves, a year and a half. She is deeply unhappy and as Guy told me, she forms a sort of couple with her sister Anaïs who is a little older. Anaïs is very short and considered somewhat retarded (which I never saw: I remember her voice, her sense of humor, her work). When Anaïs dies (date?), Jeannette is even more saddened. The grand-father, Nicolas Gourhant, was not easy, on top of this. Her other son, Yves, becomes alcoholic and comes to live with her in her last years. A hell for her. Guy tells me he was incontinent until age 24. Other kids, at school or even in the army (he volunteered and then became a policeman), don't make fun of him. He meets his wife Joëlle, the incontinency disappears instantaneously.

SATURDAY, 22 APRIL 2017

Light fog over the Trégor. I come to the local café with the croissant I bought at the boulangerie. There is a brocante near the river. I've been invited by Hervé for lunch. I go visit our tomb in Pommerit and look at the flowers on the way: lilacs and especially primevères, bluebells, an occasional *ophrys* in bloom, gorse, and even the bright navettes or the emerald wheat in the fields. At the cemetery, I talk briefly with Michelle Thomas who retired from farming. They had a farm on the road to Hengoat and I remember going once to their place (to sell billets de tombola?). I give a little water to the flowers on the Hamel-Gourhant tomb.

SUNDAY, 23 APRIL 2017

In the train to Paris. Françoise-Thérèse, Alana and I ate lunch at their Runan place. The floor is done. There remains: putting back the kitchen implements in their place and painting. We talk about the Gourhant side of the family. Alana looks forward to playing with the little neighbor. I was going to forget: we go to the little city-hall so Françoise-Thérèse can vote.

Eventless ride to Montparnasse and to Malakoff where MC and JL are preparing to listen to the election results. The polls turn out to have been exact: Macron ahead, Le Pen scoring slightly less than hoped for by her supporters, Melenchon doing a very good score with his new movement, Fillon and especially Hamon losing badly. The comments by journalists and “tables rondes” are empty of content. The speech by Macron is a fog of words except for the passages on Europe and the quality of education. No details whatsoever. I learn in *Le Monde* that this very organized man, though leery of being seen with bankers or politicians of the “sérail,” is seen at La Rotonde with Attali, Cohn-Bendit, etc., after the first round of the election. He is clearly aiming for the *législatives*. The main question for me is whether he'll be able to transform the score he is going to get in two weeks into real political authority, that is, is he going to be able to surround himself with new faces as he promises and avoid the sharks that are going to surround him and who come from the industrial and banking elites as well as from the politicians who have been played by him?

MONDAY 24 APRIL 2017

At MC and JL, political reminiscing. I work in the morning, then lunch with them, subway to Porte de Clichy, great conversation with Christian

Chomat, and late visit to the basilica of Saint-Denis: magnificent Suger's work, especially the choir and the stained glass windows or what's left of them after reconstructions. I did find the Moses/Paul window in St Péregrin's chapel.

Recent book by OBER,²³ translation of *The rise and fall of classical Greek*. Decentralized collective intelligence would have led to an extraordinary economic development. What incited Greeks to cooperate without a centralized chief state? Ober's answer to this question is that a particular set of institutions existed (came into being? i.e. we have the equivalent of a tautology?). Rules of justice (Solon?) encouraged capital investments and lowered transaction costs: the usual recent extended explanation for what used to be called forth with a simple word, trust. Also, there was a spirit of competition between cities that helped innovate. What of the absence of kings and the presence of oligarchies, as well as slavery? Looting of neighboring states? And are we overly fascinated by the Athenian evidence again? Ober does address issues of imperialistic exploitation and slavery. Then, why did the fall of this complex "eco-system" occur under the Macedonian kings? Adaptation by those kings of innovations made by Greek cities and turned against them?

I enjoyed reading Tesson (*Sur les chemins noirs*) but found him superficial at times and often meanly divisive in his judgments on the use of modern technology. Still, page 29, interesting comment on the return of wolves in "hyper-rural" areas. I would suggest that the wolf is more likely to be found in such areas not so much because it avoids humans but because it can more easily live off traditional agriculture. Page 32, remark on lyophilisation "dans les tuyauteries de la plomberie cybernétique."

TUESDAY, 25 APRIL 2017

Yesterday (Monday), I worked in the morning, In the afternoon, I visit Christian Chomat and his wife who have a wonderful apartment near Porte de Clichy. We talk about travels, cultures, their work for Caritas, children, and especially about our respective fathers who were in the same *stalag* 1A from 1940 to 1945. Why didn't they learn German? Did they find a kind of relief or peace in doing their work well (one a farmer, the other a woodworker), even though it was "slavery?" Christian has many documents, many of them written by his father in a very tiny hand (pencil),

23. OBER, *L'énigme grecque*.

probably because paper was so rare. They wrote on various materials. The most moving document is a gray piece of cardboard, about three by three inches. Much of the writing, Christian tells me, concerns mundane matters. Mundane to us, yet inseparable from the essence of things when so close to hunger or death, especially since these were lived in friendship.

Around 5pm I went by subway to the St Denis basilica. I had never visited this extraordinary abbey and royal cemetery. At first sight, there is a vivid contrast between the people milling about on the *parvis* and the magnificent basilica. At this late time of the day, we were two or three visitors, with the fourth to thirteenth century crypt, the lavish tombs of the French kings (at least those of the sixteenth century), the fabulous wall of light surrounding the choir, all to ourselves. The crypt is very cold and gives the feeling of being able to imagine the beliefs of early (converted) barbarian Christians. The exhibit in the crypt ties the graves of kings and queens to the action outside on the *parvis*: kids of all races playing together, a film being made, music... I spend some time contemplating the stained-glass windows in the Chapelle de la Vierge, and especially the scenes with Moses and Paul which I need to study (Suger).

Return to Malakoff by 19h00, conversation with MC's sister, whisky, and trip to the RER. I don't remember her name (!), or the visit of her daughter in California, years ago... In the Caspis' house?

This morning, after breakfast at the hotel, I go to the CDGVAL line where two beautiful hostesses ask me if I can help a hemiplegic person who walks on crutches. His chariot is loaded with luggage. He may be coming from an African country but I don't ask him. I help him along, right to the counter of his airline (Brussels Air) and discover the difficulties of navigating escalators, finding the right elevator, going around a couple times to find Hall 5 in Terminal 1 when you have to take a couple elevators. When we get to his counter, about 40 minutes before the scheduled departure time, he is told the position is closed. Another African man is in the same position. I try to reason with the official, but nothing works. The airport has specialized help for disabled people: why didn't this man call them, the employee wants to know.

Van Seters detects three models for reconstruction of the history of the Biblical text:²⁴

1. an analysis and reconstruction of fragments, saga-like sometimes (he

24. VAN SETERS, *The Pentateuch: A social-science commentary*, Page?

refuses this term), cycles of stories, that formed blocks of texts. These individual narratives were then collected and edited. The larger blocks were eventually combined, at the end-stage of composition.

2. the supplemental model starts from a basic *Urtext* of the Pentateuch or Hexateuch that would have been expanded over time. This is the model eventually favored by Van Seters. It can restore creativity at all stages and doesn't invoke a redacting activity that Van Seters rejects as unnecessary.
3. the strata or sources and documents model. Here, inconsistencies (or what are taken to be such) lead to the analysis of long narrative sources that are independent of each other though often parallel. They would have been combined by redactors later in a final form. In this model, the problems of coherence and cohesion are attributed to the redaction level.

FRIDAY, 28 APRIL 2017

Some sort of bug caught up with me yesterday and I had to rest. This morning, I wake up at around 3h30, read the *NYT*, and decide to walk up to the office in Cowell. It is almost 5h30 when I leave, 6h20 when I arrive. On the way, I salute a man who is untying the trailer from his rig. A few minutes later, he honks lightly as he passes me on Hagar. The sun is not out yet. The sky is orange in the east and purple violet to the west. In the office, I read a number of reviews of books in the *Review of Biblical Literature* series.

SATURDAY, 29 APRIL 2017

I correct a number of texts, read Musso, video-conference with Callum and Lucie, go at noon to the Humanities courtyard where I find three or four colleagues and hardly more alumni, glide home...

SUNDAY, 30 APRIL 2017

We have breakfast at the Cowell provost's house this morning and meet a number of alumni. There are quite a few people, which shows how important the college life was to students. A distant memory now, or at least such a difficult slog, as I realize when talking to Noriko. Here too, students are making noise about transforming the library into a social space... The whole university except the labs could become a huge (YUGE?) lounge and series of cafés with fast debit wifi... I also had a conversation or rather listened to

a monologue of PK who doesn't seem to realize at all how much his topic of interest and obvious crave to be published are not appealing to anyone.

Email of Christian Chomat et deux photos de papa prises à Hambourg en 1942 et à Berlin en 1945:

J'ai été très heureux de vous rencontrer et vous remercie d'avoir fait le déplacement. J'espère que la visite de la Basilique St Denis s'est bien passée et surtout que vous êtes bien rentré « safe » à votre Californie d'adoption.

J'ai eu pendant 5 jours 3 puis 5 de nos petits-enfants à présent repartis et je profite du calme après la tempête pour vous écrire.

Il se trouve que l'un de mes petits-enfants s'est passionné pour l'histoire de son arrière-grand-père et a remis en ordre toutes ses lettres de captivité. C'est maintenant un énorme tas bien classé avec quelques lacunes qu'il sera encore possible de combler avec des cartes postales et des petits carnets peu lisibles. Les lettres se lisent donc il reste à ouvrir ce chantier !

En attendant, j'ai ressorti un album photo de mes parents ainsi que quelques photos non classées mais avec des indications de dates et rarement de noms que je vous fais parvenir en PJ. Je mets tout de 1940 à 1945 bien que je ne pense pas que vous soyez concernés par tout.

En revanche je pense qu'il y a une bonne chance que vous reconnaissez votre père. Je crois le voir sur la photo de 1942 Hambourg B999 à droite en bout de barrière mais c'est à vous de me le dire et de voir s'il se trouve ailleurs.

Je vous signale aussi que sur le groupe Yahoo on peut trouver un album photo allemand du Stalag 1A dirigé par le sous-lieutenant Sauvant. C'est bien sûr un ouvrage de propagande où tout est impeccable. Le stalag a été détruit depuis et il ne reste qu'un champ (photo jointe)

Ce sera tout pour ce soir, bon 1er mai !

Amicalement

Christian

He appears on two pictures: Hamburg 1942 (4.1) and Berlin 1945 (4.2). I do not know if the Hamburg picture was taken before the Allied bombing Papa spoke about so often. The Berlin picture, I imagine, was taken before the onslaught of Soviet troops into East Berlin (Pankow).



Figure 4.1 – *Jean Hamel, second row, left.*



Figure 4.2 – *Jean Hamel, second row, second from R.*

5 May

MONDAY, 1 MAY 2017

Aorta ultrasound test this morning: everything normal according to results received tonight. I am still reading Musso: by avoiding the type of dialectics Marx or Gagnepain used, he is forced to go back to allegories and mirror effects turned into causes. Not very satisfying and highly repetitious. It is a two-dimensional analysis (Incarnation repeated by magic at different bifurcations: monasteries, manufactures, and modern industry). Strange to say, its main claim about the impact of the incarnation on the supposedly most secular phenomena (industry) has no flesh: no labor, no transformation by the bodily use of techniques (by body I mean a continuous mind and body), no hope and vision at that level, but on the contrary free-floating ideas of incarnation and industrialization. In other words, no incarnation in that book in spite of what is repeatedly claimed on each page.

THURSDAY, 4 MAY 2017

Reading Musso is frustrating. The book is indeed repetitious, as I said yesterday, and full of quotes that mask an avoidance to explain or give a proper historical context to the main concepts. For instance the following three, of the utmost importance for his purpose—religion, nature, Incarnation—are not explained. Their full-blown existence is taken for granted. The fact that the notions of religion and nature greatly changed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is not given its proper due. The concept of creation by a single god seems inadvertently addressed, even though it appears in many of the quoted thinkers. On the contrary, incarnation is presented as a free-floating idea somehow magically allegorized or reinserted in various forms of “industrialization” when its main import is the life and death of Jesus. Finally, the notion of faith is also presented as a pure concept rather than the fundamental cement of the lives of millions of people over the long history

of Christendom. And strangely, I add, Christian regions other than Europe receive no attention whatsoever in the shaping of this gloriously European advent and flourishing of logic and technicity.

FRIDAY, 5 MAY 2017

Rémi told Amy that Lucie surprised him with a couple words today. When he put the usual barrette (a blue one) in her hair, she said, “two!” Then, as he was going to put a grey barrette on the other side, she said, “No, blue!” She doesn’t mince words...

Tilling on Paul’s christology, reviewed by Kugler.¹ I note that the use of the word “christology” influences this reader right from the start, as it requires me to struggle with the innate intellectualism of the concept—as if Paul were first of all a technical theologian—rather than pay attention first to how important were the practices that his communities followed (Hurtado), or how close he hewed to Jewish, non-Alexandrian, views. He reviews the literature and movement of ideas quite completely. He pays particular attention to Fee, Hurtado, Bauckman, and his results reinforce those views, particularly the latter’s, it seems (check on this aspect). His work is important in that he insists on considering the whole Pauline language rather than simply focussing on titles and simple expressions. What of “cultic worship,” underlined by Hurtado, however? Another lack: there are examples of figures in ancient Jewish monotheism participating temporarily in the divine aspects, without being identified with it. This is clear from the work by Schäfer and others. The difference between Paul and Philo is instructive in this regard. In any case, Tilling’s argument convinced the reviewer (Kugler), namely that “the pattern of Christ-relation language in Paul” is exclusive to the relationship between Israel (and its individuals) and YHWH.² The fundamental text he uses is 1 Cor 8:1–10:22. Note that Tilling’s language of “relation” is strange for a relationship normally quite precisely defined as an exclusive covenant between YHWH and Israel. See ASSMANN³ most recently on this point.

I just signed up for the [Library Symposium](#) scheduled for the 31st of May.

1. TILLING, *Paul’s divine christology*.

2. *Ibid.*, 73.

3. ASSMANN, *Exodus*.

SUNDAY, 7 MAY 2017

Macron 66.1%, Le Pen 33.9%. Progress since 1969 when Chirac (“the crook”) got 82% vs 18% for Le Pen (“the fascist”).

Même conversation ce soir sur maisons, appartements, décisions de grands-parents sur l’aide procurée aux parents ou enfants et petits-enfants. Que de calculs, que de complications.

René Char, lecture aérée, étoiles...

Quelques heures avec Gary Mils aujourd’hui, à écouter son histoire, raconter les nôtres, élections en France, repas, l’apprêter pour sa sieste... Il va beaucoup mieux.

MONDAY, 8 MAY 2017

Macron and his friends are going to face great difficulties in building a workable coalition in the house of representatives in June (= Chambre des députés). He has to co-opt ex-socialists from the center and left and beg them to run for and with him. And at the same time he has to find center and center-right incumbents or people he can work with. In other words, he has to woo many people still defined by their party’s machines and echo chambers. I’m not familiar enough with the inner workings of the parties and regional politics to venture a prediction but I think the window of opportunity Macron has right now (the large numbers that voted for him) will close quickly. He is quite aware of it and said so on Friday night before the final run.

The larger issues are economic and cultural. Trust within institutions like schools and health system, corporations, and political groups, was maintained according to a mix of religious and political makeup of France until the eighties. Even more important, probably, was the heritage of the “trente glorieuses” (post-WWII thirty years) that had brought significant economic development to French people, right into the seventies. Superficial perhaps but mappable and vouchers of stability. This trust and hope are under considerable pressure, including among immigrant communities. Systems of rationality inherited from the Enlightenment, reinforced by a top down education system (Sciences-Po or ENA, after Polytechnique et al) that shapes Macron and other elites, cannot generate trust or fidelity and hope, or at least I don’t see how they can. Religions and political systems (various -isms, a phenomenon often analyzed especially since the so-called fall of communist political entities) have become very

marginal. However, rather than creating enthusiasm, the faith placed in social calculus fosters suspicion. The description of the sober reality of migratory flows—as in Hervé Le Bars’ book—doesn’t make a dent into the emotions poured out over the topic.⁴ Once more, emotions are in danger of replacing political analysis and commitment.

I think about those matters with my very recent experience of the French health system and end-of-life apparatus in mind. My older brother passed away in April. He was in a medicalized unit for which he paid about 2,000€/month on top of the payments by the national health system, in a very complicated situation in which one is left to wonder not so much who owns but who profits and how much. For example, special bedding is sub-contracted to private companies or mixed (national/private) companies. It seemed very murky to me, in spite of the regulations for which France is famous in the US. As for death: the mechanics of funerals and the contracting with private companies that sell an ersatz of dignity for very high sums of money have become ubiquitous. There was also a Catholic funeral mass in this case. It was celebrated by two priests in their eighties, helped by two able older women. The cost was small, 180€. I should mention that all through this process, from hospital to the cemetery, the people we met (nurses, doctors, insurance agents, Catholic priests and lay workers) were helpful, supportive, and trustworthy. Nevertheless, I have a sense of drift in which human lives, characterized in the case of my brother by fidelity, steadfastness, judgment, and strenuous work or social involvement, have become near-pure matter for the maw of financial and production systems that escape rational judgment even while justifying themselves as rational. It is especially grating to consider that my brother’s values, not simply his work and productivity, could be relied upon by such partial systems and turned into financial advantage and power over others (he was a site supervisor, working on big concrete sites).

My sense of where all of this is going is rather somber, in spite of the high score by Macron (66.1% vs 33.9% for Le Pen). I did see some genuine signs of hope, that is, people working indefatigably to repair the fractures that are so prominent in French society. Macron is well aware of those fractures and repeatedly mentions their healing as the first order of business. I hope we are lucky enough to see all people of good will come round to this kind of program and ensure its viability.

This morning, I meet RM and his grandson John at Kelly’s. Richard

4. LE BRAS, *L’âge des migrations*.

is writing more short stories and continuing his research and teaching of mathematics.

TUESDAY, 9 MAY 2017

Legendre and Musso have been looking for re-incarnations, replays of a single idea that has no flesh on it at all, as they clothe it in their ethereal reconstructions. Musso writes in the allegorical mode or is it just a simile that he applies mechanically throughout his “vision”. The history of the idea of *industriation* would be an image of the Christian notion of incarnation because the words “body, corpus, corporation, incorporation” appear so often. But the notion of incarnation and industriation are nothing without working/thinking bodies. Much thinking is elucidated but detached from the body. Labor is almost nowhere to be seen. The dignity of labor, including that of women’s bodies—as in Mary’s story in Luke and Matthew—seems to be the big forgotten element, especially prominent in its mediaeval redemptive aspect.

THURSDAY, 11 MAY 2017

About the first paragraph of my resurgent Cana paper: I assume that the audience or community was aware of the two competing views of history that wine symbolized by virtue of its aspects, production, conservation, and the pleasures it elicited and stood for. The more general view was that the best of one’s history was at the origin of time, in an unretrievable golden age that one could only hope to approximate under enlightened, powerful, generous kings (such as Solomon? There is entropy even in that history of kings). Pockets of golden-aged nectar were reserved for the wise and powerful (i.e. justified by divine ideology), and vinegar for everyone else. This view was the broader one, more widely shared than just in the Hellenistic world or its Roman stoic reincarnation. The minority view expressed in much of the Bible and in the gospels is that the golden age is in the messianic future. In Genesis and Exodus, there is no past golden age but a difficult, narrow straight towards a permanently adjustable life (*Mizrayim!*).

SATURDAY, 13 MAY 2017

Blaise tells me last night that his paper at a Chicago medical conference went well and will be featured in a publication (abstract?). He also was interviewed Wednesday by Genentech for a position as pharmacist/researcher.

SUNDAY, 14 MAY 2017

Notes on LE BRAS, *L'âge des migrations*. He starts with the September 2016 government's project of dispersing 9,000 migrants in the whole of France: 1.5 migrant per 10,000 inhabitants! Loudly refused by most. The book looks at the evolution of the migratory phenomenon: it has become global; stereotypes re migration (desires and fears) haven't evolved much and disregard the education and progressive factors; student migrations have become very important. Climatic changes and aging of populations are also factors.

The very old conflict between sedentary agriculture and herders explains some of the fears. The desire to migrate has been measured by Gallup in 2008–10. About 51M people would plan to immigrate (especially to the US). This is a much larger figure than the actual number of yearly international flow, which concerns about 10M people.

The greater the revenue, the lower the desire to emigrate in a given year. For some professions like medicine, there is a clear hierarchy of desired countries, with the US at the top (very few US doctors emigrate). The number of students who are studying abroad is increasing: 2M in 2003 in the entire world, 4.2M in 2013, about 2% of totals. The West dominates, beginning with the US (784,000 registered students in 2013, i.e. 20% of all foreign students in the world, followed by the UK, Australia, France, and Germany, then Russia, Japan, and Canada). Note that Latin American students are less likely to be mesmerized by the US and Cuba exerts a considerable influence.⁵ Cultural imperialism has replaced the colonial power grid.

Migration caused by climatic events and changes has led to the use of politically loaded vocabulary. Such migrants are considered “refugees” and placed under the 1951 Geneva convention for refugees. One side of this debate is that industrial countries seem to accept their responsibilities in creating this kind of migration. Another side, however, is that the term “refugees” allows modern governments to lump them together with political refugees and justifies harsh measures meant to control refugees from southern countries. Finally, the broadening of the category of refugees allows a renewed (negative) debate on the responsibilities owed political refugees in virtue of the Geneva convention of 1951. The real goal may be to change the latter.

Finally, children or migrants? France vs Germany... The 27 European countries may see their population go from 440M to 420M by 2050. To

5. LE BRAS, *L'âge des migrations*, 73–75.

counter this de-population, 38M more migrants would be necessary in the coming 35 years. France, Sweden or Ireland would not need to increase their migrant population. But is the diminution of the population a threat (economic threat)? It is not proven. Yet, immigration could be a remedy to the aging of the population (as well as a solution to population and economic problems of countries south of the Mediterranean Sea)? If Europe were to invite migrants to try to keep the present ratio of active workers in the economy, one would need 385M migrants by 2050, i.e. 11M per year. The present rate is tiny in comparison.

Conclusions. The poorest people don't have the money, educational resources or the connections, to seek security elsewhere. The richer countries like France do see their educated young migrate: about 200,000 go abroad every year. Some of its best prepared (?) citizens will be replaced by the best educated citizens of poorer countries (or of countries situated below in the world order). Globalism at its beginning meant capital movements looking for cheap labor where it was. Now, in a second movement, professionals are migrating to countries where they can fulfill their dreams or aspirations. They threaten not so much the poorest people in rich countries as the middle classes who are a major part of the opinion and voting public. The book ends with a Macron-like question:

Pourra-t-on les rassurer [les classes moyennes] en améliorant l'éducation et les possibilités de promotion, les persuadant ainsi d'entrer comme les autres dans le vaste circuit de la mondialisation ? (Page 144).

End of notes on Le Bars' book.

I would add another more important question: can this global economic process that is worshipped by everyone in industry, government and now education be seen at last from the only angle that has a chance to bring a true reflection on human dignity? Can it be seen at last as a chance to realize that we are all made of each other, all indebted to each other in an infinite number of ways, all ready to respond to others' generosity with our own gifts, beyond quantifiers, and that our will and capacity to respond to each other are actually the main question?

In the introduction to my book on labor and gods, I need to argue why I assume a unity of topic along centuries of lives. Is this unity an illusion of modern, Christian or post-Christian optics? And if so, is it to be abandoned and replaced by a simple concatenation of unrelated events? The main reason for assuming a certain unity is that belief in the biblical god

and its theological underpinning, in the three monotheistic religions, has gained a particular weight in modern views of the world, even those critical or religious traditions. I mean that the textual tradition, the political and religious developments attached to it, even the aesthetic and architectural realizations have long had an aura of unity symbolized by the single words commonly attached to them: Judaism, Christianity, Islam. Yet, the story, if properly examined, has no internal compulsion behind it, in and of itself. Neither Christian end of history sort of things, or Hegelian subsuming under or submission to an unfolding spirit of history.

Then explain what are my presupposés, including the dialectic view of JG in all sectors of human life.

MONDAY, 15 MAY 2017

I slept on a cot in Gary Miles' room at Dominican Hospital (part of the "Dignity" system). We talked about history, family, life and death decisions. He has to be catheterized every four to six hours (more frequently last night), his body and limbs occasionally rearranged. My role was to be there for companionship and do small things for him such as plug his phone, rearrange the pillows under his tibias, etc. I woke up at 10h30, 00h00, 3h30, and 5h30 and managed to sleep in-between. I found the cot comfortable, actually.

Amy is sometimes to the left of me, which is a surprise. This morning, on our bike-ride to the university, we talk about disparities of salary at UCSC, and the deepening gap between the advertised purpose of the university and its practice. For instance, there is much talk about being a "Hispanic" institution, while underpaying the many Hispanics working disproportionately at the bottom of the salary scale (28K?). This salary scale, together with the tuition increases, makes it very hard to pay for a good university. Of course, there are attempts to correct inequities, but the overall picture is not favorable. The university contributes to the widening gap in income and life satisfaction (=happiness, the old white whale of enlightenment?).

A propos de Musso, *La religion industrielle*. Ce gros livre continue de me donner le fort sentiment qu'il évacue le travail et que son auteur se met dans tous les états pour prêter à l'entreprise une dignité artificielle qui lui manque par nature en la réincorporant ou plutôt en la rattachant à l'idée de l'incarnation. Je dis idée, puisqu'il la dénature aussi à vrai dire d'une autre

manière en la nommant “mythe de l’incarnation”.⁶ La question que j’ai est que la transformation sans reste de l’incarnation en pure idée et l’automatisme de son impression sur les formes sociales, spécialement la structure industrielle et gestionnaire qui s’est développée depuis le dix-huitième siècle évacue le travail comme si celui-ci n’était également qu’une idée et ne pouvait avoir de corps que ses hypostases en science, ingénierie, et gestion (ce qu’il appelle management, pas ménagement !). Il s’essaie à marcher sur l’eau.

En insistant à temps et à contretemps que l’idée mythique de l’incarnation a été hypostasiée sous les différentes formes du monastère, de la manufacture, et de l’usine, il fait l’impasse sur l’idée de création, qui est indissolublement liée au monothéisme tardif et qui, liée à l’incarnation, est un nouveau moteur de cette distance que la raison humaine se permet de prendre par rapport à la nature. La rationalité scientifique telle qu’elle s’est développée est difficile à comprendre sans les développements de la théologie chrétienne dans l’antiquité tardive (la reprise du platonisme en particulier) et à l’époque médiévale. Musso le dit, mais sans voir que la création et sa corollaire d’agent divin externe au monde est un antécédent nécessaire. L’incarnation ne peut se penser sans la création. Il est assez facile de parler allégoriquement de transsubstantiation, transmutation de la Nature, et transformation historique de l’humanité, encore faut-il que la nature puisse avoir été pensée comme telle.⁷

Musso parle trop rapidement de transfert plutôt que de continuité quand il cite Augustin de Narbonne au sujet de la transformation de l’eau de Cana en vin et des changements dans la nature ou de par l’industrie.⁸ Celui-ci suit Augustin d’Hippone qui parlait du vin comme d’un miracle renouvelé en permanence (pluies annuelles, etc.). Musso parle de “transfert de la transsubstantiation” mais il s’agit de continuité plutôt que de transfert. Le “grand Corps” qu’il voit comme étant habité par une Incarnation

6. Pour Musso, l’incarnation d’un sens absent (le dieu) en un présent (Jésus comme Christ) est un mythe ou une “symbolique instituante”, arrimée ou ficelée à une logique instituée (on fait avec ce qu’on a sous la main) : Musso, *La religion industrielle*, 56. L’histoire—je veux dire la matérialité—qui a mené à ce point qu’il appelle symbolique est complètement évacuée. Je ne crois pas au “mythe” de l’incarnation, mais je crois que cette foi anciennement constituée ne peut pas être simplement évacuée comme étant quelque chose de complètement irrationnel. La “folie de la croix” paulinienne a de bien bonnes raisons d’avoir eu lieu, sans folie, si on analyse les évangiles et la situation de ces petits royaumes au premier siècle. Il ne s’agit pas seulement de “foi” au sens étroit de la politique qui a suivi mais de fidélité qui engageait toute une vie.

7. *Ibid.*, 59.

8. *Ibid.*, 60.

plastique (je conserve sa majuscule), je l'imagine au contraire caché, comme le travail exploité et ses productions sont cachés ou ensevelis sous d'autres formes. L'auteur me paraît être ici un pur produit de l'industrie à son sens à lui d'industriation, de processus, il est fasciné par sa propre machine. Pour lui, "Derrière les récits opère une logique" : divine ? de hasard ? jeu divin ?

Il mentionne la création de temps à autre sans voir l'importance du concept, l'influence qu'il a eue au fil des siècles, et combien son histoire de l'industriation lui doit.⁹ Quant à ses citations de Chenu, Gilson, Ellul, Illich et Michel Henry, il me semble qu'il les prend à contresens en s'appliquant à lire ce qu'ils disent de l'incarnation comme s'il en allait d'une série d'idées (la chair : Henry).¹⁰

Il y a cependant des lueurs, par exemple ce passage :

La religion industrielle est le résultat, sur longue période, en Occident, d'un processus d'*industriation* fait de rationalisation et d'abstraction et de projection/incarnation pour « donner corps » et agir dans et sur le monde. Il y est toujours question d'incarnation, d'incorporation et de désincorporation, pour passer d'un Corps à un autre, *ou pour extirper, à partir des corps au travail*, des corpus standardisables. (Musso, *La religion industrielle*, 99. Je souligne.)

Où l'on voit, bien que ce soit très limité (l'utilitarisme de la dernière phrase), qu'il n'est pas facile d'éliminer complètement la chair, l'exploitation, et l'injustice. Rare lueur.

Musso parle à répétition de cette "architecture fiduciaire" comme d'une construction intellectuelle, un mot qui pointe vers un corps mort et une croyance mythique au-delà de toute réalité.¹¹ Et le monde de lois qu'il décrit est un monde créé :

Dans la matrice chrétienne, Dieu crée la Nature parfaite et l'homme, créateur à l'image de Dieu, peut prolonger la création par le travail et la technique. (101)

Mais cette "nature" (un participe futur actif) est suspendue, elle est une restructuration, puis un réinvestissement qui cherche à être "naturel" mais ne peut l'être complètement. Comme le dit Erich Fromm cité plus loin,

9. Musso, *La religion industrielle*, 66–67.

10. *Ibid.*, 68–86.

11. *Ibid.*, 100–1.

L'Homme a fait de lui-même un Dieu parce qu'il a acquis la capacité technique de procéder à une "seconde création" du monde qui remplace celle du Dieu de la religion traditionnelle. On peut également dire que nous avons fait de la machine un dieu et que, en la servant, nous sommes devenus des dieux. (103, réf. à *Avoir ou être*, 178)

La grande question : comment expliquer le déblocage en Europe médiévale ? Musso parle du "nouveau culte du travail" et de la technique comme moyens pour préserver la prière. Il y a toujours de ça dans toute technique, cad la création d'un *otium*. Mais on pourrait en parler aussi comme d'un continuum, le travail et la prière comme continuation et interpénétration. Musso martèle des formules comme celle-ci : "La rationalisation est alors mise au service de la foi," et de citer Bergson sur la mystique et la mécanique.¹² Mais il oublie la chair des chrétiens ou christianisés : il fait complètement l'impasse sur la vision du travail comme rédempteur ou y contribuant en continu avec la prière. Et il ne voit pas que tout ceci (son *industriation*) est préparé par la foi dans la création du monde par un dieu transcendant dont l'incarnation élève ou restaure la dignité de l'homme jusque là réservée à quelques élites ou sires.

Après Pierre Legendre, il parle d'une Schize entre règles du croire et celles du vivre (les deux cités et leurs exigences ?) comme "une faille ensevelie" (III). Mais cette faille est au contraire déjà mise au clair par l'Exode où il faut choisir entre alliance révélée et les avantages de l'esclavage dans une Egypte caractérisée par une terre qui précède et un régime monarchique qui se dit intermédiaire obligé des dieux. Elle est renouvelée, de nouveau en clair, par l'appel du "Royaume de Dieu" dans les évangiles. Cette "faille" n'est donc pas ensevelie, ou du moins pas très profondément. Il est étonnant de voir le christianisme présenté comme une foi sans loi, sans "préceptes."

Musso ne comprend pas que c'est la dépendance de l'autre, y compris par le salaire, et non le travail lui-même, qui avilissait et était servile.¹³ Il cite Cicéron sur ce point (*Traité des devoirs* 1.42). Il ne s'agit pas de dédain pour le travail, au contraire,—bien qu'il y ait le problème de la technè comme magie et détournement de la nature—mais de manque de liberté et de dignité. Le travail et la technique seront éventuellement revalorisés sur une autre base, mais ce n'est certainement pas seulement par une incarnation désincarnée, je veux dire par un travail sur la raison ou la logique. La rationalité n'est pas seule en cause ! La clé du problème présenté par les anciennes économies est

12. *Ibid.*, 109.

13. *Ibid.*, 126.

donc l'idée de dignité humaine telle qu'elle se fait jour (= ancienne idée de révélation) au travers de la croyance en une Création et Incarnation, ce qui libère le potentiel du travail comme valeur (calculable).

Pages 134–35, paragraphes assez confus sur la Genèse et la vision du travail qui y transparait. La réhabilitation du travail dépendant ou surtout servile et la restauration de la dignité humaine se sont faites lentement. Parmi les grandes étapes selon moi : la foi dans le récit de la création, la passion et résurrection (“surrection”, à la Gauchet ? il n'est pas suffisant de dire l'incarnation), la séparation de la science grecque et des mythes, le sentiment que la raison ne pouvait être fondamentalement en désaccord avec la foi et donc son développement à son service, sa séparation éventuelle dans un monde où surplus économiques commençaient à se faire jour... Curieux que Musso voie l'importance de la création (135–36), probablement parce qu'il paraît suivre Gilson, mais n'en fasse rien ou plutôt n'en tire aucun développement ou conclusion.

De temps à autre, au fil de pages assez sèches, réapparaît le travail, par exemple :

Les monastères bénédictins, fidèles à la règle de Benoît, sont fondés à l'écart des villes, généralement dans des fonds de vallée que les moines ont pris le soin de défricher et de mettre en valeur *avec le concours de frères convers* (du latin *conversus*, « converti »), *en charge des tâches domestiques, ainsi que de serfs ou de paysans libres.* (149. Je souligne)

Les pages sur l'abbé Suger et la période “charnière” des cathédrales illustrent les failles du raisonnement de Musso, spécialement quand il s'agit du travail. Elles rappellent combien la dialectique de Marx est la seule approche possible.¹⁴ Interruption et conversation avec Miguel qui travaille dans la cuisine du café où j'écris. Il me dit bonjour, “Toujours à lire et à écrire ?” — “It is a job, I was trained for that,” I answer, as an excuse for my sitting, ability to draw on a retirement fund, be respected, etc. What form could the conversation have taken in 1134?

Le monastère institutionnalise “le travail, l'économie et la technique”, mais la transformation en réalité précède l'arrivée de ce que Musso appelle “des quasi-entrepreneurs”.¹⁵ Ceci est un jeu de mots. Le concept moderne d'entreprise s'est donné des marques de dignité sur le dos des “croyants.”

14. Musso, *La religion industrielle*, 180.

15. *Ibid.*, 184.

Un peu plus loin, un autre ratage à propos du rôle des humains dans l'œuvre de création :¹⁶ ce qui est fondamental ici, à mon sens, est que le monde ne peut être transformé en nature ouvrable que parce que l'élément divin comme l'élément humain n'y sont plus et le transcendent, au contraire du mythe où il est partie vivante et agissante du monde. Cette vision biblique du monde et de son créateur a des raisons politiques dont l'histoire est encore à faire.

La gestion et la technologie pratiquées par les monastères médiévaux n'en font pas des firmes modernes, contre Rodney Stark qui est cité par Musso.¹⁷ La très grande différence à mon sens est que les monastères n'étaient pas liés à une structure de marché moderne où les servo-mécanismes sont supposés ajuster les besoins et désirs aux ressources, sans aucun reste — c'est-à-dire avec zéro à payer, et comme si ces deux pôles que forment les besoins et les ressources étaient naturels alors que tous deux sont fabriqués et fuient la nature ou la refont. C'est confondre apparences et réalité.

TUESDAY, 16 MAY 2017

About forgiveness as a radical idea, “an impossibility that requires imagination,” as reflected by Karen:¹⁸ Why did her family save their letters? The putting away, I imagine, is more than a possible claim on forgetfulness. It is “proffered to the future. *This is what we did. Do not forget us. Please forgive us.*” There is also the literary accomplishment, the recognition that a real effort to be true permeates these documents.

WEDNESDAY, 17 MAY 2017

Paper by Martin Devecká on Socratic economics, via Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and Plato's *Symposium*. The main argument as I understood it was a version of the notion that politics was for those freed from unavoidable obligations? Read Xenophon.

16. *Ibid.*, 190.

17. *Ibid.*, 191.

18. YAMASHITA, *Letters to memory*, 14.

THURSDAY, 18 MAY 2017

I finished Karen's book.¹⁹ I read it as a gift that broadens my questions on past lives. History as a series of problems, the first being, by what right do I think of lives as part of a collective body that can be pointed to in words, in imaginary collective tensions and intentions? The letters are sometimes highly formal though passionate. They are clearly lifted by belief. Passages I liked especially: the story of crutches that his father had to use after injuring his leg jumping over a fence. More ominously, the silence of pastors and professors in Evanston when a Japanese-American family was about to rent a professor's house. The mentions of Niebuhr. Most disturbing: the reference to Lilian Smith's *Strange fruit*. Odd: the reference to Alexis Carrel (147): he was clearly famous or infamous with his ideas about genetics (*L'homme cet inconnu*). On Mao and revolution vs dinner parties or art, see 125, the destructive fury of a passion for justice if not tempered by... measure? peace? putting oneself in the place of the other, no matter the position?

FRIDAY, 19 MAY 2017

I need to think about this text by Gagnepain in regards to the question raised by the schmoozers about what would purportedly characterize humans, and that is, their future-orientedness:

qu'est la *culture*, c'est-à-dire l'ensemble des processus grâce auxquels l'homme implicitement analyse sa représentation, son activité, son être et son vouloir, à travers un réseau de signes, d'outils, de personnes et de normes qui ne se manifestent que réinvestis. La *médiation* dont nous parlons à ce propos n'est nullement la capacité de nous forger l'alibi multiforme d'un monde auquel réellement nous appartenons. Par la négativité qu'elle instaure, elle y introduit le discret et, ajoutant nos lois à ses lois, nous permet de le transformer. L'homme n'est pas, en un mot, seulement ce que la nature l'a fait. Il est aussi et spécifiquement ce que par son langage, son art, sa société, son droit, il se fait. Loin de tenir, en effet, désormais, le rôle de référence suprême et monolithique que lui attribuait naguère l'humanisme en l'identifiant finalement à la seule cohésion du discours, la raison, plus volontiers, nous apparaît comme une rationalité éclatée; ses divers modes logique, technique, ethnique, éthique sont autant d'instances par quoi nous créons la distance qui nous confère l'humanité.

19. YAMASHITA, *Letters to memory*.

SUNDAY, 21 MAY 2017

Last Thursday, Trump at a press conference with Santos, the president of Colombia. He was asked questions on the on-going investigations, on the nomination of the special counsel. Santos was asked for his opinion regarding the wall idea. DT took over and spoke to his base (“witch hunt”), went on and on about the accomplishments of his visibly crumbling White House, spoke much too long about Venezuela to the point that I wondered if he was confusing Columbia and Venezuela.

Dark thoughts come: the humiliation and disorder that an “imperial order” can foster, how hard the fall can be for most. What are the options for DT? He is cornered and puts a brave face on the mess, like Nixon or Clinton before him. Further thought: “Thank God his love of money, gold, and the power to buy fame is still there. The desire may still be there, his presidency as another way to accumulate goods, if not to keep creditors at bay.” Strangely comforting thought. If this desire to fight for recognition of his quantities (“big, very very beautiful, huge, many many, greatest...”) was gone, if this superego went away or the path to it was removed, what would happen? Would there be a danger of seeing DT appeal to the worst instincts, to the sort of destructive mob feelings Karen alludes to in her book, regarding the US internment camps, discrimination, and much worse the “strange fruit” of racism, or the *shoah*? DT is still in the electoral mode, stuck at the 38% or so level of approval. It is his permanent mode, courting the biggest number of people possible to acquire means to court even more people, etc.... What will happen if the Coulters, Savages, Bannons, et al, abandon him or he is forced to jettison them? There are signs it is happening. Many voters in the Republican party may begin to think of the Pence option as warranting an impeachment procedure or a forced resignation. Everything looks solid still, these options far in the distance, but the fall could then come fast, as for Nixon.

Beautiful wedding of Tim and Laurie this afternoon. Claire Bras-Valentine officiated and said wonderful, true things about each person’s life. The ceremony started with a Santa Cruzan thing, a women’s circle that celebrated earth, water, crystal... Tim asked me to think about something biblical for the event. I realized he wanted something that could sound biblical enough with the overt Christian marks deleted. This morning, while I was still thinking of Corinthians (a no-no because of its overuse), Ruth, or the story of Hannah in Samuel, and realizing any of these texts involved a preachy or lecture-like tone, the cooing of the doves on my

morning walk made me realize *Song of Songs* 2, with some erasures (no gazelles, stags, or honey), was still the best text, especially when sung. It is a celebration of nature with some dark tones somehow receding in the background. Amy sang the tunes (modern arrangements) and we alternated the reading of a few stanzas.

MONDAY, 22 MAY 2017

While reading VIDAL-NAQUET,²⁰ I note the story Glaucos told about his ancestor Bellerophon. He was sent to a king of Lycia with a message containing “murderous signs,” not quite the kind of letter Uriah brought to his army commander. In the story about David (2 Sam 11:14), no need to write in ciphers, since Uriah, the brave and totally obedient soldier, could be trusted to carry the scrolled and sealed message without opening it. David simply “wrote a document,” וַיְהִי בַבֶּקֶר וַיִּכְתֹּב דָּוִד סֵפֶר אֶל־יֹאָב וַיִּשְׁלַח בְּיַד אֲוִרְיָה.

WEDNESDAY, 24 MAY 2017

Summary of Descola’s pages on forms of attachment, production, protection, and transmission: DESCOLA.²¹ He examines six types of relationships: three in which there may be an element of reversibility (*exchange, predation, gift*); and three that are univocal (one way?) (*production, protection, and transmission*). Are exchange and gift—pace Levi-Strauss after Aristotle and Seneca—to be conceived as belonging to the same set of phenomena?²² About the *gift*, Mauss was following his own tradition, and LS after him, in interpreting it “as resting upon the obligations of giving, receiving, and giving back.” Does this conception match the observed practices? Literally speaking, *gift* “has” no reciprocal. See Testart who differentiates exchange from gift.²³ The obligation to pay is purely moral: if gift entailed an obligation, it would cease to be a gift.

Exchange requires a counter-move.²⁴ It is bi-directional. It is better to conceive of it as exchange and not reciprocity, as the latter can happen with gifts, even though they are not required, on the contrary. Both exchange and

20. VIDAL-NAQUET, *Le monde d’Homère*, 21.

21. DESCOLA, *Beyond nature and culture*, 321–35.

22. *Ibid.*, 312–14.

23. TESTART, “Les trois modes de transfert”; see also TESTART, *Critique du don: études sur la circulation non marchande*.

24. DESCOLA, *Beyond nature and culture*, 315–17.

gift are universal (or common at the very least). Exchange and gift don't cancel each other. It looks like gift is at the center of things for many groups.²⁵ Trust is a fundamental value of such sharing societies. Trust is a situation of dependence freely entered into. Gift and sharing are unconditional, exchange is a tacit or contractual obligation.

About *predation*:²⁶ not a moral matter at root. Even with livestock raising and deferred consumption or products transformed by agriculture. I agree that predation needs to be analyzed as one form of subsistence behavior in environments where predictability is difficult to achieve. The moral problem arises when predictable incomes (by kings and elites especially) mean that predation and its risks are not necessary for the group at large. Was Hobbes right that *homo homini lupus*? No, this was a naturalized view of competition in a new market economy. Predation is widely attested, especially in Amazonian societies.

On *producing, protecting, and transmitting* (all one way?).²⁷ Is consumption just a moment in the process of production, simply enabling the larger process of production? Can this model be applied universally? It would be better to speak of *procurement* for hunter-gatherer societies, not *production*. What of China, as interpreted by François Jullien? A mutual relationship, with no beginning or end, and no external agent, therefore a self-regulated process.²⁸ With the biblical notion of creation and Greek philosophical dualism, there is no ontological equivalency between producer and what is brought into being. In other societies like the Achuar, one cannot speak of "produits du sol" but of things transformed. Baskets are bodies, for instance.

On *protection*:²⁹ long disquisition on pastoral societies of East Africa and the Mediterranean. Descola's mention of the *Georgics* brings out the political problem in all its clarity: the "pastoral treatment" of people, with obedience and slavery, brings security and is clearly opposed to the central meaning of the Exodus story.

Transmission:³⁰ The dead get a hold (are given?) over the living by *filiation*. This has taken the form of a debt only in certain circumstances (de-

25. About gift and sharing, see Norit Bird-David on the Nayoka, "A giving environment."

26. DESCOLA, *Beyond nature and culture*, 318–19.

27. *Ibid.*, 321–24.

28. *Ibid.*, 323.

29. *Ibid.*, 325–27.

30. *Ibid.*, 329–32.

pending on the means of subsistence). It implies genealogies, though these are not universal.³¹ Access to land, exercise of political responsibilities, well-being, all of them depend upon ancestors. Authority comes from subordination to ancestors. The survival of ancestors (I frame it differently: the survival of the political arrangements dependent upon this kind of mediated transcendence) depends upon the filiation's sense of being indebted to them. Such collectives are able to claim land and ethnicity on this basis.

THURSDAY, 25 MAY 2017

Meeting on role of Judaism and Jews in social revolutions, from 1917 to Bernie. Luminaries: Alma Heckman presented Bettina Aptheker, Tony Michels, Arie Dubnov, Lior Sternfeld, Joel Beinin, Orit Bashkin, Nathaniel Deutsch, Peter Kenez, Bob Weinberg. Twenty-nine people attending, including the eight presenters. About ten students, ten people from town. Bettina begins with portraits of indomitable women who were radical world-changers. She reads some of her letters that point to an indefatigable concern and work for the neediest. It reminded me of Amy and the way she approaches personal needs. "Radical compassion", as Bettina called it. It reminds me also of Dorothy Day and others whose lives beckon. Later on, there is a discussion of la "question juive" and what looks like a paradoxical situation: modern Jews who at least since the nineteenth century are perceived as radicals (and may perceive themselves as such), yet want to reach normality. Bettina interjects that to frame everything in terms of questions, as it was done so often in the communist party of her youth, comforts the notion that there is a center elsewhere. I would add that it obfuscates the real question which to me is the source of this extraordinary attention to others for themselves: a sort of inverted protestantism, with works without the faith, or rather a faith against faith? Peter Kenez asked why Jews are disproportionately represented in radical movements. He thinks it is partly a response to antisemitism, a commitment to learning, and perhaps a smidgen of messianism (à la Marx or à la Benjamin). Brushing history against the grain?

31. I note that ancestor cults were or are a form of transcendence, a way to weigh on the living's labor, structure it, give it differentiated value, from a point of view that is "beyond" and is/was coopted and reinforced by centralized political systems such as those that succeed themselves in China.

FRIDAY, 26 MAY 2017

Lucky: I see Bettina this morning at the library and tell her my reactions to her intervention. What is the source of this non-stop attention to the world, which doesn't eliminate a matter-of-factness that sometimes veers into stubbornness?

MONDAY, 29 MAY 2017

Reading ROSENSTOCK.³² Cohen thought of monotheism as expressing a new way of thinking about the relationship between the deity and the world rather than as a reaction to polytheism. The singleness of the being or essence of the cosmos formed an important step both for Greek philosophers and Hebrew thinkers. Cohen traced the rise of this idea of the uniqueness of the deity's being. He sees it in the self-affirming being of the burning bush story. Cohen sees Parmenides' being as lacking capacity to expand in time and space, as neuter or too abstract. The Hebrew god is a person (as Pascal staked his life on). This personhood is persistence in unity, *אחדות*, and especially in *making-oneself-one*, *יחידות*. In Cohen's view, Greek immortality of the soul is a negative expression of the spirit that denies its end. In Hebrew monotheism, immortality becomes an affirmation of another, chosen, end. The purposefulness of life belongs (spreads?) to the divine self-affirmation of unity. This is framed in Leviticus as an injunction, to be holy. To be holy is bound to the future, not enthralled to the past or some kind of golden age (as in most of Greco-Roman wisdom). *Time will be future and only future.*

Both Cohen and Peterson shared in their criticism of Philo's substantial view of the world as in need of a monarch. It also explains for me a startling difference between Philo and Hebrew prophets or visionaries, including those of the late period (eschaton thinkers of various stripes). Philo thinks one can have a mystic fusion with the divine, as his notion of the divine and of the world are actually less radical than those found in Exodus or the Hebrew prophets. For him, the world might exist even apart from the deity, it seems. Yet, for Cohen, the world is not a sempiternal appearance of multiple beings, but a perpetual renewal originating in its creation.

I realize now that Assmann's commentary on Exodus could very well be wedded to Cohen's concept of a "messianic transcendental." And in rela-

32. ROSENSTOCK, "Monotheism as a political problem: The critique of political theology out of the sources of Judaism."

tion to this sort of transformative view of the divinity and the creation, see Keel and Schroer.³³ They observe that their initial 2002 publication (second edition in 2008?) was misunderstood by some critics, especially those of the reformed tradition, for whom the opposition of a creating god and its creation is paramount. The creation accounts in Genesis retain something of the widely shared notion of the divinity of the world.

TUESDAY, 30 MAY 2017

Note on Keel and Schroer: they challenge the notion that Exodus and its theology have some sort of priority over Genesis. Indeed, the concept of creation by the divinity is more important than Musso is willing to grant (or is blind to). The reason for this importance, however, is not the divine aspect of the created world itself. There is continuity, as the writers devised the history of the world and that of the Israelite people, from the creation to the end of the Exodus story, with its re-imagining of the temple and a re-envisioned life in the world.

In a review of a new book on the Letter to the Romans by Rodríguez, Philip Esler keeps expressing an hesitation to term all too quickly ethnic followers of part or all of the Torah precepts as Jews. I understand the need to stay away from the fraught and loaded word *Jew* and *Jewish* since these words point to religious, cultural, and social aspects of modern Jewish people that made little sense in the Greco-Roman world. But to use *Judean* in parentheses is not very helpful either as it seems a) to erase all too quickly both the possibility of a religious and ethnic unity in the ancient world—however fraught this may have been—and b) the continuity claimed by later Judaism through the centuries. There has been an extensive debate on these issues, and the stream of books on the Letter to the Romans is not helping much. Still, I find Esler's further consideration of what ethnic choices implied in antiquity very interesting:

He [Rodríguez] presumably takes this view because of the persistence of the notion that the *Ioudaioi* of our sources were adherents of a religion, Judaism, whereas in fact (whether you call them Jews or Judeans) they were members of an ethnic group (which did include religious beliefs and practices but only as part of a larger,

33. KEEL and SCHROER, *Schöpfung: biblische Theologien im Kontext altorientalischer Religionen*; now translated into English: KEEL and SCHROER, *Creation: Biblical theologies in the context of the ancient Near East*.

more inclusive identity). Becoming a Jew/Judean through circumcision and adoption of Jewish/Judean customs meant adoption of Jewish/Judean ethnic identity, not the adoption of a separable and separate Jewish religious identity (which was nonexistent in the first century CE just as surely as Judaism is a category error for this period).

He doesn't seem to see however that to choose this broader identity by whatever means was politically fraught, as it was joining a conquered ethnic group whose apparent political and military power had crumbled. His quotation of Philo about proselytes (*De virtutibus* 102–3) makes clear how risky and tightly bound to very special circumstances it was to become “Israelite” (perceived even then as *Jew*, with attaches to *Judean*). This is the more so as this commentary on an Abraham-like choice made by proselytes was written by Philo before the Jewish war and the divisions it implied within and without the Judaeans and Jewish communities of the time.

WEDNESDAY, 31 MAY 2017

Julie called me this morning and gives me news of the family. She seemed content, busy with various administrative tasks stemming from François' death, and still inhabited by the strong feeling of his presence. Christophe and Halima have begun the *ramadan*. Jean-Tophe's and Nathalie's family came last Sunday to her house to celebrate Mothers' day. I tell her about Blaise's hiring as a pharmacist at the Lucile Packard Hospital in Palo Alto. Blaise told us about it yesterday. It is a well-paid position, about twice the money I was earning at the end of my position (I told him thrice, mistakenly).

6 June

FRIDAY, 2 JUNE 2017

A recent book by Esther Fuchs about the meaning of feminist interpretation for the broader field of Biblical studies serendipitously reminds me of what Marx and Marc Bloch say about the need to prioritize the study of structures and relations before analyzing their evolution, and especially the need to guard against historicism: « L'anatomie de l'homme donne la clé de l'anatomie du singe. » (Marx, quoted by DESCOLA, *Par-delà nature et culture*, 13–14) One needs to give all its weight to “regressive history” (Marc Bloch), i.e. interpret the present in order to better analyze the past.

MONDAY, 5 JUNE 2017

Haudricourt s'est demandé si les dieux et rois de la Méditerranée orientale ont pris la forme de pasteurs et protecteurs de troupeaux et de peuples à cause du mouton plutôt qu'à cause d'une capacité innée des humains à se construire une transcendance :

Est-il absurde de se demander si les dieux qui commandent, les morales qui ordonnent, les philosophies qui transcendent n'auraient pas quelque chose à voir avec le mouton, par l'intermédiaire d'une prédilection pour les modes de production esclavagiste et capitaliste, et si les morales qui expliquent et les philosophies de l'immanence n'auraient pas quelque chose à voir avec l'igname, le taro et le riz, par l'intermédiaire des modes de production de l'antiquité asiatique et du féodalisme bureaucratique. (Haudricourt, « *Domestication des animaux, culture des plantes et traitement d'autrui*, » 50)

Il me semble que ce qui est indiqué (ou qu'on peine à indiquer, qu'on imagine plutôt) par les mots de transcendance et immanence est à ré-analyser d'une tout autre manière. Avoir des animaux et des plantes domestiques a dû exiger quelque chose comme une domestication des croyances, une

transformation du sentiment que les chasseurs et cueilleurs avaient de faire partie d'un monde que se partageaient corps et esprits sans a-priori.

I haven't written about Monday the fifth of June 1967 and the adumbrated memories I have of the first days of that week. Not six days. A list of the clearest ones will include: the story of the squad of Jordanian soldiers stationed on the Ottoman wall above the no man's land. So, I realize, first a *map*. Ottoman and modern walls, some Herodian stones, a jumble of vegetation, poor Jews from Morocco and other Arab countries, where streets and a most expensive real estate now officiate. The high wall near Damascus Gate, on my way either to the Barclay's bank right near, and especially along Nablus road to the EBAF.



Figure 6.1 – *Nablus Road, 2000, by aggada (Google Earth)*

Figure 6.1 looks back south towards Damascus Gate. At the end of the street, to the right, was a Barclays Bank office, a post of Jordanian soldiers,

and a high cement wall hiding the no man's land and making you believe Israel was a fantasm. Its name could not be mentioned in conversations. In French we used "l'Auvergne" to refer to it, because of a well-known bad joke, perhaps antisemitic, on "sale homme", supposedly pronounced "šale homme" in Auvergnat dialect...

Notre-Dame convent, looking noble still in its semi-ruined state and kept virginal for future prayers and demonstrations of divine love, perhaps sheltering IDF soldiers we never saw. Until a few days before the 1967 June war, when a few men were seen consulting maps in the open on the rooftop. We interpreted this unusual, bold-looking attitude, together with the passing of small airplanes over East Jerusalem—taking photos?—as part of the preparations of the invasion by the Israeli army of Jerusalem and the West Bank. We, that is, the brothers and foreigners in the Old City. There was no doubt since the closing of Tiran Straights and especially since King Hussein had been forced to go and kiss his mortal enemy, Shuqayri (replaced by Arafat in 1967 as president of the PLO),

Entrance to the college. Smooth stone-slabs. Abu 'Atta's café. Early June: school year over. Thoughts of going toward "Mesopotamia," even Iran. Tensions high. *Le Monde* not always available. I missed the usually brilliant articles by Éric Rouleau.

TUESDAY, 6 JUNE 2017

Still debating the merit of the fundamental structures thought by Descola to preside over (direct? frame? cause?) our understanding of ourselves and the world (I didn't say "in" the world, as I don't want to intimate any naturalist idea). Descola seems to be closely aligned with Gagnepain's thought when he sees identification and relationship as fundamental (though not exclusive) structuring of the experience one may have of the world and oneself.

News this morning: aftermath of terrible attacks in Afghanistan (one hundred and fifty victims), London, Manchester, Paris... The Caliphate and ISIS (DAESH?) are losing ground in Raqqa's area. Who knows what will replace it once everyone recedes in the shadows? Qatar is being ostracized once more by Saudi Arabia, the United Emirates, Bahrein, Egypt, and Yemen, probably because of its attempts to play by its own rules between Iraq, US (a big basis and operational command), and Iran. The US president's visit may have been the catalyst. Any increased tension may look good to Trump, these days. In the US proper: less health safety, increased polit-

ical polarization, increasing inequities in access to jobs, education, health, decreasing stability of the economy. Most jobs are without security and consumption is flat or low. Meanwhile, much capital flows to destructive or non-producing sectors like armament and security (including much software).

WEDNESDAY, 7 JUNE 2017

An attack by Sunni jihadists occurred in Iran today, only a few days after the visit by Trump to Saudi Arabia, Israel and Europe. The US—or the present government—have decided to support an aggressive Saudi Arabia, Israel, and even Egypt to a much lesser degree. This is adding oil to the fire, as the jihadist philosophies are in great part bound to very conservative views of Islam directly anchored in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi dynasty is directly supporting a hard-line Islam for political and moral reasons. It is the only cover for a corrupt dynasty put in place and long consolidated by western empires. The burning question of justice and dignity for all is completely masked by these kingdoms and dictatorships, and framed by western governments as a *sui generis* entity, terrorism. Iran was attacked today by these “terrorists.” Qatar has been aggressively isolated by Saudi Arabia et al, for many reasons among which the main one is that Qatar follows its own piper about Iran, Israel, the Muslim Brothers, and the gulf, and needs to be reined in, from the Saudi point of view. In the US struggle to eradicate jihadi land control in northern Syria and Irak, Iran is a *de facto* ally, even though it is for different, more long-term reasons. I think Iran has common interests also with Turkey regarding Kurdistan, even though this may change. And Russia and Iran have long-term common interests in the whole region. It seems the US present government has raised the danger level without getting anything in return.

Is there evidence that the kings of Israel, Judah, and Aramaean states, proclaimed freedom from debt or slavery? Anything in Ezekiel? Could priests and other elites have borrowed the idea from Babylonian customs? But then, why would they have felt the need to enshrine this as a long-respected custom? Did Achaemenid kings publish similar rescripts on their enthronement?

I agree with Frahm’s review that Oded could or should have hierarchized his analysis of the reasons that Assyrian texts gave for war.¹ Chapters 8, 11,

1. ODED, *War, peace, and empire*; FRAHM, “Review of: *War, peace and empire*. Justifi-

and 12 should have been gathered together. The documents are given without any context. The reasons given for war appear to be eerily stable and last over centuries. Were they that stable and uniform? Was there a difference of approach in the Assyrian texts regarding Babylonia vs “very different peoples?”

On *prozbul* and whether it was fully justified under Biblical authority or an innovative *taqqanah*, see the excellent discussion by HAYES.² The conclusion or summary of Hayes in regard to the relationship of *taqqanot* to Torah law is given page 306. Hayes gives later her general conclusions on the difficulty encountered in applying universal truths.³ Divine law could be modified according to moral critiques, which was a scandal from the Greco-Roman viewpoint. The reason was that the Bible located the divine in history, not in nature. It was not universal, static, or uniform. And another great difference was that divine law was unwritten for the Romans, whereas it was written for the rabbis. I add that it is the fact that it was given *once* and *written* as part of this “once” that makes interpretation and adaptation so crucial in the Biblical and rabbinic traditions.

On Levi-Strauss according to Descola:⁴ He conceives of culture as a *sui generis* reality separate or distinguishable from nature, and finds in it an inexhaustible fount of analysis and symbols. At the same time, under the influence of Boas and others (the German-American school), he becomes and remains a relativist who refuses to rank cultures according to moral values or on an evolutionary scale (i.e. vs Enlightenment).

Note that the notion of a singular “culture” (civilization) gets much of its power from its opposition to “nature.” When declined in the plural, cultures lose that polarity and can only mean by themselves, unless forcefully ranked, which was abandoned for several reasons: political problem of *Kultur* and Nazism; ebbing of Christian views of history; de-colonization; capitalist globalization that seeks its advantages by drawing from multiple, weak, sub-national centers; i.e. from the weakness of modern states. Still, the German-American notion of culture (Boas, Sapir, Lowie, Kroeber, etc.) took over also for epistemological reasons: development of a method between idealism and positivism.⁵

cations for war in Assyrian royal inscriptions, by Bustenay Oded,” 240.

2. HAYES, *What’s divine about divine law?: early perspectives*, 294–99.

3. *Ibid.*, 325–26.

4. DESCOLA, *Par-delà nature et culture*, 114.

5. DESCOLA, *Beyond nature and culture*, 115; see especially RICKERT, *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft*. No *Geistwissenschaften* in the title.

L'ethnologie tire une inspiration constante d'une opposition [nature / culture] dont la plupart des peuples qu'elle décrit et interprète ont fait l'économie. (Descola 130; my emphasis)

Note to be integrated in chapter on labor and monarchy: in Mesopotamia, temple labor supply came in part from giving refuge or protection to poor people, crippled, orphans and widows, and ransomed citizens.⁶ Temples also coerced citizens into service.

THURSDAY, 8 JUNE 2017

Fossils of homo sapiens dated to 315,000 years have been found at Jebel Irhoud in Morocco, together with Levallois flint tools.⁷ This dating means that homo sapiens is much older than thought previously (195,000 years). The discovery in Morocco also means that homo sapiens may have lived in a much wider area than previously thought (East Africa and South Africa), at a much earlier date, and with already developed tool systems.

Eight o'clock. A turtle-dove is singing, the sky is dark and it might rain even though this is the month of June. I have planned to take JPL to the UCSC library for breakfast.

A foreign policy catastrophe is unfolding in the Persian Gulf that may lead to an even more dangerous situation. Two events just occurred: one, the attempt by Saudi Arabia a few days ago to isolate tiny Qatar a few days after a visit by president Trump to the Saudi king in which he promised \$110 billion worth of weapon systems, some of which are quite sophisticated according to the reports. Two, an attack by sunni jihadis on the parliament and the Khomeini monument, both in Teheran. These attackers probably came from the Iranian small sunni minority.⁸ The White House's reaction to the first event was to support the Saudi side and act as if Qatar was the only supporter of jihadis. The reality is that all state actors in the area support their "favorite" ones. What was the trigger in the WH's reaction? Vanity alone? vanity and real estate interests in the Emirates? Or sheer stupidity?

The Saudis have long been upset by the independently minded Qatar leaders. They are mostly annoyed by the practical ties Qatar maintains with

6. CHIRICHIGNO, *Debt-slavery in Israel and the ancient Near East*, 41.

7. See [Nature's article](#), dated 7 June 2017. One scholar cautions coming to rash conclusions about the tools, as the deposits in the cave may have undergone a number of disturbances over the millennia.

8. Later news reveal that they were Kurdish sunnis.

Iran, that are based mostly on their sharing a geography and especially a large natural gas reserve in the Gulf. This doesn't prevent Qatar from providing the most important air and logistics base to the USA (Al-Udeid, 11,000 soldiers), providing financial and armed support to the Saudi fight in Yemen against the Iran-supported Houthis, or exactly for the same reasons in Syria against the Alawite regime. Yet this is not enough for the Saudis, or apparently the WH. Qataris are at fault in Saudi and Egyptian eyes because of their support of the Muslim Brotherhood (though they hedge their bets there too), their embracing of the Arab Spring in 2011, their support of Al Jazeera, and their unabashed "modern" embrace of everything Western, including football!

The attack on Iran triggered immediate messages of sympathy from the whole world, except the Gulf's royals and ...the White House. Hours went by before a horrible message came out expressing sympathy for the victims but blaming the attack as punishment for past and present use of violence by the Iranian government. Exactly the tenor of Iran's view of the attacks on the US in September 2001. Not only is this "not diplomacy" but actually it is a dangerous acceleration of the conflict. The *NYT* editorial today advocates diplomacy regarding Qatar, but the much larger problem is Iran, which must be re-integrated among the nations and has recently become a de facto ally of the US in the struggle against sunni extremists. The *NYT* itself has long been a conservative and reactionary voice about Iran. It has finally accepted the policy of containment devised by the Obama administration, if perhaps grudgingly. But in this latest diplomatic spat between the Saudis and the Qataris, it only mentions Iran as a reason for the dispute. It doesn't try to analyze the changed situation the main actors of the area find themselves in: Iran, Turkey, the Kurdistan, Irak.

FRIDAY, 9 JUNE 2017

The newspapers are full of the Comey story. The positions on whether Trump obstructed justice in trying to influence the FBI director and later firing him depend on the political allegiances. I suspect the crude acts of Trump should not simply be read psychologically as narcissistic behavior. Neither should they be seen as thuggery. Rather, this "thuggery" should be replaced in its larger context of a global struggle for mastery of investment flows and returns that involves many entities.

Another piece of news: the British Prime Minister Teresa May lost her gambit of a couple months ago in which she decided to call a snap election.

Her conservative party got 318 members elected and will have to share power in a minority government with Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party. No coalition government possible apparently. The left did very well under Corbyn. Consequences: a difficult, more complicated, but still negotiable "Brexit," with meetings beginning soon; likely tensions, at least politically between Sinn Fein (pro-European) and the DUP; and firm relationship of Scotland with the UK.

About vanishing footnotes and their effects, a passage that describes our situation at UCSC:

Now scholars don't worry so much about footnotes. The emphasis in the Internet age has been more on access to data rather than retrieval thereof, with academics promoting that access via technology initiatives that have all but transformed some university libraries into computer centers with gourmet coffee rather than learning centers with expert archivists. The phenomenon of vanishing citations seems more like a technological glitch— a downed server or corrupt file— than a lapse in methodology. The typical student, professor and researcher now seems to overlook the disappearance of primary sources in an article or a document, rather than questioning where those sources went or trying to recover them, merely because the Internet glitches so frequently, that the convenience of online research would be severely undermined, if we kept our meticulous ways. As we will learn, the tilt toward convenience over substance has put at risk peer review and scientific process upon which research, invention and innovation have been based since the Enlightenment. (BUGEJA and DIMITROVA, *Vanishing Act*, 2)

A few words to Bruno about our political morass:

Je suis de près les péripéties de notre agent immobilier international. On espère que l'enquête qui est dirigée par Mueller, ex-patron du FBI, mènera à une mise en examen et à une démission forcée ou non. Mais ce sera long parce que le parti républicain a trop peur de se faire déborder par les 30 à 40% qui ont voté pour Trump et donc se tient coi. Si les aficionados de Trump donnent des signes d'abandon (il y en a eu sur Fox, une télé très réactionnaire, je ne sais si elle existe en Europe), les républicains se précipiteront vers la sortie. Pour le moment, les sondages disent que 80% des Républicains sont encore pour Trump. Mais ces sondages sont-ils fiables ? Ce château de cartes peut s'effondrer d'un moment à l'autre mais tout le monde se tient encore par la barbichette. Je ne puis te dire qui tirera la chevillette et quand la bobinette cherra !

SATURDAY, 10 JUNE 2017

Schmoozing this morning about books, racial prejudices, culture, meaning of retirement. Elliot recommended *Every brilliant thing* on HBO. Other things recommended recently: Michael Mann on kingship. Think about French “dépouille mortuaire.” Spoils. Let go of everything.

SUNDAY, 11 JUNE 2017

New from Lucie: we are on video call with Callum and Lucie. While Callum is looking for one of his trains, Lucie leans a napkin against her bowl, sticks her hand and arm under the makeshift passage and says, “tunnel!”

During a brief conversation with Frances N., I realize that thrifty behavior is a topic worth discussing. How do modern individuals evaluate the salaries they receive, the choice at least some of us have in deciding what to use them for, the role of retirement plans and health programs. I read today that the annual sum of \$35bn would be enough to remedy the hunger problem (I wouldn't say solve, as sufficient local production and just distribution would presumably remain an issue). Europe apparently wastes upwards of \$125bn per year in the tossing and destruction of expired-date food. Thrift can go together with expansion of proper use of time, exploration, intense social life.

Descola defends the duality of what he calls physical exteriority and interior spirituality on the basis of two intertwined arguments (as I see them).⁹ Most basic is a universally felt sense of self as discrete and autonomous. This universality of an “I” and “you,” in whatever detail these are conceived concretely, for instance as individual versus non-individual, can be observed linguistically. But universality of the feeling of selfhood is not sufficient. It needs to be inhabited or fleshed out (my words)! And indeed it can be argued that the universal sense of self is characterized everywhere by a common feeling of disjunction of an “immaterial” self from the physical one.¹⁰ Common experiences of it are meditation, prayer, memory, dreams. More seriously, there are linguistic traces of this duality in all languages and traditions. The one exception is the modern Western scientific view that the sense of self can be explained physically, i.e. biologically or neurologically.

9. DESCOLA, *Par-delà nature et culture*, 171–72.

10. How so? All of this, however grounded in linguistic aspects, could be self-persuasive and yet entirely wrong. See Damasio or Dennett.

Discussion of human nature by DESCOLA.¹¹ Even Condillac could not abandon the idea of an irreversible threshold that only humans would be capable of reaching (? the formulations are strange, the questions somehow sound self-fulfilling). In his 1735 *Natura naturae*, Linné frames the genus *homo* in a gradual taxonomy but separates it nevertheless from all other genera because of its reputed capacity (ontologically based?) to reflect on itself (the *nosce te ipsum*). It seems to me that Gagnepain is solidly on the side of a continuum animals-humans, and asked the rarely asked question, which is, “What makes humans into a particular sort of animals,” rather than the question on a radical difference between genera (often answered now by a radical absence of difference).¹² I wonder if even Gagnepain, by positing a dialectical relationship that is not available to other animals, is not ultimately separating humans from other animals. Yet, one can’t either trust Montaigne’s skepticism in his *Apologie de Raymond de Sebonde*.

Harari’s recent *Homo deus* plays with predictions of the collapse of the barrier between animals and machines, What is one to think? Another form of Cartesianism? Will biochemical processes take second seat to big data that have been submitted to new barrages of algorithms? Will liberal humanism and its granting of a special privilege to human capacities, desires, and needs, become parochial or even go extinct? It is easy to see the dark side of a three-century old enlightenment and show how its belief in the power of reason—a large river or rather eddies—may have excused if not helped bring about the rise of communism and marxism. Harari is not really making serious, weighted arguments. He is writing for a general reader who is wont to toss large ideas on complicated topics that are not amenable to univocal answers. The takes on parenthetical topics like obesity or sugar—a grave danger—mean that I can safely leave the book aside. And more important, the para-scientificity seems to be a simplistic cover for the acceptance of traditional social frameworks and the absence of real political thinking.

Last Monday (see above), I began writing my memories of the 1967 so-called six-day war. I continue with as many details I can muster. I’m especially interested by the shapes and sensory aspects of my souvenirs, including the changes they have undergone in fifty years, and most importantly—when I can identify them—those that have been erased or have fallen by the wayside.

First, what happened during the preceding weekend of June 3-4, 1967?

11. DESCOLA, *Par-delà nature et culture*, 248–49.

12. *Ibid.*, 249.

I don't remember anything directly, except a generally shared feeling among the brothers at the Collège des Frères that war was coming, and Israel would soon be occupying East Jerusalem and the region. There was absolutely no doubt about that among all of us. The only question was when, which for us meant a matter of days or even hours. First the practical details: the school year was just over and we had time now to reflect upon the situation in a rather free fashion. The basics of the situation that shaped our understanding of the events to come were simple. First of all, there was our geographic location. We were at the western most corner of the Christian quarter, which is dominated by the Latin patriarchate and the Franciscan order, the Custodians of Catholic interests in the region since the Middle Ages. I shared a room in the main building that looked over the Ottoman wall (right below us) to the 1948 no man's land strip and to the ruined Notre-Dame convent building.



Figure 6.2 – *View of the Frères College, 2000, by travelwithpavel.com (Google Earth)*

Secondly, there was the broader event, the Cold War, which helped shape the alliance between Egypt and Syria and form the United Arab Republic (UAR). The USSR supported the UAR and Nasser's aggressive

foreign policy. This support however, perhaps because of the lack of clarity about US policy, thanks to the latter's interference in the Suez crisis of 1956, may have been misread by Nasser as giving him free rein in cornering Israel despite the ominous presence of the Sixth Fleet. Our conversations at the Collège went along these lines and others. They were the conversations of "stratèges de chambre."

So, and this is the more ominous event, there was the closure of the strait of Tiran by Egypt. This was known to be a *casus belli* for Israel. I didn't know then what I learned later about Israeli strategy—and it makes sense for that period of history—that one essential character of it was the need to strike with full force so as to leave no doubt about the consequences of any bellicose attitude among Arab neighbors. No half solution, no second guessing of the "rapport de forces." It could be felt, however, even without knowing much about the history of the 1948 war, just by looking at a map, that a show of power and especially the conquest of all of Jerusalem would occur. The reading of Éric Rouleau's brilliant, deeply informed articles in *Le Monde* helped shape one's opinion on the dynamics of the conflict.

[need to date all of this and provide maps or photos]

MONDAY, 12 JUNE 2017

[continued] Shukeyri, president of the PLO, was the questionable representative of Palestinians at the time—reports about him in my narrow world were negative—who had to submit to the pressures of the Cold War.

In the days leading to the 1967 war, King Hussein came to meet and advertise his support to Shukeyri (with a famous kiss: when exactly, and where?) as a sign of his total commitment to the Palestinian cause as well as to the Egyptian-Syrian coalition. The pressure on the king could be observed locally. First, there had been the extremely intense demonstrations in November 1966 (I saw the one on Friday November 25, 1966, after prayer at the mosque) after an all-out, disproportionate retaliation by the IDF in response to an incursion near Hebron (Samu'a) in which three (two?) IDF soldiers had been killed. These incursions from Jordanian territory (Cisjordan) were extremely rare, in contrast with the usually impotent attacks coming from the Golan Heights where the Syrian army posed as a liberator that put to shame their southern neighbor, Jordan. The Jordanian king was reputed to have on-going communications with the Israeli leadership and was not trusted by Palestinians. But in this case, Israel's use of extraordinary force in its response was condemned by the UN and the Security Council.

The US were not pleased because it threatened the king who was a reliable ally. This Israeli action was criticized by some within Israel. It has been persuasively argued that it was one of the major events leading to the June 1967 war.

Right before the war, I saw much smaller events that increased the pressure on the king and were signs of the approaching events. On Saturday June 3, the French radio is inaudible: jammed by the Israelis? In the afternoon, there is a meeting at the consulate of the directors of French institutions. We are being evacuated. But as “detached military,” I need an order that certainly has little chance of arriving in time. Moreover, we are no more exposed here than elsewhere ... Indeed, starting yesterday, the situation has become serious. Moshe Dayan has been appointed Defense Minister yesterday and diplomacy seems to have failed completely. For us, it feels like being on the eve of a night game in a scouts’ encampment: will they attack, will they not? Where will they come from?

On Sunday June 4, a small plane flew over the old city area, perhaps taking photographs. It is the only time I saw small planes over the old city. Another day, close to the war too but I don’t remember the date, we saw soldiers looking at maps on the rooftop of Sainte Anne, which dominates the Old City. They didn’t hide their presence at all. We interpreted these small details as indications of the self-confidence and more ominously for us as signs of the approaching war.

Monday morning, I go early to the École Biblique where I am an “auditeur libre”. The plan is to keep studying the Aegean civilizations. I go down the maze of narrow streets and paths, past Abu Atta café, the dentist’s office, the barber’s, the Franciscan convent and school, avoid the *shuq*, and arrives at the Damascus Gate. To my left, the high wall separating East Jerusalem from the Israeli city. I probably looked at the newspaper kiosk at the start of Nablus road, perhaps gave a couple of coins to the begging woman seated on the sidewalk a little further, and walked up to the right side, along the stone wall, past the “tomb”, to Saint-Etienne. There was less traffic than usual on the streets. Past the metal door, the garden of the famous Dominican School was a haven. The Frères’ college was all stone slabs and walls, except for the great bougainvillee at the main entrance. Saint Etienne, on the other hand, had trees, flowers, palm trees, grass, porticoes... These were the two places where I spent all of my time. Teaching, preparation and corrections kept me up until iam usually.

I went to the famed library where I may have been the only student that morning. At 8:00 am, I learn that one or several Egyptian armored columns

have tried to force the Sinai border. The Israelis opened fire, and pursued the Egyptian army in their territory while planting mines. According to Egyptian sources (relayed by Israeli radio), the Israeli air force bombed Cairo and the main cities. The Israelis claim that two Mig 21 took to the air and fought each other! One got the other and the first one was shot down by the Egyptian air defense. Radars would have spotted Egyptian planes approaching the coast. I will learn later that all of this was unreal. The Egyptian air force was in fact completely neutralized on the ground by preventive attacks. At 10:15 am, I leave the EBAF library. Father Benoit came to tell us that the war had begun between Egypt and Israel and that it was prudent to return to the College. Everyone was running in the city. The shops closed in a few minutes. We had to go around the city and found the Dung Gate still open. From there, it was easy to go through the ex-Jewish quarter (destroyed in 1948), the Armenian quarter, Davids' tower and the closed Jaffa Gate, back to the College.

There, a few brothers were listening to the BBC in the common room on the first floor where we gathered to read papers and work. I began typing notes from courses by De Vaux. I don't remember how long I worked. There was some shooting which I recognized as such because of the events of the previous days, but I didn't think at all about danger. I kept working. I just remember looking around at one point and realizing I was all alone. I thought about the situation. I was behind a thin, partly window-paned partition, in a hall completely open on its northern side to Israel and Notre Dame building, across the no man's land. I thought there might be soldiers there who wouldn't know what to make of my presence. My imagination took over and I became scared. I made myself small, wrapped my things up, and went to the basement where all the brothers and staff had gathered.

We didn't leave this basement Monday to Thursday morning. Did we sleep much? I don't remember. The noise on Monday was loud. Some time Monday, while gathered around the radios, we heard that the Israeli troupes were entering the city. Or was it Tuesday? We also heard (Frère Émile or Frère D.?) that by noon, on Monday, officers of the Arab Legion (Jordanian Army) fled back to Amman in civilian cars, by the king's order. We later learned something firmer or more likely about the five or six men, Bedu from Kerak, perhaps Christian, who were stationed on the Ottoman wall right near the College. We worried they would come into the college and make the situation even more dangerous for all of us. They were encouraged by local people, we heard later, to abandon their position and take civilian clothes. They refused and were killed right near us at the Knights'

Palace, a couple of them on the roof, after the building was torched by flame throwers. When I could get out on Thursday afternoon, for a three-hour walk between curfews, I realized the street right near the College was covered with shells. At one point Tuesday or rather Wednesday, we inspected damage on the first floor. It didn't seem the college had been a direct target (because it was a foreign institution) but there had been damage, particularly by a few self-propelled grenades that drilled through the walls.

[other things to describe: 1) learning about mass media and propaganda; 2) the stunned Palestinians and hopes for a few months; the friendships; 3) the position of a Nahum Goldmann]

TUESDAY, 13 JUNE 2017

Monotheism, according to CATALDO,¹³ is

The institutionalized product of a (religious) community's attempt to realize its desire of authority over the broader social-political body in which it exists.

The reality the word denotes can be expressed that way, that is to say, there is a reframing of authority from within the society (if the *golab* is considered to be part of the *ethnos*), but what of its binding to new forms of trust and fidelity? This is a more complicated question requiring a more complex analysis. Why did others, for instance Samaritans, accept it, however, especially in the form of the Torah? I understand also that

the monotheistic perception of God [...] was initially defined in reaction to the multiplicity of competing authorities by a solitary community desiring authority for itself.

This is a negative view of the Yahudu community in Babylonia and its members in Yehud. This take on reality would have had little chance of expanding. The monotheism of the exiled community may have been the first example of monotheism. It was prepared, however, even if there are ruptures in its development rather than a smooth evolution. Furthermore, it is likely that the "monotheistic perception of God" was a more complex and varied object than what is implied here.

"When we speak of "land," therefore, we refer to those spaces in which desiring production as material production occurs." (CATALDO, *Breaking*

13. CATALDO, *Breaking monotheism*, 2-3.

monotheism, 158) Isn't it primarily about survival? Deleuze and Guattari are in another world. There is a shaping and distribution of power in the "production," right, but its analysis needs to be more concrete. So, indeed, the architecture of Jerusalem is an important object of analysis: a new temple without a royal palace above it? Why walls and temple featured as contentious objects of desire?

Cataldo frames his approach as a deductive theoretical approach in which DG's desire production is the main concept, with "historical and material peculiarities" as the ground for verifications of conclusions. A good example of this theoretical framework looking for examples is that of "reverse socialization" (= resistance and substitution of its own norms and ideas by *golab* community).¹⁴ The theoretical framework can be questioned from two points of view: first, is it more than a collection of ideas culled from Deleuze, Foucault, Bourdieu, and accessorially Marx and Weber? Second, aren't the ideas of these modern thinkers all too quickly presumed to be directly applicable to an ancient society? Page 8, however, the author is looking for theoretical structures and model from the material conditions of Persian Yehud. So inductive here. Which approach does he really follow? It looks to me like it is deductive.

His basic approach is that monotheism is "a consequence of a material contest over land and authority."¹⁵ My question is about this context, the "human desire for authority." Doesn't it also have a history. Why kings already? Why a single Yahweh by the eighth to seventh centuries? I agree that monotheism was not a "necessary logical, evolutionary "next step" out of polytheism [...] but was a consequence of chance material circumstances." Let us see the detail. Further, "it developed from the periphery of material power." Yes, a marginal phenomenon. But Cataldo insists that monotheism's basis is exclusivity, which in turn demands a single god. I still think that the exclusiveness is an artefact of social and religious conditions and is not primary. And in the absence of kings, it is a good practical solution to a difficult problem. "Monotheism, in short, is a consequence of a material contest conducted at the margins of power." (12) Cataldo's approach is confusing as one doesn't know if it is deductive, inductive, or both at the same time, *ad libitum*.

14. CATALDO, *Breaking monotheism*, 56.

15. *Ibid.*, 6.

WEDNESDAY, 14 JUNE 2017

On pledges, hypothec, etc., see NEUFELD.¹⁶ One would have to determine first the structural role played by social differentiation and the loosening of bonds within a traditional kinship system. I suspect that the investment of more labor per land unit (terracing, product differentiation, raising of more animals, etc), together with a willing, family-based, shouldering of risks rather than staying within the security of reciprocal and honor valuation, led progressively to a sense of private property.¹⁷ This process would be enabled by general political and military conditions (loosening of the authority of city states in the very early Iron Age), and a demographic development. We have archaeological evidence of the physical transformation (appearance of villages, destruction of city-states in southern Palestine, changes in the iconography).

Still, how can one be sure that private property developed as a consequence of more intense, family-based, investment in the land, and at the expense of common property. How much of this land was still held in common, and how did the common kinship-based system accommodate more narrowly defined household-based interests? The archaeology of Iron Age I villages indicates a certain uniformity and equality of distribution: houses uniformly distributed in circles, with no encircling wall or evidence of clear social differentiation. We have no writing from that period, however, except some graffiti and names on knives. The language of brotherhood that is featured so prominently in Deuteronomy and Ezra-Nehemiah is from a much later period—sixth to fourth century—and is trying to revive a broader feeling of kinship based on new principles (Exodus story essentially?). This kinship was always there but differently structured and it was threatened by new political and social events.

Note also in Neufeld (a few pages before) the discussion of social cleavage. The pledge of the cloak has a remarkable social aspect that few commentators expand upon. To lack a cloak was to be without dignity or honor, and therefore without the virtues and ethics (including trust) that were normally granted to all those with “cloaks.” The cloak was a kind of hypothec, not owned yet really, but a step towards debt slavery.

A study of the origins of monarchy in the Levant needs to start with filiation and inheritance. In tribal and kinship systems, was there a set filiation

16. NEUFELD, “Socio-economic background of Yōbēl and Šūmiṭṭā,” 88–89.

17. As observed and theorized by Netting after Boserup.

system as the one we see used by all Levantine kings?¹⁸ How strong was the cult of the ancestors? Any trace of it? Systems of private property and inheritance may have competed all along Israelite history with the notion of commons and complex reciprocity.

There are questions of private ownership in Biblical texts purported to be older (that is: preceding the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests). I think particularly of the buying of Ephron's property by Abraham in Genesis 23 and the story of Naboth's vineyard that was so desired by Achab.¹⁹

I need to reshape Neufeld's conclusions in view of the new theories on biblical authorship, dates, and background. I would particularly feature an analysis of the greater need for putting breaks on accumulation under Babylonians and especially Persians.

Were there foreign warriors in Israelite monarchies (what would "foreign" mean, actually)? See the following passages: 2 Sam 10:7; 8:18: 20:7; 15:18–19; 6:10; 1 Kings 1:38, 44;

Before reading Cataldo, start with DELEUZE and GUATTARI,²⁰ on the land as machine. See also my marginal remarks on my copy of *L'anti-Œdipe* (ex libris of N. O. Brown), pages 292–93:

Le téléphone portable à oreillette nous transforme en schizos. Je parle à une image au milieu d'une foule. Je reconstruis une savante structure et m'efforce de la faire marcher et plus je me *mobilise*, plus je dois colmater les brèches, rassembler, sans limites, ce qui est fracturé à l'infini. Conversation de client monté au supermarché : "Où es-tu ? Ah. Mais alors, si tu... On fera comme ça... Si tu veux. Mais quel est ton projet ? Appelle-moi au cas où tu changes d'idée. Tu as mon numéro. Appelle-moi sur skype si je ne réponds pas. Ma pile est presque morte... etc." Le démoniaque Légion ? Pas seulement vrai du capitalisme mais plus étendu. Au dehors de la ville, habitant sa maison-tombe, au milieu des représentations de morts comme société, nu, enchaîné, le possédé incarne la vérité de la ville et non son envers. Il souffre, eux non.

Les agriculteurs "font pousser" des molécules et produits de lait de vache hybride dans une série de tubes et de flux, depuis le colza, luzerne, ou maïs de Monsanto et Pioneer, en passant par la mamelle, le tube, la réfrigération au gaz, la poudre de lait, la graisse pour ... vélos,

18. This is made clear for instance by DION, *Les Araméens à l'âge du fer*.

19. See RUSSELL, "Abraham's purchase of Ephron's land in anthropological perspective." See his upcoming articles and book.

20. DELEUZE and GUATTARI, *L'anti-Œdipe*, 170–80.

moteurs, peaux... dans une succession d'images qui toujours représentent quelque chose d'autre et ne s'arrêtent jamais, même dans la mort.

Cataldo gives his working hypothesis page 38:

monotheism is a consequence of an original conflict—one that produces a concern for the division between member and non-member—within the *material* sphere. Analyses of monotheism must be equipped not only to identify monotheism's origin in the material sphere but also to explain its development from compact to complex forms, which entails a shift from a dependence upon the material to the ideological. This shift was brought on by monotheism's concern for its own *acquisition of authority* over the *social body*.

I don't see how a "material sphere" can be separated from an ideological one. Cataldo assumes that monotheism failed to fulfill expectations that were *material* and went *ideological*. This is the reverse of my idea: clear catastrophes that could only be explained by a mix of divine and human causes. Hence the deepening of the arguments and the beginning of a reading of history as having some movement and depth. Yet broader failure and an Ezekelian explanation of the events, presented as vision. One could look at all of this as a play for the captation of authority, which is reasonable, but what of fidelity to a past structure, however reconstructed? The same problematic situation is that of priestly families in the first Jewish war against the Romans.

THURSDAY, 15 JUNE 2017

I worked late last night, trimming the hedge and cleaning a bit around the flowers. I finished what I had planned to do in near darkness. I find it a little disconcerting that I'm able to work very quickly and in systematic fashion with solid materials, be they soil, plants, lumber, pipes, wires. I'm not structured at all when reading and writing: I let myself be distracted by the latest book or theory. Part of it is that I want to know it all even though I know my time is counted.

The "lawn" is gone already. I only water the trees and flowers. This morning, I woke up a little achy from the repeated climbing on the ladder and carrying it here and there. At about 10hoo, though, I felt sick: a stomach bug, it seems. I feel much better already. I watched *Ida* by Pavet

Pawlikowski and think I understood the desire for “l’absolu” that the large, castle-like, isolated convent represents. The most stunning moments were the visit to the farm, the rare moments of affection between Anna (Ida) and Wanda, and especially two scenes having to do with the finality of things: the prostration of the young novices flat on the slabs before the altar, and Wanda’s last moments (buttering a toast and adding a little sugar as we used to do sometimes in Kervilgoch, listening to Mozart’s *Jupiter*, and walking, almost dancing, through the window. I was less impressed by the excavation of the bones from the forest though moved by the re-burial in the decrepit Jewish cemetery. The music, above all Bach’s *Ich rufe zu dir, Jesus Christ* and Coltrane’s *Naima*, played respectively by Wanda’s turntable and by the young man in the hotel dancing hall, was moving.

FRIDAY, 16 JUNE 2017

I woke up this morning at 1h30, put the garbage out under the wondrous starry sky, with a half moon already high on the eastern horizon.

Page 45 of Cataldo is about the reshaping of social norms by monotheistic expressions. He says it in a needlessly complex way: “rejection of the socially established order.” It was more complicated than this, since the kings and the temple authorities were dismissed and publically humiliated.

For Deleuze and Guattari, no pure “nomadism” following “flows” and picking their subsistence off them.²¹ There is always a “socius” that forces sharing, for instance by asking that the hunter doesn’t consume his own game. The *socius* enforces the “prélèvement” on the state. So, this makes me think that one of the roles of kings and priests was to secure the *socius* and defend the “lifting” of a share for everyone’s benefits, so long as it was framed as a share for the divinity. Was this a constitutive role? Was this “lifting” justified as a detached, divine share?

Regarding the so-called myth of the empty land, I tend to agree with Oded who accepts that the land was not empty but that the returnees “integrated” Judaeans (I would add Israelites) who were not exiled.²² That is quite different from Cataldo’s idea. Oded gives a general argument about Judaism being a religion of *memory*, “not a religion of inventing myths,” but rather against myths.²³ See my questions regarding Assmann and

21. DELEUZE and GUATTARI, *L’anti-Œdipe*, 174–75.

22. ODED, “Where is the myth of the empty land to be found?,” 55–74.

23. The meaning of “Judaism” needs to be specified in relation to time and place. “Religion” too needs to be explained, more in line with Cataldo, but in a much broader fashion.

the role of priests in developing the Exodus story. It remained a story of power consolidation while being a memory and an effort to be faithful. Humankind has a long history of living with contradictory visions of self.

SATURDAY, 17 JUNE 2017

We'll be going to San Jose airport in half an hour or so. The day is already warm. The sun projects the rose bush in moving shadows on the living-room's curtains.

"Imperial governments tended to recognize that order was best maintained" via local political organizations.²⁴ The author doesn't discuss the reason for this, which is economic: it was easier and better, in terms of "return" and absence of political problems (?) to farm out or rent out the collection of tribute (farming out here = a given sum; while renting out = a share of proceedings, a kind of sharecropping at the provincial level. Any evidence of this kind of choice being made?). The approach to laws and torah found in EN and Zechariah, however, needs to be explained in a more complex fashion than Cataldo's. Of course, as he and many authors conclude (evidence?), the land was not empty.²⁵ The economic arguments of Joel Weinberg, however, need to be seriously examined.²⁶ I think it is likely that priests and other elites formed complex networks. They were divided into a central stratum attached to royal government and therefore exiled (evidence?), and into local groups that could still be attached to Jerusalem's incipient centralized authorities. Of course, they did not build their authority by appeal to charisma, as Zechariah and his naïve readers might think. The texts most closely connected with the priests, Exodus first and foremost, are very diffident about this and express many reservations about authority, including priestly leadership. The figure of Moses himself shows that the authors do not simply have ideological, manipulating perceptions of "charisma." They also were thinking about being faithful (however creative they were in their remembering, pace Oded), about justice for the whole community (while they thought about it in stratified ways), in-gathering of people (including Israel), and the more so because they found themselves in the difficult situation of intermediaries.

24. CATALDO, *Breaking monotheism*, 62.

25. See his note 74, p. 63.

26. Cataldo cites his own article as a critical analysis of Weinberg: *JOT* 28 (2003):240–52; and CARTER, *The emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*, 294–307.

Page 65, a more concrete discussion of the divine rule of YHWH as utopia. The manna-giver divinity, however, doesn't seem to be confused by the authors of Exodus with the practical divinity of settled land. Again, the interpretation of the manna and desert story as being a fanciful ideological ploy by a *golab* lacking control over land and its "surplus production" (whatever that is) is a stretch. The repeated insistence on it is particularly striking.

Cataldo implies there is a serious difference between the *golab* people and the local society.²⁷ Yet they shared YHWH if I'm not mistaken, whatever they put behind the word. See Morton Smith's *Palestinian parties*. How did the satrapy see the potential conflict between Zerubabel, son of Shealtiel, and all the *-yah* people? The onomastics may be significant in this case also. See EDELMAN.²⁸

The new vision of YHWH was forced by circumstances. The Exodus was revolutionary in that it bypassed kings and made salvation from Egypt, covenant and law, the promise of the land, and the building of the moving temple, entirely believable as a map for the dire situation. It explained why things could go wrong (with the help of Deut and 1-4 Kings), yet didn't univocally fashion a "kingdom of priests" (though it was tempted). In regard to this whole discussion on the rise of the monotheistic ideology, it is important to remember that EN and Zechariah or Haggai need to be read in the context of the Exodus story, which I assume was well accepted by that time.

Did the *golab* leadership really ignore the economic and social conditions of the land? The restoration program featuring the temple at the center doesn't necessarily forget the economy. The temple is one way of networking deeply into the local society, via the priestly and levitical families.

SUNDAY, 18 JUNE 2017

Callum has more complicated ways of trying to get what he wants. For instance, after his afternoon nap, he asked Lucie if she wanted to see some videos so that he might share. He also can express his feelings in more depth. When I asked him what difference it made to have Babish and Tadkoz here rather than on video link, he answered that sometimes with the video it was sad because it did not allow you to hug. He choked a bit at the thought.

27. CATALDO, *Breaking monotheism*, 68-69.

28. EDELMAN, *The origins of the "Second" Temple*.

MONDAY, 19 JUNE 2017

NYRB has an article on one of the most influential architects of last century, Louis Kahn, who died in 1974. The writer argues that Kahn's vision of architecture as art and his accomplishments in monumental buildings were squandered by a new generation of professionals who accepted to respond to corporate demands for blandishments. An example of his style is the Salk Institute at La Jolla. Surprisingly, no matter his uncompromising views on commercialism, he died almost half a million dollars in debt. The article devotes quite a few superficial paragraphs to his affairs. Very good article on Israeli-Palestinian situation by David Shulman, according to whom Nathan Thrall and Matti Steinberg seem to share the same realistic view that only coercion will bring Israel to its senses...

Golah and *ammei ha-aretz* are religiously, not economically defined. Nothing surprising here, since ancient societies did not separate economic, social, and religious aspects, or made out of them quantities and forces (or at least not as we do). What is surprising perhaps, is that a view that was highly critical of mythological approaches to political realities remained mired in the basic mode they framed social structure. One could even argue that they made it worse by positing a single transcendental source rather than the multiple, competing centers of polytheistic thinking (including proteiform monotheisms).

Cataldo thinks it is uncritical to accept the notion of a temple economy in Yehud.²⁹ The simplest explanation of the texts we have is that the agrarian economy of Yehud could and did function without a temple, since its rehabilitation and completion was done only at the beginning of the Persian period. The local temples, in general, provided the imperial revenue administration with the local experience, knowledge and authority it needed. See Schaper on this.³⁰ Obviously, it would not be in the interest of EN to explain the economic and income aspects of the Persian administration. The religious aspects would be the only ones of interest.

Cataldo 92 speaks of "surplus" in relation to Neh 5:1-11, which is confusing: was the whole of production a surplus, or only a fraction of it? Is the misery expressed by the complainers due to exploitation by locals and Persian administration demands? Most importantly, are both bound to each other, i.e. are the local elites tax farmers of sorts and needed by the local au-

29. CATALDO, *Breaking monotheism*, 90.

30. SCHAPER, "The Jerusalem Temple as an instrument of the Achaemenid fiscal administration."

thorities as go-betweens? How were the rates set? How was the collection carried out? It may well be that maximal exploitation was meant to extract something lesser, negotiated “religiously.” The short explanation given of an assertive “aristocratic class” does not explain the dynamics satisfactorily. Oppression was certainly part of the social relations.³¹ Meaning: there were means of exploitation: primarily by the lifting of a share of the rent, which affected subsistence needs, by extracting even more labor through debt, interest, pledges, debt-slavery, in return for “protection”? These means of exploitation were extensive, that is to say, they reached beyond the limits of local villages and certainly beyond the household’s mutual aid and even the classic self-help (though it still worked at elite’s level).

I wouldn’t quite say that “a surplus producing machine” à la Deleuze and Guattari replaced local mutual help. Or the surplus was actually quite limited in the sense that the rent system forced investment of all household labor to yield the socially-defined subsistence of bureaucratic elite, and the low, threatened subsistence of the producers themselves. The word “surplus” does not fit. How could one determine what subsistence could or should be? Ancient elites advised belt-tightening. At the heart of the problem, and here I agree with the thrust of Cataldo’s argument, is the materiality of subsistence.

Kinship and loyalty, those things that once bound tribes together, had been replaced by the cold, functional gears of, in the words of Deleuze and Guattari, a surplus producing machine. (CATALDO, *Breaking monotheism*, 92–93)

This is true of the modern period. But the problem of *kinship and loyalty* in antiquity, isn’t it what the *golab* party and others (see Albetz) tried to solve precisely because not doing it meant “cold, functional gears” of empire and loss of identity and capacity of resistance? The YHWH monotheistic party was proposing a transcendent being that may look “cold” and manipulative to moderns, but they insisted on *fidelity* to it as nullifying the fidelity enjoined and enforced by their masters. The role of local leaders and elites was crucial in this regard, and confronting them in an Exodus-shaped story—however ideological (how else?)—aimed at protecting a more broadly-conceived people. I therefore disagree with the main argument of Cataldo who sees the *golab* party as tricking the locals

31. On class, see GOTTWALD, “Social class as an analytic and hermeneutical category in biblical studies,” 4.

into submission to their authority. That this claim of authority was also there cannot be disputed. Abuses could follow (as will be seen much later in Hasmonean times), but I think that the main part of the expansion of יהוה's power was more broadly shared *because* it made economic and political sense to the *locals*. To imagine that the transcendence the *golab* leaders insisted on as a *sine qua non* was pure trickery is going beyond the evidence. A better explanation is still the notion of a kind of negotiated truce between Israelites, Judeans, *golab* and settled *ammei ha-arets*, calling everyone to revere this new portrait of יהוה and giving a better, more uplifting explanation of everyone's history.

On Neh 5:1–11. Cataldo is right that 5:3–4 doesn't refer to temple taxes. How did the assessment of taxes work, actually? C. is confused here. His note # 35, page 93, is silly. Part of the argument regarding yahwistic monotheism is that it was a serious attempt to build kinship and fidelity on another basis, with a set of laws that protected or at least aimed at protecting a people potentially unified by faith in a kinship-like status (but more expansive than traditional clan structures). Hence its demanding aspects and its heterogeneity. What needs to be explained is how this "reconstruction" of faith without kings could be attractive to all Israelites who shared a variable Yahweh belief.³² The whole text is highly ideological, clearly. But the return of property and the cancellation of debts (with time limits not specified) were a standard part of the adjustment of the production forces done by all exploitative societies of the ancient world. I don't think it was threatening at all.

"economic equality [...] between member and non-member is not consistent with the monotheistic identity." (96) Evidence can be found for it, or at least for minimizing the ramping up of inequality. But what is needed here is a proper analysis of property and debt. This page shows a strange understanding of agrarian economics. We don't know if the fix alluded to by Nehemiah was permanent. Most likely not. What we have in Neh 5 may be a glorified account of a switch to a different organization and authority over taxation. Freedom and return of property and debt-pledged labor called forth the Exodus and Deuteronomy texts on the matter. It may have attempted to moderate accumulation of land by a few non-priestly elite.

32. By the way, the author seems to assume an early date for Exodus: see note 38, page 94.

TUESDAY, 20 JUNE 2017

I'll need to write on the Charybdis and Scylla problem entailed by a proper analysis of the situation of the priesthood in Persian times. On one side, Assmann's view of Exodus as a revolutionary, democratic even, refounding of *fidelity*, while passing over the use and abuse of power and authority by priests and other elites.³³ On the other side, scholars like Cataldo who turn the priests into ideologues who thirsted for power and authority over material conditions.

Cataldo's thesis in his 2009 book was that the term "theocracy" could not fit the reality of Yehud because Persian control over it was heavy handed and local autonomy was limited. In other words, perhaps "theic" but not "cratic". Loyalty to the empire had to be demonstrated. Local temples were part of the fiscal administration. The local leaders were serving at the pleasure of the masters. His analysis of the Biblical and extra-biblical evidence (al-Yahudu, Našar, wadi ed-Daliyeh, Elephantine, Haggai, Zechariah, EN) points to the fact that there were governors almost all the time and that priests wielded little influence. It may be right that Yehud cannot be called a theocracy. Yet, the possible influence of the priests and more broadly of a Yahweh movement is played down all too quickly. How does one explain the power of the high priest in later times (Hellenistic and Hasmonean periods)? In his review, Grabbe calls for a more nuanced explanation. The Elephantine documents reveal that the high priest in Jerusalem wielded some influence.

Cataldo misreads the role of ideology in ancient society and makes confusing statements.³⁴ He obscures the role of mythic ideology in monarchic Israel and Judah. Of course, Judah was not led by priests. But an explanation of the evolution is needed, namely, that priests had a leading political role from at least the fourth century on (see below on Johanan the Priest). The enmeshing of royal and priestly authority started earlier, at least under Josiah at the end of the seventh century BCE. One needs to reconstruct its evolution. Cataldo is so intent on seeing priestly *golah* religion as a foreign body that he gives a completely confused interpretation of the economy both under the kings and after.³⁵

To sustain the idea of an absence of priestly power, he re-interprets the

33. See index under "priests."

34. CATALDO, *Breaking monotheism*, 98.

35. Useful as foil, however, to a degree.

early coin of Johanan the High Priest.³⁶ Barag's article reviews silver coinage from the end of the Persian period and beginning of the Ptolemaic reign. The particular small silver coin with the vertical inscription, "Johan(nan) hakohen," is similar to types struck by Yehezkiyah the governor (without the name for governor) and shows that the high priest's status was equal to that of the governors named by Persians. They date at the earliest from mid-fourth century BCE. Barag considers it likely that this Johanan was the grandson of the Johanan named in the Elephantine letter of 408 BCE to Bagoas (Yehud governor), Nehemiah 12:22 and Josephus' *CA* 11.302–39. The silver coin, with its inscription and imagery (owl and mask), means that this high priest controlled the government at that time. Was this typical of the end of the Persian period, and related to sagging fortunes of the Achae-menids in the area since the independence of Egypt (351–45 revolt of king of Sidon Tennes)?³⁷

Cataldo does not seem to realize how important and how *material* loyalty was for any government or power, from any larger landowner to office holders. It was a *sine qua non*, and that is precisely what elites and priests could guarantee in their own way, while at the same time building "fidelity" as an ethnic and universal ideal.³⁸ So, Cataldo misreads the intent of the book of Exodus when he writes: "While *freedoms* would have been permitted for local territories, they could only be *conducted* within the framework of this priority." (My emphasis) This is a complete misunderstanding. Priests could demonstrably deliver "fidelity." They argued that their tradition (exemplified by Exodus, Genesis) was in good hands. Imperial authorization was only indirectly necessary for this claim of authority.

Cataldo uses "market economy" very loosely about Jerusalem.³⁹ Also, was it a utopia that the "nobles" would submit to sabbath regulations because of the consequences for the whole people? I believe it may have been contested and begrudged but still effective pressure, precisely because of the people.

About the intermarriage of local grandees and *golah* families: it was part of the evolution, no doubt, and an issue of "land ownership" (better

36. See BARAG, "Some notes on a silver coin of Johanan the High Priest." Compare *Qadmoniot* 17, nos. 2-3 (1984): 66–67. Check. See also *Israel Numismatic Journal* on this coin.

37. See ELAYI, *Histoire de la Phénicie*: BARAG, "The effects of the Tennes rebellion on Palestine."

38. CATALDO, *Breaking monotheism*, 99.

39. *Ibid.*

described as “land control” or land access). The problem: how legitimate were the claims by all actors, and how can that be ascertained? In ancient agrarian societies, all conquered lands were controlled by the conqueror and farmed out, or rented out, to (temporarily) authorized or habilitated parties. Which were these? The answer must be: those capable of showing that they could deliver “product” of land and labor while keeping order—read ideologically, but with material components—. Intermarriage was a solution to the problem of sharing of authority, and an area of contestation. Ownership is misunderstood by Cataldo, therefore.⁴⁰ This authority did need confirmation and trust was most important.

The temple was rebuilt in the fifth century rather than the sixth.⁴¹

WEDNESDAY, 21 JUNE 2017

Morning scene: Lucie comes to our bed where we create “tunnels” which she pronounces /tynel/ when speaking with me and /tanl/ when talking to Amy. Callum comes with Michigan Bunny and Bunny Bleu, who speaks French. The game this morning was different: it was a lawn-mowing expedition done with a special machine.

THURSDAY, 22 JUNE 2017

I agree with Carol Meyers’ 1991 review of SMITH-CHRISTOPHER.⁴² Some of the characteristics of the exilic experience closely associated with the *golah* group, especially priestly, could be regarded as being those of the non-exiled people both in Judah and Israel. They shared in the catastrophic series of events and its political, economic, and psychological effects. This would be certainly the case if Neh 1:2 (“those who remained...”) does refer to Judaeans left in the territory of Judah after the exile. Japhet makes this argument.⁴³

40. CATALDO, *Breaking monotheism*, 100.

41. *Ibid.*, 103.

42. SMITH-CHRISTOPHER, *The religion of the landless: The social context of the Babylonian exile*.

43. JAPHET, “The concept of the remnant in the Restoration period: on the vocabulary of self-definition,” 439; discussed at length in a note by CATALDO, *Breaking monotheism*, 214, 94n. The obvious meaning of Neh 1:2 is that Nehemiah asks about the Judaeans who remained from the exile = were left after the captivity. NSRV translates: “I asked them about the Jews that survived, those who had escaped the captivity, and about Jerusalem.” Cataldo proposes a forced interpretation: namely that they “were made a remnant”, which the Hebrew does not say. It would concern Judeans who had been exiled, transformed into

On the conflict between the *golah* and the non-displaced people, see Haggai 2:10–14.

Last chapter of Cataldo has another unwieldy title: “The monotheistic body within view: understanding the parameters of the model.”⁴⁴ It starts strong and wrong: “As this work has sought to show, a material-based conflict over land and authority was the *initial* catalyst for the development of monotheism.” (218; author’s emphasis) What of the Yahwism of the seventh and sixth century, the dates and background of Exodus and Deuteronomy?⁴⁵ This would have been triggered by a failure to “acquire absolute control over land and authority.” There couldn’t be much control over land by a conquered people, only partial control. That is why the ideological claim that only the divinity had real control over land—writ large, that is, in the form of creation of the world—is a way to avoid the suffocating reality of conquest and slavery. It allows another view of oneself and might even be an oblique criticism of present masters while proposing a way to restore dignity to the members of the community who recognized themselves in the renewed cult. The claim encompasses the old-fashioned binding of the land’s fortunes to its local divinity(-ies). In that sense, the text from *bKeth* 100b quoted by Cataldo extolling the advantage of divine proximity for those living in the land of Israel is not extreme, as the author claims. Local divine presence, singular or plural, had long been thought fundamental to survival, while simultaneously contemplating a broader, more mobile, universal divinity à la Ezekiel and Isaiah.

The A. speaks of “discourses of resistance” as needed by “monotheistic identity” (221). He only is thinking of resistance to the “larger social body,” by which he means the community that was left (“remaining?”) in Judah at the time of the exile of the leadership and elite supporters. As far as I can tell, in coming to the end of this book, he is so preoccupied by the way his theory could play locally that he fails to go back to something he was quite clear about at the beginning, which is the larger political issue of resisting empires.

a remnant by the punishment of the exile, and had already returned. His explanation is unnecessarily convoluted. The arguments of Japhet, Oded, and others, that he finds “intriguing but not entirely convincing” could have been addressed much earlier in the text, not in footnotes.

44. *Ibid.*, 218–36.

45. As Cataldo himself discusses later, page 220, note 4, where he criticizes SMITH, *The origins of Biblical monotheism*, 165, for presenting the initial monotheism as a survival mechanism rather than a play for authority (as C. does).

On the “remnant” or *golab* identity: was some of their sense of being a “saved remnant” based on their higher social origins, the more so because they were treated as a conquered, enslavable, and corveeable people? How could they make claims on their “closeness” or “nearness” to YHWH? The answer to that question may be their own intellectual transformation—Exodus and Deuteronomy being the clear evidence of this change—, their adoption of prophetic criticisms, i.e. their separation from the *monarchy*, together with their sense of being the necessary link to YHWH as habilitated officers of the cult (this habilitation was a strong basis because it didn’t depend directly on palatial authorization). There was an accommodation with the “elders,” i.e. the regional leadership.... Yet also an internal sense of superiority or “election” based on their inherited social function, a hardened holiness that allowed the reconstitution of a political landscape without kings. By throwing their all after YHWH, by radicalizing faithfulness and trust in YHWH, they could maintain a social and political cohesion in subjection and abjection, while connecting with Yahwists who had not been exiled but shared their basic sense of loss. See the literature (aside from Cataldo, Fried, Grabbe who is more general, Blenkinsopp, et al.).

Cataldo gives a broad interpretation of Neh 13:3.⁴⁶ The context indicates that this appeal by Nehemiah concerns Ammonites and Moabites only (Neh 13:1), which means that the law had a very narrow ambit. One can guess that the social rank of people in this kind of marriage was low, as the story of Ruth indicates so clearly. According to Cataldo, this is all ideological and a mark of *golab*’s powerlessness.⁴⁷ Cataldo concludes all too quickly that Jerusalem as a cultic center had meaning only for the *golab*. And he is misguided when he writes that “An exclusivist posture is at the heart of any monotheistic identity.” The exclusivism is indeed part of it, or becomes so, but it is not the original spark. I think the “monotheism of truth” that Assmann and others write about is a component but not the prime mover (as Assmann now recognizes, though instead of considering competing tendencies, he prefers to look at fidelity and truth *seriatim*).

FRIDAY, 23 JUNE 2017

Rémi and Leslie went to help a friend and clean her house. She is a fourth-year surgery resident who has been told she needs to do her fourth year over

46. CATALDO, *Breaking monotheism*, 205.

47. *Ibid.*, 206.

because she has not logged enough procedures during the year. She discovered only too late that other residents were logging single operations as if they involved more interventions.

SATURDAY, 24 JUNE 2017

Saint Jean today. I used to send postcards to my father and to JF a few days before. Their dates are a memory now, and a thin one at that, as I can only share my regrets with A. My father, Yvon and JF, did they ever have a sentiment of fulfillment? I don't ask myself the question about our mother or François. And I know that JF actually thought of his last months and days as full. His permanent intensity may be regarded as a fulfillment of sorts? All of this a call to arms or action for me in my remaining time.

Breakfast at Sweet Lorraine's this morning with D, G, G, and G! The place is going out of business because the owners are retiring and keeping only a couple other franchises. On the way back, I notice the imposing church at Twelve Mile Avenue and Woodward. It is the church where Father Loughlin did his preaching from the late twenties to the forties, when he was finally silenced. So much antisemitism coming out of a "shrine" devoted to the "little flower" (Thérèse de Lisieux). There is a school attached to the "Shrine." A neighbor who advertised his voting for Trump, at the corner of West Breckenridge and Livernois, has a sign saying he is a "Shrine Knight."

Tonight, longish breakdown of Callum who has a little scrape on his knee and somehow keeps crying and howling. Longish time out, and finally a more composed discussion with parents. He is ready for bed early...

SUNDAY, 25 JUNE 2017

Callum woke up at 7h30, went to the bathroom and then back to his bed. He got up at 8am, Lucie kept talking to herself in bed.

On the father's absence and the mother's intimate knowledge and control of the home, see Fehribach (summary in my notes on Cana), and Carroll she quotes.⁴⁸ On the wine: better wine vs watered down wine which would have been served to make it last. How does the "mother" notices the lack? By listening to servants? Small signs? Presumably the master of ceremonies also knew?

48. CARROLL, *Response to the end of history*, 50.

An article of the *Washington Post* argues that Trump is another McCarthy. His use of fear is matched by that of liberal media. The latter also use fear to keep selling papers. What is needed is an analysis of what we have to fear, the reasons for it.

MONDAY, 26 JUNE 2017

Rémi left at 6h20 or so this morning for a day of introduction for residents in general medicine at Henry Ford Hospital. His residency starts this Thursday. He tells me he'll be paid about 57K/yr. Callum and Lucie woke up a little earlier today, a bit before 7h30. We played a lot. I'm discovering I can play puppets too: I activate Bunny Bleu and Michigan Bunny who are passengers on trains worked under the supervision of Chief Engineer Callum. They have their tickets punched, take care of their luggage, go to the restaurant car where they have coffee (Bunny Bleu who is 6) or chocolate (for M Bunny who is 2), and read their papers. They also take automatic trains to go from station to station. And sometimes they go to Barcelona or Madrid where they are a bit flustered by the new languages they don't know. Bunny Bleu speaks French, however. M Bunny has a very difficult time with foreign languages. For example, he pronounces "marteau" /mardo/ instead of /marto/.

I agree with this introductory statement by Gauchet in his fourth volume on the advent of democracy:

[la démultiplication des moyens de l'autonomie] se traduit, en un mot, par un recul de l'autonomie réelle dans le moment où l'autonomie potentielle s'accroît. Jamais nos capacités d'auto-production et d'autodétermination n'ont été aussi grandes, jamais nous n'avons été aussi peu en mesure de les maîtriser. C'est en ce sens qu'il est permis de parler de crise de la démocratie, dans l'acception la plus pleine qu'il convient de prêter à ce terme — soit la mise en forme politique de l'autonomie.⁴⁹

As I say elsewhere, never has our interdependence been greater, in myriad of ways, and especially in things that ensure our lives. What is called forth is an autonomy, framed democratically, that enables everyone to respond freely to the new conditions that the immense work of past and present generations have created for them. The mechanism of providence and divine

49. Gauchet, *Le nouveau monde*, 19.

economy has been replaced by an economy without god but not without invocation of a hidden rationality that is praised, prized, and idolized by the merchants of the temple, from the physiocrats or Mandeville to us, without forgetting Adam Smith, Galbraith or Friedman. It is still a theology. I wonder how Gauchet addresses this question, a rationality completely embedded in us, yet partial.

TUESDAY, 27 JUNE 2017

Callum gives me a hug and a kiss on the back porch as I get ready to go to the library. I walk around the house and he is already behind a half-open window in the front and asking, “What is the book you’re reading about?” I say it is about how big people reflect upon their lives, how they try and often fail to share. The question leads to a discussion of how the ways we live can change dramatically yet some things are shared by all peoples. I tell him I imagine how Ojibua people may have hunted for food and collected maple syrup in the forests that existed before the large trees looming now over our houses. How their houses were different, before piped water, electricity, roads, carts and cars, trains, and many other things that came about in the last century and a half.

Interesting response to an article by Brooks in the *NYT* that berates the Republican politicians for being cruel:

Mr. Brooks is right in much that he says, but he needs to understand one thing. Trump supporters, who are Fox viewers and Right-wing radio listeners, want what Congress is doing to healthcare insurance. They have theirs and they are “tired of helping others” as a Republican friend told me over the weekend. They view healthcare as a privilege though most of them I know are on Medicare. They think Social Security should be privatized, but again, many of them collect their check every month. They hated Barack Obama and still do, viewing him as un-American because he is black. The racism and bigotry is deep and wide and carefully hidden below the surface with these folks. Trump is their Mr. Hyde—saying and doing the cruel things that Dr. Jekyll would like to do. The GOP has created a monster base that they now must satisfy. This healthcare bill is one of the pieces of raw meat they’re tossing into the cage. And the beasts will be hungry again tomorrow. (Meg Ulmes from Troy)

WEDNESDAY, 28 JUNE 2017

BC sends me a short comment on Boubakeur, Mosquée de Paris, who is accused by *Le causeur* of authorizing official web pages that are hostile to all other religions. I answer:

Il y eut un temps où on insistait en chrétienté sur la triple filiation abrahamique, par exemple chez nous au pardon des Sept-Saints au Vieux-Marché, où Massignon avait lié de vieilles légendes gréco-chrétiennes que l'on retrouve aussi dans le judaïsme et en Islam à ce site chalcolithique. Notre Jérusalem à nous ! C'est après l'exil, assez tardivement (5-4ème siècles ?) qu'on a réécrit l'histoire d'Ismaël et Isaac. Tous les deux sont sacrifiés par le père Abraham et s'en sortent miraculeusement. Les auteurs de ces traditions bibliques sur Ismaël et Isaac sont très au fait des rapports de proximité entre peuples dans l'empire achéménide, et de leurs efforts pour survivre en concurrence les uns avec les autres. Les Arabes de l'époque perse, y compris les Nabatéens de l'époque hellénistique et romaine, n'y ont pas perdu leur arabe, leur grec, ou même leur latin !

Gauchet's fourth volume on the advent of democracy and his reading of neo-liberalism's resurgence in the US under Reagan et al reminds me of the book by FRANK.⁵⁰ I couldn't find it in Ferndale's public library yesterday, so today I dropped by the jam-packed bookstore near the Java Coffee place and got it for six dollars. "Time to resist," says the lady who helps me with the purchase.

Very interesting note 16, page 329, of Kiel. He quotes Crüsemann and Ska about the role assigned to the figure of Moses in bringing together the aspirations of different groups, priestly and non-priestly, in the post-exilic period.⁵¹ Why was this role unique to Moses? Clearly there was the complex character of the figure, an in-between type. There is also the fact that it disappears from the story or cannot be claimed directly by either the priesthood or other groups. See what Assmann makes of this figure. I wrote a more complete note in my "notes". What does Yamauchi have to say?⁵²

50. FRANK, *What's the matter with Kansas?*

51. See CRÜSEMANN, *The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law*, 102–107; SKA, "Persian imperial authorization," 177–78. Check.

52. YAMAUCHI, "Did Persian Zoroastrianism influence Judaism?"

THURSDAY, 29 JUNE 2017

Joshua Schwartz, not surprisingly, wrote a somewhat negative review of the recent book on the Maccabees by HONIGMAN.⁵³ He is impressed by the method, the thoroughness, the arguments even, but think that the author has been too radical in eliminating the dimension of religious persecution from the analysis and presenting only a political, social and economic study. He doesn't think one evacuates the other. It is her arguments regarding the literary cycles that lead her to consider that 1 Macc 1–2 is ahistorical. He mentions a detailed review by Bezalel Bar-Kokhba in *Tarbiz*.

Nous avons perdu nos repères en Europe, que nous tenions nos origines des conservateurs (retour à l'ancien régime) ou des révolutionnaires. Inégalités statutaires, blocages des libertés (surtout de vote), ou emprise du religieux, la carte du Tendre a disparu ou s'est élimée et nous nous retrouvons dans la situation des Américains, incapables de nous figurer où nous sommes, puisque l'opposition à l'ancien régime, aux obstacles politiques, ou à l'autorité religieuse ne peuvent plus servir de base de jeu. Comme le dit Gauchet de multiples façons, nous avons perdu nos repères. Nous sommes définitivement sortis non seulement de l'ancien régime mais encore de la lutte pour un avenir meilleur qui sous-tendait les esprits jusqu'aux années 70–80. Si liberté et égalité perdent de leur allant, qu'en est-il de la fraternité ?

Gauchet me paraît faire la part trop belle au ressourcement que le néolibéralisme ferait aux origines libertaires du pays. Tom Frank dresse un tout autre portrait dans son *What's the matter with Kansas?* (2004). Ou Bryan Stevenson dans l'article du *NYRB* de cette semaine sur le racisme encore virulent de la société américaine. Le virage à droite des deux grands partis s'est fait des années 70 à la fin des années 90. Rabotement continu du travail, des régulations financières, de l'aide sociale, etc. Le virage à droite des démocrates a mené à l'abandon de ce parti par les classes populaires. Bush II gagne 80% des voix au Kansas en 2000. Beaucoup de gens se sont mis à voter pour des gens qui n'ont cessé de se retourner contre les intérêts de leurs électeurs : pensions, santé, politique de salaires, liberté des syndicats, immigration... Pourquoi ces votes suicides ? Une des réponses est que des marques nouvelles d'appartenance et de nouvelles définitions de la "culture" et de la moralité—en gros des décisions individuelles qui ne coûtent rien ou si peu au trésor public—sont devenues le masque privilégié des politiciens à la recherche des suffrages, notamment par le truchement des média de droite

53. HONIGMAN, *Tales of high priests and taxes*.

payés par certaines grosses fortunes. Le processus s'est accéléré depuis avec Trump, McDonnell, Ryan, etc. Mais je crois qu'il y a plus : une peur de se voir être devenu autonome, ou du moins emporté sans retour par une rationalisation tous azimuts qui a défait silencieusement visions politiques de fond, notions d'une mission ou avenir historiques, et raison d'être d'une vie entièrement vécue comme un marché sans fin (aux deux sens du mot).

FRIDAY, 30 JUNE 2017

Most interesting article by Ali M. Latifi this morning in the *NYT* on Shi'a Afghans who are being enrolled by Iran's Revolutionary Guards to fight a proxy war in Syria. It is strange that this informative piece, devoid of quick and easy moral judgments was placed in the opinion page. This "paper of record" has been cagey at best about Iran. It was very negative for over a year until Obama's administration struck a deal stalling the expansion of nuclear weaponization in Iran. Reading this article should give pause to Pentagon's specialists of the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

The Shi'a are about 20% of all Muslims. The numbers are: 90 to 95% in Iran; 83% in Iraq; 75-80% in Bahrein; 35 to 50% in Yemen and 15% of Saudi Arabia, mostly in the East; 32% of Lebanon; smaller ratios in the United Arab Emirates (15%), or Qatar (10%), and in India (ca 30M, 10 to 15% of Muslims). They have been struggling desperately to survive in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Lebanon, and now Iran, Iraq, and especially Syria. Their social and class origins are usually left unsaid: peasants, low-salaried workers in deconsidered occupations, so "uneducated, gullible, conservative..." The Shias of Afghanistan have been scattered across the world. Millions took refuge in Pakistan and now Iran: 3 million in this country, 2 undocumented. They left because of their poverty. In Bamyan province, two thirds of the population live on 25\$/month and so many young people especially seek menial work in Iran. The religious aspects of this migration cannot be separated from the economic and political issues. Pilgrimage, especially to significant sites like Karbala, is important. Legal status and better salaries are offered to those willing to defend shia shrines in Iraq or Syria. Iran uses foreign shia militias on a large scale in Iraq and Syria. Iranian leadership and poor Afghan shias share a religious determination, especially regarding the shrines and Israel. The parallel strategic calculation is access to the Mediterranean, preparation of defense against sunni encroachments, be they self-organized groups or states. The support for Assad, an Alawite, is logical. It also pays back a debt to Assad who supported Iran in its war against Iraq.

The Fatemiyoun Division of Afghan trained refugees started in 2014 and counts between 8 and 14K soldiers. The Iranian support of Hazara Shia Afghans forms a parallel with the Pakistani use of Pashtun Sunni Afghans and their transformation into Talibans. The Afghans are used as front line troops in all areas (Aleppo, for instance) under Revolutionary Guards' command. There have been many victims, perhaps 600 dead (est.), who have been heroicized in Iran. Iranian victims are less fêted?

Tonight, I read three or four of Aesop's fables to Callum. They don't have the sharp political and moral edge of La Fontaine's version. After that, he wants me to read the story of Athena's birth. He likes the character of Hephaestus. Once the lights out, he asks me to write the Hebrew alphabet on his back. He repeats each letter. Then the Greek alphabet, the American alphabet, the French version.... He wants to write the Hebrew letters on my back too and asks me about their shape. We draw a lot of shapes in the air.

7

July

SATURDAY, 1 JULY 2017

The evening routine with Callum and Lucie who now share the room downstairs is to read a couple of stories, brush teeth, read one more story, switch off the light, snuggle, perhaps do “X marks the spot...” Last night, the last story was that of the birth of Athena from Zeus’ head. Later, Callum asked me to trace the alphabet on his back. First he wanted the Hebrew alphabet which I had to do twice in square letters. He repeated each letter after me. Then the Greek alphabet in capitals, also twice, and the “American” alphabet. He asked for the Spanish alphabet but I couldn’t deliver as I don’t know how to pronounce most of the letters. In turn, he wanted to learn to trace the Hebrew letters on my back. No surprise therefore to hear him in our bed this morning say that he wanted to learn Arabic later. We learned a few salutations. Callum and Amy are speaking about the English and French pronunciations of Bunny Bleu and Michigan Bunny. Suddenly, Callum says in imitation of Bunnny Bleu, “Ça c’est un marteau,” a real sentence that makes Amy and me look at each other in recognition of this “first.”

Gauchet’s new book *Le nouveau monde* is about the crisis we are in in Europe and the US. Europeans have lost their bearings. The struggle or effort that focussed so long on the solving of the three corollary issues of hierarchical status, political representation, and freedom of thought (separation of church and state) has *spent* itself. The US still seems able to hold onto its historical sense of a unique political creation and keep reformulating it as the freedom of individual rights and the market in its conquering neo-liberal forms. For how long? What is striking in Trump and cohorts is the hostility to vision (the “vision thing,” in Bush I’s contemptuous phrase), the absence of pretense that there is a universal march towards freedom led by Yankee doodles. It seems to me that Macron’s *en marche* is trying to copy

a song from the tattered US dream. I don't see how he can set a tempo, for very long at any rate, without a re-founding that cannot be either socialist or religious, i.e. without any messianic core.

Americans are prompt to invoke freedom when discussing public policies. The most recent one is the discussion of health systems. Many people want to repeal Obamacare—better called the Affordable Health Care Act—because they think it encourages irresponsibility and mooching from others (a common view among Republican voters). Lower taxes (no matter the fact that very high revenues would over-benefit) and lower spending (to bring the nation's deficit under control, no matter the uncontrolled spending for defense) are justified by the ideal of individual self-reliance. This ideal takes two forms: the moral notion of free will, and the idea of the free market where the desires of individuals turn to be a virtuous self-correcting mechanism working to everyone's benefit. So, instead of "Obamacare", back to reliance on individual provisions (actually worked massively through large employers), and charity. On the horizon, no national insurance of course, no medicaid or very little of it, and eventually no Medicare. The preference is supposedly (40%? of the electorate?) for a voluntary system in which the "human element" would be preserved, vs the cold monster that a national-scale system is or would be.

Two problems come into view: a) the catastrophic nature of many diseases or accidents would be badly served by charity. the latter is fundamentally organized around its own communities. Charity is usually limited by a perception of who is same and other. It cannot be relied on as insurance though this unreliability can be part of its appeal as a form of heroism and impressive self-giving. b) the national tax and social systems of support, however large and seemingly opposed to or without "individual power or freedom," push the notion of charity to its utter limits. As Maimonides said, the ideal act of charity occurs in a *relationship* in which the helping hand doesn't know whom it helps—the power of patronage is removed)—and the one helped doesn't know where it came from—the dignity of the person is preserved. The existence of grace and gift within large state administrations is still a need and a real possibility, very much as conversely charity organizations can become awfully rigid mammoths (Red Cross USA for instance?).

SUNDAY, 2 JULY 2017

Everyone is up a bit before 8am. Lucie uses French words with me. She often starts with English and switches to French when I insist: une baleine, un chien, oiseau... We go for a walk after breakfast. She collects “bouts de bâton” or “cailloux” and stops at flowers. Back home, Rémi is playing his clarinet, Callum is keeping a nice slow beat on *Summertime*, and Leslie is taking her violin out. Lucie is upset she cannot do as she thinks is right with the clarinet or the violin.

Tonight, after a walk to the pool and dinner at home, Leslie and Rémi put them to bed. Everything is quiet but around 21hr15, Callum comes out to use the bathroom. I turn the light on for him, but he asks me to give him “privacy,” and that he wants to kiss good night to Bahbish and me. We hear him drag the footstool to switch off the light, then come out and give each of us a kiss and a hug. He also wants me to trace more alphabets on his back but I tell him that mama put him to bed tonight and that I’d do that tomorrow. No struggle on that one.

MONDAY, 3 JULY 2017

To reflect on the difference between exploitation and expropriation, it makes sense to follow the ancient vocabulary across the landscape: dwell, inhabit, settle, reside, *nahalab*, *hazaqah*...

TUESDAY, 4 JULY 2017

Rémi came back late last night from his work at the hospital. He was in good spirits as he felt he had a chance to make some good decisions under supervision. He was in charge of a whole floor.

One article of interest in the *NYT* today, by Peter Wehner, a conservative Christian who often expresses his disgust with our present government. His gripe today is about its chaos, unreliability, and unpredictability. Civil society is busy thinking or worrying about the latest flare-up. It feeds the president’s ego instead of going about its business as it could be expected to do if government was running well. Order and peace take long efforts, chaos takes minutes. The Republican party, together with this hustler-president, has become the party of chaos rather than order, while supporting the establishment more radically than ever.

Another word became a slogan not long ago: “first-generation” college student. The six of us at Kervilgoch were first-generation high-school stu-

dents. This is potentially the majority of young people in the world since the sixties... What is much more surprising to me is that we have made so little progress in primary and high school education, and actually lost much ground in states like California, thanks to the radical lowering of taxation in the seventies and later.

WEDNESDAY, 5 JULY 2017

Affaires de famille: Blaise and Liz called from Berkeley yesterday. They are staying at Holly's and Hector's and are apparently being much appreciated and admired by their hosts. I worked the whole day (well, six hours) at the local library. I learn when I'm back that Lucie is now able to climb out of her bed and didn't have a nap today (neither did Callum, or Bahbish, of course).

THURSDAY, 6 JULY 2017

The wiki article on Zoroaster was hagiolatric. Enlightenment intellectuals were interestd enrolled the figure to help retain deism without the problematic dress of historical Christianity. Rameau wrote an opera by that name in 1749. The Avesta was translated by Abraham Anquetil-Duperron in the mid-eighteenth century also and this marks the beginning of Western scholarship's interest as well as the development of occultism. Yeats and wife are said to have graphological contact with Zoroaster. Zarathustra is credited with the authorship of *Yasna Haptanghaiti* and the *gathas*. The wiki recognizes that

no strictly historical evidence can place him into a fixed period, and the historicisation surrounding him is part of a trend from before the 10th century that historicises legends and myths.

It looks like the Zarathustra tradition was “creatively appropriated” not only by the Achaemenids—or some of them at least—perhaps also by Judaeans (Kiel), and by Greek platonic tradition (see Phillip Horky). Innovative links between Old Persian *dāta* and “Torah” or Aramaic *dat* would have been drawn by EN. This would have happened under the impact of Avestan tradition because of its creative ideological re-use by the Achaemenids. Short of an imperial authorization (not necessary), the Achaemenids would have facilitated “Avestan notions of divine revelation of the law and scriptural unity linked to personal authority.” In other words, the Achaemenid

use of Zarathustra was parallel to the meaning given to the Moses figure by EN. I don't see why the Achaemenids would have bothered to encourage a parallel effort to their own putative one. All that is needed is that they simply recognized the Judean priesthood's authority, and "approved" (tolerated? be given assurances? there may have been a need for that given the prerogatives of kings) the unification of Torah (at some degree: would they have cared?) and its sacralization. It seems to me that the authority of the Torah and those charged with it should have preceded any interest on the part of the political authorities.

The bases for Kiel's claim are the *thematic* parallel ("law?"), the *historical* proximity, and the *terminological* affinity. These are resemblances and do not carry the weight of a structural analysis. He may be right that a broadening of the meaning of תורה can be detected in the Bible: from particular legal instruction to a legal structure, and finally to the whole of the Pentateuch. But this evolution could have occurred in exilic and post-exilic circumstances—the need to give authority to cultic and custom laws in threatened communities—and doesn't require an external source (especially from conquerors).

Among the several suppositions made by Kiel is this problematic one: "The basic notion of divine revelation of the law mediated through the figure of Moses emerges already in preexilic texts" (326) (according to his view: the Covenant Code of Exod in E, Deut 12–26 in D, and the laws of the tabernacle and purity in P). But could this "basic notion" be expressed (and written!) in the monarchic period? Note 9, page 326, refers to the traditional role of kings in providing the "law" (or chunks of it) as a divinely-enjoined prerogative. Can we assume that things were different in Israel and Judah and that these regional kings were "disempowered" in pre-exilic times when it came to affirming their role as law-givers? And if this Mosaic figure was already a mediation in monarchic Israel, what need is there for an influence of Zoroastrism? As Bernard M. Levinson claims (or Jan Assmann), direct divine revelation of the law in the Israelite mode was new in the Near East. It seems overly speculative to propose that pre-exilic Israelite religion and Zoroastrism were different from other NE kingdoms. What is needed in this regard, I repeat, is a structural analysis of the role of kings in controlling the enforcement of cultic and criminal laws.¹

Kiel claims that the innovation lies in "the literary use of the figure of Moses" to achieve unity of the Pentateuchal law and give it its shine as Mo-

1. See LeFebvre who is followed by Kiel but criticized on this point.

saic Torah. As I mentioned above, there are antecedent, practical reasons why the figure of Moses could have been given great unifying authority by priests and scribes. The main one is that substitute authority was needed, such as could not be second-guessed and was not directly attached to the priesthood—a political problem lurks here—, if only to re-inforce claims regarding Jerusalem and the land. Moses' mediation made it also acceptable to accept innovations in circumcision and sabbath.² The enlargement of the Mosaic figure is also bound to the question of prophecy and its subsumption under this primordial, king-less, figure.³ The question to ask at this juncture is: why would written law carry authority, already in the monarchy and differently in post-exilic times? Again, with Anthonios, see the evolution of the use of writing in prophecy (and imagery of scroll-incorporating in Jeremiah and Ezekiel). So, it is to be expected that Moses was turned into an inspired authority (revealing, consolidating, scripturalizing, and writing!), given the ruinous absence of the usual suspects, the kings. The pursuit of the consolidation of the law under Ezra should occasion no surprise and is in no need of extraneous examples. “The law set down by Ahura Mazda,” according to Xerxes' royal inscription, is not a formula that per se sets Achaemenid kings apart from other NE monarchies.⁴ And the expansiveness of the תורה מושה formula, as I argued above, need not be assigned only to the EN period, first, or assumed to be a creation under the influence of an Achaemenid *remaniement* of Zoroastrism, second.

If the “law of Zarathustra”, like “the torah of Moses,” indicates the “totality of the Zoroastrian tradition” (340), how can we be sure that this is very different from the usual *modus operandi* of NE kings? In any case, why is Zarathustra “completely absent from the Old Persian inscriptions?”⁵ Kiel's answer is that kings took it upon themselves to enact the figure of Zarathustra in themselves. Possibly. But does that mean that an Achaemenid king was “subordinate to the law revealed by Ahura Mazda to Zarathustra?”⁶ It may simply imply that royal power was everything and that the law of cult and civil matters was to be understood as divinely inspired and expected to shun competition or crass interpretations. Nothing new under the (royal) sun here. But this was very different from

2. Check scholarship regarding this need for Mosaic authority: Albertz?

3. See ANTHONIOZ, *Le prophétisme biblique: de l'idéal à la réalité*.

4. This needs some arguing: how limited law corpora could be set between declarations of divine inspiration.

5. KIEL, “Reinventing Mosaic Torah in Ezra-Nehemiah,” 343.

6. *Ibid.*, 344.

Mosaic law, as Levinson or Assmann and many others write. Mosaic law was actually revolutionary in its political implications (though turning necessity into virtue at some level, while not preventing abuses of power in the long future), except that these political implications were narrowly framed and in no way could threaten the imperious and jealous powers that had conquered Israelites and Judaeans.

Gauchet fait une analyse sociologique des inégalités qui nous instruit peut-être sur notre avenir.⁷ Les pages 129–44 sont sur les aspects religieux de l'élimage du socialisme. L'état soviétique se trouve évidé de l'extérieur et de l'intérieur, menant à une implosion où "la propriété collective" se trouve accaparée en quelques mois par des "hommes forts."

Nul besoin aujourd'hui, au G-20 à Hambourg, où se retrouvent les chefs d'état du monde riche, d'imaginer des tractations secrètes Poutine-Trump. Ils représentent le même désir d'occuper un espace laissé vide par le retrait de la vision, de la gouvernance au niveau de l'état, et son exil ou sûrement son rétrécissement. Le premier souci de Trump n'est pas de gouverner (est de ne pas gouverner ?) mais de détruire tout ce qui était effort d'organisation, de choix législatifs guidés par l'idée de bien collectif. C'est cette dernière idée qui a longtemps été mise à mal, et pas seulement par le parti républicain. Comment concevoir l'unanimité humaine :

un circuit formé d'attachements où chaque individu humain trouverait intellectuellement et affectivement sa plénitude dans la mesure où il fait corps avec le système tout entier. (140, citant T. de Chardin, *L'avenir de l'homme* (1950), 373)

Je revis certains aspects de ma vie de 1964 à 1973 en relisant Gauchet :⁸ mes intérêts désordonnés pour la philosophie — Sartre et Ricœur sur Freud pour le cours de l'abbé X ?, et Merleau-Ponty, Marcel, et une foultritude d'autres lectures sauvages —, la théologie morale, la littérature, mais pas l'écriture sainte, au Grand-Séminaire de Saint-Brieuc, et surtout le sentiment de ne pas pouvoir me situer dans une église désemparée, au milieu de fidèles perdus qui se raccrochaient aux lambeaux de la structure ou allaient à la recherche des esprits. Ce sentiment de désemparement était aussi le mien, surtout après mon retour de Palestine en 1968 et ma participation aux cours de Villejean (Rennes) en 1969, la découverte de tous ces mouvements politiques qui me paraissaient autant de chapelles ou d'imitations théologiques

7. Gauchet, *Le nouveau monde*, 111.

8. *Ibid.*, 167–79.

auxquelles je ne pouvais pas faire confiance. Le monde intellectuel aussi me paraissait peu digne de foi bien que je l'admire encore beaucoup.

Le poème : acte d'invocation qui permet aux lointains de se rendre intimes, apprivoisement accepté dans les deux sens.

FRIDAY, 7 JULY 2017

FRANK:⁹ he explains his own political evolution half-way through the book. The personal account doesn't contribute directly to the previous analysis. It makes me aware, however, that Frank's own view of politics is highly polarized and the examples he gives of conservative, manipulative, criminal even, businessmen have to be taken with grain of salt. The most interesting suggestion of his account so far is that the right has re-purposed the playbook of the left and turned itself into a complaining machine without solutions (with many gradations). Its discourse assumes a minority status and conveys the belief that it is hobbled, despised, or even persecuted by a pervasive, relentless coast-to-coast liberalism that pushes its "issues" onto a hard-working, honest, abused people: abortion, homosexuality, Hollywood morality, media laxity, repression of Christian beliefs, ethnic redefinitions and pride together with contempt for the nation, ceaseless regulations, encroachment by state and federal governments, laziness and abuse of social services, etc. The reality is that a) this ceaseless shouting has a majority hold on airwaves in many states; b) the Republican party dominates local and federal governments most of the time (in the past twenty years or so) and includes "moderates" who go along in public even though they disapprove of this discourse. What Frank doesn't explain is exactly who espouses the discourse, and why. Is it related to their class status? Bartels, a sociologist at Princeton, disagreed with him and showed that lower classes in US rural areas were not more likely in 2008 to vote for conservatives:

It is true that American voters attach significantly more weight to social issues than they did 20 years ago. It is also true that church attendance has become a stronger predictor of voting behavior. But both of those changes are concentrated primarily among people who are affluent and well educated, not among the working class. (April 17, 2008)

The problem for me is this last word, "working class." The recent massive vote for Trump and Republicans in Wichita may show that Bartels is

9. FRANK, *What's the matter with Kansas?*

right (upper working class employed in aviation voted for Trump?), but isn't there a problem with our definitions? What does it mean now? It has changed meaning all over the world and certainly in France as Gauchet says. The question then becomes a matter of what a majority of lower and middle class people *want*. I see nothing in Frank's book that tries to answer this question. Abuse by semi-criminal conservatives and capitalist forms of media distribution, together with naïveté, do not explain the evolution. The votes seem to me to express something much deeper and that must remain hidden. I'll see if Gauchet gets closer to any answer.

I read in a TLS review of Primo Levi's recently published collection of writings that Mann, like Mendelssohn and others, defended Jews as the founders of modern morality (*Joseph und seine Bruder*). This reminds me of Confino's disputable argument in *A world without Jews* (2014). I also read with some relief that Levi disliked the use of the word "holocaust" for the history of extermination ("it seems to me inappropriate, it seems to me rhetorical, above all mistaken.") because of its prevalent religious meaning. Its errant usage since the sixteenth century for catastrophic burning is no justification for its present use. It is shocking for Christians in the Greco-Latin tradition, mostly old-fashioned Catholics. The special nature of the word, making part of it unique (the one related to the genocide of Jews) consists of its attachment to the Bible and Christian theology yet doesn't really pack more significance than "genocide" or "extermination camps" (*pour moi, s'entend*).

"We are aware of the unpleasant fact that when the nation is at war, the people do not suffer from unemployment, undernourishment, and boredom." (TS Eliot)

SATURDAY, 8 JULY 2017

Thoughts about recent political developments in the US, including the election of Trump but not limited to it. His election has been frightening for good reason. This is a time in which the "first private individuals" of history have been emerging by the millions. To go from village to city and from traditional industry or service jobs to modern employment as so many are doing now—not only in China or India but in the whole world, including the industrial world—, is happening now beyond the usual framing of any pre-existing forms or structures. Socialist, religious, or mixed liberalism (in-between the other two) see their structures cracking and their goals dissolving. Publicly, socially, and psychologically enforced relationships and

values affixed to them have become strange landscapes for present beings. The sources of our life and aspirations are evidently located in an immense continuum that reaches beyond the communities, state or civil organizations, churches, and national governments that were their horizon until recently (Gauchet would say 1970). The enforced relationship disappears to be replaced by what? Nothing. The freedom of choice becomes entirely that of the individual to recognize one's pre-existence in others. "Nouvelle économie psychique?" Voilà pourquoi Trump est si dangereux. Pour Trump, pas de "pardon à demander pour ses dettes (péchés ou manquements)".

SUNDAY, 9 JULY 2017

Games we play with Callum and Lucie: she likes to be read stories, loves to run from one end of the house to the other, play construction or train. The trampoline downstairs is another favorite. She likes to tease Callum by using a piece from his wooden train and give him a look that never fails to get a rise out of him. He likes to play with his imagination in a series of games involving Michigan Bunny, California Bunny, and Bunny Bleu, who speaks French. They are part of our video "presence" when we are back in California. Here, one of the main games is to have Michigan Bunny and Bunny Bleu as passengers in different trains. They use the wood trains inside or the tricycles outside—oops, the various TGV or AGV trains—to go to Paris, Madrid, or as regional trains. Imaginary lines are drawn along the sidewalks, stations designed with very precise limits, and fuel sources distributed along the way (soil picked with a little blue shovel and dumped in the fuel cell compartment).

I am on the front porch, enjoying the towering oaks and maples that shade the streets of all small cities in this part of Michigan. I try to imagine life here more than two and a half centuries ago, without the imported plants (geraniums, yews, cedars, boxwood, even oaks?). Here, the rumor of traffic is faint. Last night, near midnight, by a magnificent full moon lighting the lush suburb of Pleasant Ridge, I was disturbed to hear the rumbling of cars and trucks rushing the 696 channel three blocks away.

Rémi helped us decide about investments in Vanguard and Fidelity mutual funds. We turned the Vanguard funds into admirer funds (a couple of them), and invested my IRA, about 280K now, into domestic stocks (mostly, for 30%), international funds (10%), and bonds (60%). We don't really need these funds in the near future, since we have cash in BFCU (about

45) and WF (about 120). We do have other accounts in Fidelity and Vanguard. How much will we need later in long-term care of either of us? I foresee 250K but is this reasonable? This means we can help fund Roth IRAs for Rémi's and Blaise's retirements. The maximum for each per year is 11,450.00 per year per person. That would reduce our tax by essentially giving (gifting) the profits from our accounts.

MONDAY, 10 JULY 2017

L'élection de Trump et l'arrivée au pouvoir de tous les enthousiastes ou cyniques qui le soutiennent nous engagent à réfléchir à la sorte de société où nous voudrions vivre. On n'ose dire que c'est une chance. Un des pôles du choix est l'effort de donner un sens à notre existence en acceptant de la constituer comme quelque chose qui est à la fois déjà donné d'avance et pourtant pris dans des réseaux infinis de relation où nous nous efforçons de nous dégager de nos dettes le plus clairement et honnêtement possible tout en acceptant qu'une part de grâce ou de don existe dans chaque élément comptabilisé de notre vie. Il s'agit là de reconnaissance dans les trois sens du mot qui me viennent à l'esprit : recherche ou approfondissement, nouveauté ou inattendu de l'ancien, et grâce rendue. L'autre extrême au contraire est le refus et la prétention non seulement de ne rien devoir aux autres, mais encore l'intention de les spolier et d'en vivre. L'avenir de la "civilisation occidentale", nous a encore dit Trump, est en jeu : il ne croit pas si bien dire, si on admet que l'occident de cette "civilisation" est partout et nulle part.

1. Nous savons tous que nous sommes indissolublement composés du travail, de la pensée, de la société et des valeurs des autres, de la naissance à la mort. Ceci a toujours été vrai pour les petites communautés de l'histoire, depuis les villages jusqu'aux grandes unités politiques du passé. Ça l'est devenu plus que jamais grâce aux développements économiques de l'époque moderne. Les moyens de reproduction de nos conditions et circonstances actuelles—je ne veux pas dire simplement nos corps et esprits individuels mais leurs extensions, par quoi je ne veux pas seulement dire nos enfants—plongent leurs racines et ramifications à l'infini. Parmi tous les éléments qui composent notre vie, notre nourriture quotidienne nous permet de le voir le plus clairement à tout instant d'une reconnaissance vite enfouie et cachée. Le travail et l'effort intégrés à chaque produit nécessaire à notre vie ont des aspects universels dont nous ne pouvons pas espérer calculer de manière exhaustive tous les tenants et aboutissants. Mais les paravents ou écrans de solidarité qui jusque là avaient tenu parce qu'ils étaient des conventions sociales

et morales imposables par les communautés se sont évanouis à gauche et à droite. Est-ce la solution des autres dans nos êtres par les mécanismes sociaux et économiques qui a mené au délitement des structures religieuses et politiques connues jusqu'à présent et qui nous protégeaient de nous-mêmes, même encore dans la période moderne ?

2. Dans le village, la production industrielle des dix-neuvième et vingtième siècles, ou dans le travail urbain, il y avait encore des cadres sociaux, une morale du travail, une structuration des genres. La naissance dans ces milieux—que ce fût un village rural ou même encore une banlieue ouvrière—nous faisait entrer dans un monde vectorisé moralement dont il fallait accepter les lignes de force et la carte morale. Ceci représentait une force d'inertie double : a) il y avait le rappel et l'obligation renouvelée d'être fidèle à une origine déterminée par le statut ou la classe sociale ou de composer avec elle, de se rebeller même ; b) on se moulait dans une position d'attente ou un espoir car chacun pouvait ressentir dans son corps ce qui en faisait une source de vie et ce qui y était pris par la force instituée.

3. Notre situation est celle d'un plus grand éventail de choix—je n'ai pas dit de liberté—car nous sommes sortis des schèmes de reproduction traditionnels qui nous liaient les uns aux autres par nos origines de classe aussi bien que par un commun avenir—le ciel ou les lendemains qui chantent—et nous forçaient à une solidarité, fictive ou non. Beaucoup plus d'entre nous sentent que les structures actuelles, même vécues à un niveau modeste, n'ont pas dans leur nature de nous imposer une exigence visible de vivre une responsabilité morale. Il y a eu un grand changement dans l'idée et la pratique du devoir de réciprocité ou d'entraide tel qu'il existait et était encouragé publiquement dans toutes les sociétés traditionnelles ou même modernes, que cela fût encore le fait de la vision moderne des nations et classes depuis le seizième siècle et surtout les révolutions démocratiques, ou que ce fût imposé par les religions même après les séparations modernes du séculier et du religieux. La responsabilité morale est devenue facultative, une dialectique qui se joue au fond des âmes ou des esprits.¹⁰ Je ne prétends pas que ce soit une situation entièrement nouvelle dans son principe mais qu'elle est nouvelle par son extension générale, universelle même.¹¹ La possibilité de découvrir

10. Voir Lévinas.

11. Ne pas oublier que les valeurs traditionnelles et leur force d'inertie chez ceux qui croient ou croyaient aux anciennes institutions qui les cultivaient est une précieuse ressource pour le capitalisme qui naturellement détruit ces institutions et n'a aucune vocation à restaurer les blocages qu'elles impliquaient. Cette ressource est temporaire. Il suffit de penser à l'importance de l'idée de travail bien fait ou à la notion de fidélité au groupe dont pro-

que la valeur morale était au-delà des entérinements ou des soutiens religieux ou sociaux donnés par les institutions existait dans tous les systèmes traditionnels. Elle demandait beaucoup de courage et pouvait entraîner de graves conséquences. Elle est maintenant à portée de tout individu.¹²

4. Trump et alii représentent la voie (la voix ?) du refus et nous permettent d'imaginer non seulement la laideur morale et esthétique de l'égoïsme mais encore l'horreur potentielle de ses conséquences. Ils proclament *urbi et orbi* qu'ils sont prêts à ne pas reconnaître leurs dettes ou celles de l'état. Pas de demande de pardon pour Trump, ou pour le capitalisme global, sinon un pardon renégociable et re-capitalisable.¹³ De par ses origines et ses aspirations—du moins celles qu'il partage publiquement—aucune solidarité ne se voit exprimée ou vécue, sinon le suivisme de la famille. Mais justement, ceci est un retour au monde d'avant, un monde d'autorité, un retour qu'il souhaite à un monde où compassion ne peut se vivre que comme élément de négociation dans une société dont la grandeur passée se mesure à l'aune de la force.

Importe-t-il que ce soit lui plutôt qu'un autre qui nous permette de poser le problème des valeurs et de la liberté ? Nous avons l'entière liberté de choisir (Deut 31) et de nous sentir faiseurs d'un monde donné plutôt que victimes de choix faits pour nous.

Trump et alii nous offrent un monde sans reconnaissance de dettes. L'accusation de "liberalism" aux Etats-Unis ou de distorsion des faits ne trouve qu'une cible extérieure et ne peut se considérer comme en faisant partie. Le libéralisme est partout en ce sens que la liberté est vécue comme *le détachement de soi et des autres par les multitudes*, vécu quotidiennement et à la seconde même. Nous sommes des millions d'individus privés qui naissent à la responsabilité morale sans formes ou structures préconçues. La liberté est plus sélective. Le choix qui se présente : la reconnaissance de la grâce, sinon de ses obligations, et l'élargissement du cœur, l'entrée dans la dialectique du

fitent en partie bien des institutions industrielles ou bancaires qui par ailleurs se doivent de réduire les obstacles qui leur sont posés par la fidélité vécue en communautés ou la qualité qui serait en contradiction avec la nécessité du remplacement constant et de la satisfaction de désirs reconstitués, flattés et entretenus sans arrêt.

12. Quelles formes peut-elle prendre ? Au-delà des systèmes modernes d'imposition et de soutien social qui permettent au plus grand nombre de vivre les valeurs morales d'entraide et de don de manière idéale, c'est-à-dire sans reconnaissance de type patron-client ou philanthropique. Cf. l'évangile de Luc.

13. Je pense à la récession de 2008, le soutien donné par le trésor public aux banques, et la réévaluation des risques.

don et du pardon.

The enforced relationships of the past disappear from history, even in the US. To be replace by what? Nothing. Or rather the freedom of choice becomes entirely that of the individual to recognize one's pre-existence in others.

Claims to simplicity of Thoreau discussed today in the *NYT*. Social justice from the capacity (and willingness?) to recognize the pain or suffering of others that is hidden in plain sight. Possessions and the possession of more material goods prevent the rich—but not only them—from seeing the lack (poverty, misery) and the fullness (dignity) of others. Cf. the story of the Samaritan (and again I don't write, the Good Samaritan).

Poem sent by Rob Elmore today:

Sometimes after 2a.m.
 Late-at-night, early-in-the-morning,
 I will feel new Northern breaths of air
 Slide in thru the window.

Cooler air,
 So I pull on the other blanket
 And settle into my
 Newly-warm bed-cocoon.

Sometimes a little later
 I will notice little cool capsules
 Of fresh air
 Passing thru my nostrils.

I feel as if I can detect
 Molecules of Oxygen
 Fresh from Monterey Bay
 Passing into me.

Sometimes I can place that air
 In time
 Right now,
 Right here.

Sometimes I can connect this time

With past times
In the long history of
Life on Earth.

Sometimes I can go back
10 Billion years
To the Supernova explosions
That made that Oxygen.

Sometimes I am right back
At the Big Bang, the Great Expansion
That started that air
On its way to me.

TUESDAY, 11 JULY 2017

Language: sentence seen in the *NYT* today that “[they] have a clear path to prosecute their strong belief that birth.... etc.” The verb “prosecute” has two main meanings, to pursue and sue. The direct object noun following “prosecute” with the meaning of “pursuing” looks odd. What they are meaning to pursue consists of goals and methods, not so much the belief??? I would see “apply” or “implement.”

A sentence also stops me, for very different reasons, in my reading of Gauchet’s idea about the entirely new developments he observes in the modern expansion and restructuration of human autonomy:

Nous savons à quoi nous avons affaire : nous sommes en présence d’une étape supplémentaire de la sortie de la religion, à réinscrire dans la longue durée de la révolution moderne, dont elle représente une étape décisive. (Gauchet, *Le nouveau monde*, 205)

Elle me ramène à la petite scène de ce matin où nous avons entendu Callum utiliser une expression qu’il avait probablement entendue hier ou avant-hier et qu’il essayait “sur mesure,” sans penser à mal, car comment pourrait-il prendre ses distances et peser ses mots ou penser à quatre ans ? On a réagi à la phrase innocente (“I’ll kill you”), d’abord gentiment (en expliquant) puis plus sévèrement et même de manière dramatique. De quoi s’agissait-il ? Pourquoi insister que l’enfant n’utilise pas certains mots ou certaines expressions ? Il n’y va pas simplement de la bienséance future de l’individu en situations sociales qui exigeront de lui qu’il sache la différence et puisse

l'incarner de manière appropriée. Il y va de quelque chose de plus important et qui nous est obscur : nous explorons (ou plutôt nous ne savons même pas que nous explorons) un nouveau monde comme le dit Gauchet. Les incartades et mouvements aux limites que les enfants font depuis des éternités sont maintenant perçus comme engageant des valeurs absolues qui il n'y a pas si longtemps étaient accommodées ou apprivoisées (replacées) dans une éducation dont les tenants et aboutissants cachés étaient ou religieux (avec origine du monde, sacrifice fondateur, et ciel au bout, donc un présent construit comme un passage incertain et constamment retrouvé du passé au futur), ou non-religieux, mais avec une carte de la moralité démarquée de la structure religieuse (avec origine du monde aussi, sacrifices, et avenir plus radieux ou juste). On n'est plus dans cette structure mentale. L'autonomie du sujet est radicale. Mais comment alors être parent et éduquer les enfants sans hétéronomie religieuse ou non-religieuse, sans autorité d'un principe qui nous est externe ?

Rémi gets back from the hospital at 11pm and goes back tomorrow morning at 6am. But at least he was able to speak to his supervisor and ask about days off. He will have an extra day this Friday, just in time for his birthday.

WEDNESDAY, 12 JULY 2017

C and L up a bit before 8am. I go to the library at around 9H30 after helping with breakfast and cleanup. Outside, the remnants of last night storm, everything wet and sticky. Most of the small plastic US flags put by real estate companies on everyone's lawn are still up. Made in China.

THURSDAY, 13 JULY 2017

Trump à Paris pour participer à la fête de la Bastille. Il n'est pas surprenant qu'il ait accepté d'y aller, quoiqu'en aient pensé ses conseillers, mais l'ironie d'avoir un homme qui imite le luxe des rois du dix-huitième siècle à la commémoration de leur rejet n'est pas perdue pour tout le monde.

FRIDAY, 14 JULY 2017

Je lis les pages de Gauchet où il parle de la radicalisation de la modernité et de la victoire du politique sous sa forme d'état-nation.¹⁴ Il pense que ce

14. Gauchet, *Le nouveau monde*, 234–91.

changement qui consiste fondamentalement en la déliquescence finale de la forme religieuse (après l'abandon justifié et musclé du contenu de la religion) s'est finalement réalisé à la fin du vingtième siècle, primordialement et fondamentalement en Europe. Ce changement serait aussi important que le passage à la domination politico-religieuse que l'on trouve dans les premiers états il y a plus de cinq mille ans.

On pourrait parler encore à son propos de recouvrement du politique par le religieux. L'extériorité radicale du fondement surnaturel, conçu sous l'aspect des origines mythiques et de l'ancestralité législatrice, a pour effet de réduire les expressions du politique à leur simple attestation symbolique (mais non de les abolir) et de suspendre intégralement l'institution de l'être-ensemble à cette altérité religieuse. (Gauchet, *Le nouveau monde*, 240)

Il me semble que politique et religion ne pouvaient être séparées sous le très ancien régime. Il a fallu entrer dans ce qu'on appelle la période moderne pour qu'on apprenne à voir le religieux comme quelque chose de séparé de la politique. Les fonctions ou buts de l'instituant politique que je reconnais dans les anciens états consistaient d'abord à assurer l'existence de la communauté (production et guerre) et à la gouverner (justice ou plutôt ordre). Cela ne pouvait se faire sans en même temps proposer une approche du lointain, donc *représenter* les volontés transcendentes des dieux (et d'abord assurer le culte) par contiguïté et espérer se voir auto-confirmé comme la clé de voûte d'une représentation générale qui comprenait d'autres formes de rapport médiatisé et censément non contrôlés au religieux : proximité physique du temple, songes, prêtres, prophètes, scribes spécialisés dans la littérature sacrée.... Les manières de se définir et de se justifier pouvaient varier mais la domination du palais sur les temples me semble évidente.

Lorsque Gauchet dit que "le lointain est devenu proche" et que "l'extérieur est à l'intérieur" (240), il décrit un phénomène historique qui s'est passé sous nos yeux ces dernières décennies. Je lis différemment ces paires de mots, je veux dire, comme l'évocation d'un mouvement dialectique nécessaire entre proche et lointain ou projet et trajet, dont les deux termes sont constitués comme tels par tout homme et toute communauté. La structuration de la distance et de la proximité à nous-mêmes que nous constituons techniquement (transports, biblio- ou média-thèques, agriculture industrielle, système santé, communications), financièrement, socialement, théoriquement ou littérairement, n'est pas nouvelle. Elle fait

partie du phénomène humain, même si les apparences nous paraissent si différentes au premier abord.

L'économie lui paraît surestimé et le politique au contraire sous-estimé. Le développement universel de l'état-nation depuis le dix-neuvième siècle et surtout depuis la fin du second conflit mondial, avec ses conséquences de la déliquescence des empires territoriaux européens, l'indépendance de nombreux états de par le monde, et le renforcement paradoxal des états en Europe de par la création de son union. L'empire russe qui a été rémanent pendant soixante-dix ans sous l'idéologie communiste est bien condamné malgré les convulsions qui le secouent encore en Géorgie, Crimée, et surtout Ukraine.

Je note cependant que les conséquences qu'il tire de son analyse de l'idéologie européenne sont moins évidentes que son style ouvert et décidé ne le laisse entendre. Premièrement, s'il est évident que l'empire russe est en train de disparaître comme objet pensable et praticable, il n'est pas facile de parier pour la démocratie en fédération russe et au contraire aisé de parier que tout peut aller au pire. Deuxièmement, il est encore plus difficile d'accepter le jugement que les États-Unis ne sont pas un empire et que les nombreuses bases qu'ils gardent sur terre, sur mer et dans l'espace, ne forment pas un corset militaire qui peut bien passer pour quelque chose d'entièrement nouveau mais représente tout de même un usage de la force dont les "maîtres" ne sont pas faciles à nommer mais existent en forme de réseau bancaire, technologique, et idéologique. C'est un empire de type particulier, mais il me semble difficile d'imaginer que le monde économique puisse aller sans convulsions imprévisibles s'il n'y avait pas cette domination militaire américaine. Nous sommes en train de découvrir avec Trump et les partis au pouvoir combien la démocratie la plus importante du monde est fragile. Bien des choses à dire sur les liens entre l'économie, l'usage de la force (y compris le nucléaire), et la démocratie que Gauchet voit comme étant l'horizon universel. C'est également mon espoir mais les exceptions et les paravents me paraissent trop importants pour être passés sous silence. Enfin, troisièmement, que penser de l'évolution de la Chine en effet ? Est-ce que l'idée de son recentrage, si ancienne, qu'elle a su et pu réaliser (en partie grâce au rôle de la répression dans la reconstruction du pays ?) depuis les années 70 suffira à conjurer les démons du capitalisme ?

Les conséquences qu'il en tire pour la guerre et la démocratie comme horizons me semblent prématurées. Puisse-t-il être entendu des dieux quand il voit la guerre (la grande, la der des der) comme dorénavant impossible.

Ferndale hosts a large group of barbecue, beer, and whiskey aficiona-

dos this weekend. It reminds me of the Pommerit kermesses without the religious framework.

SATURDAY, 15 JULY 2017

Birthdays of both Rémi and Dale. We went out early with C and L while Rémi is at the hospital until tomorrow morning. We celebrated Dale's birthday at his house: C and L were well behaved and charmed all the visitors (Lindsay and John, Gail and George...).

SUNDAY, 16 JULY 2017

We discover that C. (sister of G.) spent a few days in Kentucky visiting two "young earth" creationist museums, the Creation Museum and the Ark Encounter. Large groups of people visit these places. According to a Gallup poll, about 40% of Americans hold that humans were divinely created in their present form about 6,000 years ago.

HW discusses "The future of utopia in history" in *Historiein* 7 (2007), 11–19. His thesis is

that modern utopian thinking and its various versions of both theory and practice are of a piece with the rise of the idea of history as a distinctively human mode of being in the world such that we must consider the possibility that what we mean by "utopian" thinking must be viewed as characterized by a resistance to accepting "history" as defining a specifically human kind of being in the world [etc...] (18)

Hayden's inverted view of history as utopia's Other doesn't seem cast far from the Johannine notion of the light that came into the world. Utopia would be history's Other not only inasmuch as it "repudiates that past and the temporal process" but also because it can be the memory of a repressed desire for a reimagined future. This made me understand better Larkin's poem on daily things and the strange reciprocity that presides over the circumstances we cause and record as a history.

Other thought on utopia and ideology: it is striking that utopias are concomitant with the rise of history as a discipline: the modern period from sometime in the fifteen-sixteenth centuries... Luther and wars of religion.

In the ancient world, all of political power was thought to be undistinguishable from religion, that is, all of politics was construed as application of divine will. The transcendental ideologies used by ancient kings

to consolidate their power beyond kin groups—from ancestor cults to divine pantheons—could not become utopias it seems. Or rather they were utopias in reverse, that is, projections in a sacred, mythical ur-history of a golden age that could not easily remain pure and submitted to various degrees of deterioration and regeneration. Why was that? Clearly as part of the need to justify the repressive politics of the past. The rejection of the traditional view is represented by the re-elaborated Hebrew prophese and above all the exodus story—a story of salvation, trekking through night and desert, revelation of divine law, dissension, promise of a land discerned on the horizon. They do the reverse and can serve as utopias, precisely because a seemingly ineluctable concatenation of events has brought the ruin of their political and religious ideologies and revealed them for what they are, a poor justification for political and military violences.

MONDAY, 17 JULY 2017

About utopia. Pre-Christian monarchies were all propped up and structured by religious ideologies that primarily consisted of managing proper access to divine cult so that the gods' benevolence would not fail. They authorized the sacred use of force against internal and external enemies, maintenance of the cult by control of temples and writing, kings' prerogative and control over law. Utopia was impossible because it was posited as being at the origin of a political realm that was thoroughly religious. Any attempt to frame the inherited (enforced?) ideology into a utopia, in the sense of planning or acting upon a different future was an attack on authorities. Claims to a utopia actually existed about a past, golden age, and all of politics consisted in at least keeping the world from slipping further, at best to go back to a golden age. Even Plato's *Republic* still structures its world with statuses of gold, silver, bronze, and iron.

What should be described as a revolutionary event and a utopia is what happened in Israel and Judah, at the borders of empires, after the fall of the reigning houses and the attached temples. Prophets, priests, and others imagined that one could escape the iron law of ancient monarchies and that it was possible to be politically saved without kings, have direct access to divine will revealed in a covenant, and think of oneself not as coming from a land defining how one is to belong but as going to a conditionally promised land where divine law would reign. Exodus and Ezekiel for instance. Kings and empires repeated the exploitative past, while the new political life inaugurated a life to come in the already now. This utopia, however, doesn't dis-

turb the Persian empire, Greek kingdoms (or so little), and Roman power.

With Jesus: in an imperial situation, the utopian question is that of messianism. A king, now or in the future. Torah now, with all its maximal demands, rather than a managed messianism, the taming of a political hope.

Then an impossible return to ancient politics of monarchy, with the difficult versions of Christ Pantocrator as well as redeemer through a unique self-sacrifice. Subjects or later citizens of two worlds. Nameless utopia inside each faithful. Then the modern state, i.e. separation of religious ideology from state, while keeping religious transcendental structure as basic ground still.

Finally modern states, still under the shadow of religion re. the justification of power. More utopias... Twentieth century: communes, intentional communities...

FRIDAY, 21 JULY 2017

I've been reading Michael Walzer's reflections on the absence of political debate and theorizing in the Bible. He asks interesting questions although his reliance on traditional views of the book's historicity prevent him, in my opinion, from seeing the deeper, more complex reality of politics behind the theological underpinnings of the text. So for instance, it is clear all through the Bible that descent—that is genealogical and biological determinations—and consent—expressed by the notions of covenant, faith, and fidelity—define Israelites in a continuously uneasy struggle that knows no rest.¹⁵ Knowledge acquired by all members of the whole people and freely given consent are the heart of the matter. Consent may be given because there is knowledge of the law and no use of force (no kings, but doesn't God's theophany and threats of punishment qualify?). Yet, this consent is often framed as that of the fathers. Then, if there is such an inheritance, why is there a need to re-covenant oneself?

Why are there three law codes in the Bible, vs a single one either through dropping two of them or harmonizing the three into a single one?¹⁶ No priority is given to any of these codes. It made it impossible to claim power over the divine word by identifying the originators, in contradistinction to kings. A surprising aspect of those biblical texts is that nowhere is the peo-

15. WALZER, *In God's shadow: politics in the Hebrew Bible*.

16. *Ibid.*, 16ff.

ple invited or required to act politically.¹⁷ The surprise, for me, is that the historicist point of view adopted by Walzer, even if so lightly, allows him to eliminate the political context of the biblical texts he surveys. They are shaped by authors who are living under imperial powers, after the fall of the kings and the temple(s), and their narrowly defined political views cannot be separated from their theology. The reality of the seventh to fifth centuries BCE is that there was no room for any independent political development. The conditions of authority under the Achaemenids did not allow for any claim to political freedom. So, I'm not surprised that the covenant treats people as a collective, "but they don't appear to act collectively."¹⁸ Everyone is born to their office, except prophets who are called.

There is no unauthorized criticism. Prophecy would be "hard to imagine without the covenant." I would say, "without a king-dispensed law." Interesting question indeed. I think of prophecy as we have it as being part of the movement(s) to explain the failure of the god-given polity. There must have been failures on the part of the kings, and they couldn't all be just cultic or bound to the duty of war. The prophets are portrayed as reminding kings of their obligations, but this surely is an adaptation of the prophetic tradition after the fall of the kings. The prophets are framed in the Mosaic mode.

Sectarianism arose "in the absence of any actual practice of politics."¹⁹ Another example of strange historicism: "More than a thousand years pass between Moses and Mattathias": rather six hundred years at most, if one takes the stories presumably told regarding Moses in the Israelite kingdom of the eighth century as departure point—with only liberation story at the core then. There is a moment of political mobilization, although its religious frame obscures for us the event, and that is Josiah's inchoative reform. The numbers themselves are not important. Their meaning is: a Moses whose story as a pre-king mediator between the deity and its chosen people was enlarged in the seventh and sixth centuries by elites is a revolutionary figure. It allowed the transfiguration of their radical loss into a story of salvation and continued political existence without the requisite power.

Very good question about the bringing together the different traditions and the absence of harmonization. The respective origins of these traditions can be explained with a reworked document hypothesis. One divinity

17. WALZER, *In God's shadow: politics in the Hebrew Bible*, 11.

18. *Ibid.*, 12.

19. *Ibid.*, 15.

and theological differences that are added rather than reworked, without one taking over (whether of royal, elite, or priestly origin). No authorities are named, except the divinity. See the contradiction found in Deut 4:2: Deuteronomy 4:2 *לֹא תִסְפוּ עַל־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם וְלֹא תִגְרְעוּ מִמֶּנּוּ* : *לֹא תִסְפוּ עַל־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם וְלֹא תִגְרְעוּ מִמֶּנּוּ* : *לֹא תִסְפוּ עַל־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם וְלֹא תִגְרְעוּ מִמֶּנּוּ* : *לֹא תִסְפוּ עַל־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם וְלֹא תִגְרְעוּ מִמֶּנּוּ* : *לֹא תִסְפוּ עַל־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם וְלֹא תִגְרְעוּ מִמֶּנּוּ* . Perhaps the Deuteronomy was a conscious attempt to provide a new text of the earlier law? This is where politics was played. The crucial event to my mind is the end of kings and priests (though the latter find themselves put forward as irreplaceable), and their recomposition in a new political unit. Divergence, and also identity, names, social location, are “camouflaged.”²⁰ “God’s monopoly works against the consolidation of interpretive power in Israelite society.” Indeed. Rabbis later did establish a kind of monopoly, but by insisting that the law is in human possession, “not in heaven” (Deut 30:12 Deuteronomy 30:12). They completely changed the meaning of the explanation which was easy to decipher: the point of the author of the Deuteronomy was a critique of royal prerogatives. The point of the rabbis who acknowledged of course that the law is divine is that it needs to be decrypted and that this process is difficult.

SATURDAY, 22 JULY 2017

On wealth: *bShabbat* 25b reports that possession of a toilet near one’s trinium or table qualifies a man as being rich: רבי יוסי ... תנו רבנן איזה עשיר... אומר כל שיש לו בית הכסא סמוך לשולחנו

SUNDAY, 23 JULY 2017

Wharf to wharf run today. I hear the drumming from here.

FRIDAY, 28 JULY 2017

More from and on WALZER.²¹ He writes that political regime among Greeks lied far into the future.²² This could be so only if one believes that the legal structure of Israelite community was laid out somewhat theoretically in the book of the Exodus much before the time of kings. It was not so. The theological outlook of law giving was actually nearly contemporary with the

20. *Ibid.*, 18.

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*, 54.

advent of democracy in Greek cities. It happened at almost the same time but for very different reasons. The fall of the monarchies in Israel, Judah, and neighboring nations, didn't come out of an internal struggle, though that too went on, He speaks of the kingdom of God as being a regime without archives.²³ On the contrary, it has a massive archive of sorts, written after the demise of the kingdoms.

THURSDAY, 03 AUGUST 2017

FN called. Her mother is exhausted because she is taking care of her husband Andy who does need more care and even supervision. Two things happened to him this week: the cutting of the tip of two of his fingers with a power saw—He insists on doing a lot of tasks himself—and the loss of his expensive hearing aid. Neither Andy nor F's mother wants to live in assisted living. "I'd rather be dead," says A.

MONDAY, 31 JULY 2017

From *Kirkus* about Karen Yamashita's *Letters to memory* and the way she addresses "Homer" in reflecting on the difference between history and fiction:

For you, the problem is to separate the fiction from the fact of living, to excavate the origins of our attachments to meaning, the material forensics of human systems, the fork in the road where we could have taken another path. This is the work of history.

Homer is a recomposition of the discussions I had with her in a couple café impromptu conversations and dinners at her house with Roshni Rustomji, Jim Clifford, and Boreth Ly.²⁴

23. WALZER, *In God's shadow: politics in the Hebrew Bible*, 59.

24. YAMASHITA, *Letters to memory*.

8 August

TUESDAY, 1 AUGUST 2017

Blaise called last night and was clearly happy about the turns life was taking for him and Liz. Many things are going his way: a good salary that gives them flexibility in their choices of housing (they'll have to leave Gayne's and Tony's house before April), a hospital system where he feels he is learning a lot, many friends in the cycling community.

Sunday, I finished the marriage certificate for Sonia and Chris. My hand doesn't shake too much and proper equipment such as an architect's table would help in steadying the hand, but I was fairly happy with the results.

Two recent comments on politics I agreed with:

The real cause [for the rise of Trump] was the Great Recession, the massive job loss, savings loss, hope loss. Ironically, Obama had nothing to do with this recession, and everything to do with stopping its momentum. But the momentum was enough to create a mass of Americans willing to blame Obama. We should be blaming the financiers, deregulation, predatory lending, CEO bonuses, and dog-eat-dog capitalism. Also ironic, Trump embodies all the sins that led to the Great Recession.

And I particularly agree with the sentiment expressed below that Trump is a symptom of a much deeper and broader problem:

Looking back, the events of 2000-2003 did more to undermine democracy in America than anything Donald has done so far. A reminder—in 2000, the sitting governor of Florida (Jeb Bush) undoubtedly pulled some shenanigans to insure that the GOP nominee for president (who happened to be his older brother, George W. Bush) won the electoral votes of the state. Watching this happen from their respective presidential palaces in Havana & Caracas, I'm sure Fidel Castro & Hugo Chavez shook their heads in

disbelief and realized that their anti-American propagandists would no longer need to write fiction. What happened in real life in Florida was appalling enough.

Then, of course, American democracy went on to more or less fail the test of withstanding the impact of a devastating terrorist attack in 2001. The Patriot Act got passed, far too many Democratic politicians (John Kerry, Hillary Clinton, Joe Biden, Charles Schumer, John Edwards, etc.) gave George W. Bush the benefit of the doubt by voting in favor of the Iraq resolution in October 2002, and from 2003 the U.S. proceeded to squander untold trillions of dollars on a futile effort to turn Iraq into a docile, Israel-tolerating, pro-American Arab client state à la Saudi Arabia (democratization was never the objective).

Trillions of dollars, gone. No nation can afford that.

Remarks on Walzer. Question: was monotheism's exclusivity impelled by the scarcity? The simple answer is that scarcity and the search for security of access to land and labor (as well as to trade routes) were part of the hopes and calculations made by ancient agrarian societies at any given time in the past, but that there is no direct line from this situation to the shape given to transcendental "will".

It seems true that the worshipping of a particular god or gods had the effect of shaping ethnic groups and justify to themselves and those outside their "boundaries" their claim to "property" or "inheritance" of the land (the fitness or propriety of it). See the story of Abraham and his claim to land mediated by the acquisition of land for his family graves.

There was no cosmological transformation of Israelite kings.¹ That is indeed the way the Bible is shaped and makes us think.² The writers of the stories that filled the holes in the annals they had access to were working from the idea that with monotheism, kingship could not adopt cosmological justification of their power and status. Yet, there are traces of it in the bible and scraps of awareness that intimate it was a basic issue: the episode of the golden calf; and especially Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's vituperations. Also, another possible sign that needs to be interpreted: the absence of criticism of the monarchy as an institution by prophets.

Walzer concludes his chapter on kingship by saying that it arose in Israel "as an entirely practical response to the dangers of theocratic (charismatic)

1. WALZER, *In God's shadow: politics in the Hebrew Bible*, 50?

2. See CARR, *The formation of the Hebrew Bible* on the shaping of this tradition; also LEUCHTER and LAMB, *The historical writings: introducing Israel's historical literature*.

rule.”³ That is indeed how it is presented by post-monarchy thinkers who had plenty of painful experience. The real origin of kingship in Israel, however, may have been entirely in line with what was practiced elsewhere, i.e. A justification by divine proximity of one’s power over *salus populi*.

Concerning Rabbi Eliezer’s singular dispute with all the others rabbis: what need is there to argue when you can summon miracles and punishments? This is adding a modern layer to an ancient concern, which was the direct claim to authority over the people (anchored in a transcendental will). I note that the story of Rabbi Eliezer mentions his “reasoning”, his “logic”, as superior also. It is not simply a matter of direct claim of access to divine will. But the problem, whether with pure logic or divine access, is the same: no need for communities (the problem doesn’t give rise to an argument or discussion).

A quote, but from what book? The new volume on pillar figurines, I believe:

To summarize, in Mesopotamian texts figurines with a consistent set of attributes are used to exorcize evil, including sickness, and to guard the home. The connection with sickness and protection is reinforced by the fact that the rite takes place in the home itself. Archaeological deposition rules out other potential uses for the Jerusalem figurines, such as dedicated votives or main cult objects in household shrines. The fact that they regularly occur in domestic spaces, though without specialized deposition, could be explained by their association with semi-divine beings used in rituals of healing and protection, which must have taken place in the domestic unit.

Walzer makes an historical assumption that follows from the fact that prophets appear together with kings.⁴ This conjoining of kings and prophets does not happen in the case of Moses, who is presented by the Exodus authors as preceding kings and prophets in time and proximity to the divinity, and in whose case there is a hidden message that the Levi family and Israel are hidden royals, rather than the pharaoh. The two, king and prophet, would replace the single figure of the judge, in Walzer’s estimation. That is how the Bible presents it, but what did actually happen? Post-monarchy thinkers, especially priests, introduced “judges” as a form of transition from the legendary Moses to the historical kings, but what gave them the idea? Rhetorical necessity of a stage of development

3. WALZER, *In God’s shadow: politics in the Hebrew Bible*, 71.

4. *Ibid.*, 75.

without kings? Note that judges are *warriors* first and last. Thought: the division between kings and prophets so elaborately framed in the first book of Samuel in the stories of Saul and David needed an ancestry perhaps? The judges-warriors were endowed with the charisma that was refused to kings, except Saul who is precisely an exemplary figure because of his direct, mad therefore, access to the divinity. This “charisma” is perhaps a necessary line, from Moses, through Judges, to the prophets, and “later” for those in exile who cannot claim this kind of authority but are imagining how it flowed before the historical catastrophes they suffered: a divine connection without royal office—against all ancient practice—was still needed and separated from politics as usual. This separation required justification and is given another ideological function than simply its support of the monarchy.

Regarding the prophets.⁵ It is hard to believe that all prophets were not subject to royal control. Their utterances, for that reason, needed to be ambiguous. Compare the prophets’ situation in Assyria, Greece, Rome. Walzer assumes the pre-existence of “the national covenant.” “The kings wanted favourable forecasts...” but “true.” See Balaam. The prophet’s unique voice was taken to be a sign, as was failure. Moral admonition was (or rather became) a remarkable part of the prophetic message. It took courage, and omens. How can one be certain that they spoke truth to power in their assumed times rather than in the memories of subsequent writers and followers? Was the poetry of the prophetic books really used to speak to the people? Walzer concedes the existence of the process of addition and revision but eventually defends the contemporaneousness of prophetic books as we have them with kings.

“We don’t know precisely when the prophets left the royal court and moved into the public spaces of Israel’s cities and towns.”⁶ We know that Isaiah and Jeremiah had close relationships with kings but also addressed the whole people (like Moses?) in the streets and towns as well as in the temple courtyard.⁷ The public spaces cannot be separate, however, from “religious spaces.” No political call (cf. Weber). What was most subversive was for the prophets to speak up to power from a position of weakness, or rather with a claim to divine power in the eyes of their followers, that discrepancy between a hidden power and the weakness before the monarchy being a sign.

5. WALZER, *In God’s shadow: politics in the Hebrew Bible*, 76.

6. *Ibid.*, 80.

7. Anthonioz

See Amos 7:10–13 for a realistic view of kings, temples, and prophets. My question: why couldn't kings actually claim direct access to divine presence and authority. The problem was that the dynastic family and circles, with all too obvious interests to defend, needed as unsuspected a source of authority as they could muster. Hence the proximity to temples, rituals confirming their analogous status to the most powerful gods, claims they had dreams, and authority over prophets as intermediaries.

In a recent book, Sheridan points out that the gospel of John persuades and shapes its “implied reader” “by distributing knowledge between characters and readers unevenly.”⁸ This is an idea worth thinking about: the characters' limited knowledge is noted, be it the mother's, the servants', the disciples', the invisible groom's, the master of ceremonies', and of course the crowd's. I argue that the construction of gaps in the knowledge of wine's origin invite the readers or listeners to think of a larger gap, having to do with the origin of the power to change conditions of life. I agree with Moloney's point in the same book that the gospel ends at chapter 20 but “signals” an opening and a request from Johannine disciples to come. As for time, I remain puzzled by the restructuring of time in the story of Cana's miracle. I think that the story doesn't invite the readers to turn back to an original pure time, an hyper-aged wine miraculously preserved as a memory or mark of a mythological golden age, and regret or lament the turning to vinegar of present wine(s), on the contrary. It invites us to imagine a future “old” wine that is *already here* and can be discovered by those who accept to believe. Something somehow old yet new, without any intermediary steps.

WEDNESDAY, 2 AUGUST 2017

On video call with Leslie, Callum, and Lucie, we talk about the percussionist we saw today in rehearsal at the Civic for the Cabrillo Music Festival. Amy hesitates on the name, Evelyn...? Callum gives the name instantly: Glennie.

THURSDAY, 3 AUGUST 2017

Book by Porten on the Elephantine papyri in English has more than 620 pages. I had it bought by UCSC library (advertised cost is \$80 dollars). I

8. ESTES and SHERIDAN, *How John works: Storytelling in the Fourth Gospel*, 215.

haven't kept track of the number of books I had the library buy this past year. It must be several dozens by now.

Strange titles for *NYT* articles these days: Trump cannot save Christianity, according to a piece by Dreher, who is a conservative thinker. More serious is the flaunting by many politicians of racist and greedy thoughts in the name of respect and even "compassion" for American workers. The article bemoans the fact that Christianity is declining in the United States. Where is Berger the sociologist? The catastrophe would be to see trust, generosity, compassion, a will to share one's good fortune, etc., decline. Perhaps they are, but how does one measure this kind of change? The language used by this *NYT* article about the change in churches goes along with Genesis: a "falling away from the church..." To cast aspersions on today's generations by saying they are beholden to "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism" is not going to be effective.

For my notes: think about Achaemenid Persia and the meaning of the ostraca, in no particular order, now that we have access to Porten-Yardeni's corpus in four volumes (soon to be complete), and to numerous studies of their economic, social (ethnic), and religious aspects:

1. Entries were systematically and briefly recorded on ostraca, in Aramaic, then presumably entered in ledgers of papyrus or leather. Who had access to these ledgers after they were filled? Were they copied and sent, or simply sent to the local governor (in Ramat Raḥel)?⁹
It was a tax collection system, mostly in kind. Was there some form of surveillance of entries to ensure that there were no paybacks or secret commissions to officials of the local fortified store? Did some supervision extend to the local threshing floors where the harvest was presumably done communally and couldn't be hidden? What was the role of large kin groups? How were they held responsible? Or: what was the relationship of the tax collectors to the local population?
2. The ostraca list mostly entries of wheat and barley. Taxes are also recorded, for instance on trade, including trade of slaves, and corvée laborers.
3. Can the tribute or rent be quantified? In his article on the economy of southern Palestine in the Persian period, Lemaire roams wide in making comparisons of agrarian "rents".¹⁰

9. LIPSCHITS et al., "Palace and village, paradise and oblivion: Unraveling the riddles of Ramat Raḥel."

10. LEMAIRE, "Taxes et impôts dans le sud de la Palestine (IV^e s. av. J.-C.)." For compar-

4. The question of access to silver money remains vexing. Where were the coins minted? How did the local population get access to it? Via payments to soldiers (among whom mercenaries?). See studies of silver money in the fifth and fourth centuries. Briant shows that Persian commanders indeed used mercenaries but that the Greek authors exaggerated their role and the decrepitude of Persian military capacities.¹¹

FRIDAY, 04 AUGUST 2017

Nothing much to say, today. Menozioù ebet. Worked a bit on the alphabet book for Callum and Lucie. I read too many technical reports, I mean discussions of archaeological sites and finds.

SUNDAY, 6 AUGUST 2017

Schmoozers yesterday morning. We talked about politicians, the hidden logic of life, loyalty and trust, whether the Trump thing is an episode in a long moral and political decline, or such a catastrophe that something positive will come out of it. An awakening? Long conversation today with an older couple, probably retired. The license plate of their BMW reads or sings DDD DAH! He started the conversation by asking me what I was reading, which was a recent book on the gospel of Luke and its invocation of resistance and resilience within a highly stratified society. We talk eventually about the origin of morals...

MONDAY, 07 AUGUST 2017

Symbiosis and contention were the two poles of the relationship priests had with kings and elites. Which authority was higher: *king* or *divinity*? To ask the question is to answer it: both, in a forever unsettled fashion. Kings needed to show their deference as well as restore their authority (or capacity to authorize) by that same means, while conducting war and being the well-provided arbiter in the conflicts between the elites.

ison, see JURSA, *Aspects of the economic history of Babylonia in the first millennium BC*; JURSA, “Taxation and service obligations in Babylonia from Nebuchadnezzar to Darius and the evidence for Darius’ tax reform.”

11. BRIANT, *Histoire de l'Empire perse*, 802–20, 1012–15, 1061–65.

Note on the ideological, public affirmation of kings' closeness to the gods or even their belonging to the world of the gods, at various degrees.¹² The crowning and separation of kings was likely to be less questioned or resented if it was cast as participation in the implementation of divine will. This granted, that would suppose that one's idea of the gods was recognizable in the "public transcript" proposed by the "indigenous" king or by the conquerors of the land. Was the writer of Isaiah 44–45 really fooled by the Persian authorities, and willing to serve them? The question goes for Josephus too: his subservience seems obvious on every page but the hidden message of his Deuteronomistic outlook—with its divine punishment of the failing and sinful Israelites—implies that the great conquering Romans he celebrates were only the last invaders for whom past prophets had choice words. Their success was fraudulent, at least for anyone familiar with biblical views. Were the peoples of the Hellenistic east, after their conquest by the Romans, more likely to accept Roman domination because of the face-saving procured by the religious framing of the victors? Perhaps. It seems to be a "moving target." The worship introduced a new problem since the divinization of power was meant to be popularized and thereby could be reclaimed or interpreted by local elites and non-elites in their own way.

About the story of the Samaritan of Luke 10/Luke 10, or a Samaritan vs Jewish authorities... It suggests a negative view of Judaism on the part of the author in a context of tense ethnic division. Is the story imaginable in reverse, with a Judaeian trader finding himself called upon to help a man in need near Garizim, whereas Samaritan authorities would not? As dramatic, but not perceived as such because the centering effect of the Jerusalem temple and the Torah, assumed behind the presence of the priest and levite, cannot be felt. Is this why Santner and others left this striking story out of their ruminations on the notion of neighbor in Leviticus, Aristotle, and Freud?¹³

Miller mentions the importance of rumor reporting in Roman politics.¹⁴ This necessary evil of ancient politics features in the nativity story and its portrayal of Herod. The king wants to know what is going on in the heads. The messianic hopes are revolutionary. We can guess he is a cynic

12. Upon reading MILLER, *Rumors of resistance*. On the related topic of the complexity of myth, see JERPHAGNON, *Les dieux ne sont jamais loin*.

13. ŽIŽEK, SANTNER, and REINHARD, *The neighbor: three inquiries in political theology*.

14. MILLER, *Rumors of resistance*.

about it, in his own “trading” or grafting of Davidic aura unto his own attempt to justify and preserve power.

(After Walzer and Miller) Prophets of the eighth to fourth centuries in Israel and Judah, either by trade or because they were “called,” could choose to be the public voice of a hidden hope and judgment. The *hidden* judgment could usually be expressed only as an ambiguous message, words inviting insider interpretation. One good example of it outside of the Bible is the Balaam oracles and what was made of this tradition by the writers of Numbers. The Biblical prophecies are framed as unambiguous calls, but it is hard to believe they were framed that way under the kings. Under weak kings perhaps, when competing interests could surface (Jeremiah)?

The unfolding of Christianity carried the image of a new social order while adapting to evolving forms of power. Problem: the notion of a dual belonging or citizenship, with the most important one being invisible, a belonging to oneself inasmuch as there is an effort to reduce the distance between the then and now, the there and here.

TUESDAY, 8 AUGUST 2017

The discussion of “hidden transcripts” and especially the development of an alternative subversive folk culture like Brer Rabbit doesn’t inspire much confidence. It can also be seen as the taming of the raw, hostile forces, and work to keep people in their place of subservience. Compare the world of fables when reframed by La Fontaine, both in literary form and ideas. Clearly a *public* transcript, yet carried forward by many a schooled boy and girl and turned into a long-lasting source of wisdom, passive resistance, and even action.

“Le loup et l’agneau” peels away and destroys the pretense power has to be just, rational and reasonable, and reveals the nature of political power as consisting of preying on the weak. Did this old realization, reframed in an elegant song-like shape, have any effect on the way political resistance unfolded in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries? Miller wrongly suggests that Brer Rabbit and Jesus share something of the same trickster figure. Jesus’ death, however, is in direct relation with his going public and not playing tricks, just like the lamb of the fable is carried away by the wolf for just being a lamb.¹⁵ I agree though that “songs, legends, plays, prayers, and poems” carry the hope of reversal or at least the masking of a critical

15. *Ibid.*, 54.

distance that can turn into a taming of the feeling of injustice or a call to its dismantling. Then what?

I also agree with critics, quoted page 55 in Miller, that saturnalia were a way to disarm social tensions. Yet scholars exhibit a strong tendency to separate material from spiritual interpretations of the gospel of Luke in order to defang the riskier alternatives proposed by a non-polar reading. One example is the reading of ἄφεςις as debt and/or sin. The perceived ambiguity was the only way one hoped to “*lastingly*” change minds and circumstances.

On MarkMark 12:13–17 12:13–17, the story of the denarius and Caesar, many scholars misunderstand the form of the entrapment: the Pharisees were the “liberal party” in modern approximation. The implied reader of the time of the gospel already figured the Pharisees in a way bound to be different from the unreachable reality of Jesus’ time. They stood for no taxes, or for the messianic expectation of a better “time” (spelling it “kingdom,” even “kingdom of God” was dangerous), a liberation from foreign yoke. The Herodians (who could they be by 80 AD?) represent the glorified tax farmers who helped collect silver money for Rome and at the same time, for that political and economic reason, kept transforming the temple into a tool of tax-farming.¹⁶

About the scene in the Nazareth synagogue and the conclusion after the reading of Isaiah: the σήμερον is a call to decision, a call-up, the once and now accomplishment of a long-differed promise. The Isaianic tradition frames the promise of a glorious, peaceful future that Jesus calls in or “cashes in.” Did the impression that he was hurrying, ushering in the Lord’s year of liberation receive a favorable reading? Yes, says the text, as long as it was meant for a narrowly-defined nation. His extending it to gentiles may have been a later development of the earliest communities, leading to a need to explain the agonistic situation of Judaeans, Jews, and Gentiles.

According to [an article published today in *Physics Today*](#) a majority of students of physics prefer print textbooks to e-books. Main reasons: print books are easier to navigate, annotate, flip through.

Poem received from Rob:

Today. Tonight.

16. See Herzog as summarized by MILLER, *Rumors of resistance*, 60–61

by Rob Elmore, August 2017

Today I put back to sleep
my first grandchild
For the first time.

She had wakened a bit
When her mother, our first child,
Put her into my arms.

So I looked at her, smiled at her,
And started to softly sing “Summertime”
Just as I had to her mom more than three decades ago.

Soon she quieted, making sweet little baby-sleep-sounds,
And she placed her little curled hand
Up to her baby-soft-cheek in comfort.

Tonight in bed, I placed my old-man’s-hand
Up to my roughly-bearded-cheek
In comfort.

THURSDAY, 10 AUGUST 2017

Kill the chicken to scare the monkey: see the short film with this title by Jens Assur (2011).

Reflection about Manent 2010: The great reversal that Paul and the gospels celebrate keeps at bay the contempt for the kingship of Christ, born of a poor woman and killed on the cross.

FRIDAY, 11 AUGUST 2017

I agree with this review of Dietrich’s second volume of his commentary on 1 Samuel:

One might argue, contrariwise, that finding layers behind the *Höfische Erzähler*’s work creates a false problem. Whether one can penetrate to the historical David or even his reputation before the end of the eighth century BCE remains contestable. Dietrich thinks so, and he makes a good case for his position, but it depends to some

degree on the confidence one has in finding narrative strands behind the work of the courtly narrator. (Hamilton, *RBL* August 2017)

Miller once or twice speaks of a world of limited good. She doesn't make clear that the cooptation of local elites, with the competition that is implied, had a purpose, or at least used a powerful psychological tool, I mean the subjection and shaming of those local elites because of their use as instruments of distant powers.¹⁷ The elites expected benefits from imperial policies and in counterpart accepted servility. Imperial worship, though, was multifaceted.¹⁸ I think the public cult could be a demonstration of good faith in both directions. It was meant indeed to foster communal loyalty. Christians refused to be drawn into the politics of it.

Miller misreads the elites' contempt for physical labor.¹⁹ The problem was the perception of subservience to others' will. She gathers the Lucan texts on wealth: 12:13–21; 14:7–24; 16:1–31; 18:18–30; Acts 2:43–47; 4:32–37. On the poor, see LONGENECKER.²⁰ The elites, she writes after Kautsky, “learned the correct level of taxation that allowed peasant survival and maximum production, but also maximum profit for themselves.²¹” This is the heart of the matter and needs to be commented upon and specified.

The nature of Lucan charity is not congruent with Greco-Roman philanthropy. Indeed, see the book by Gary Anderson and now by Downs.²²

Magnificat: lord vs Lord. Miller doesn't discuss the way in which the two faiths or trusts are composed. The recomposition of trust is hidden in the nativity story. A new version of honor can also see the light of day. Miller has a good passage on the meaning of the Magnificat in the sweep of the gospel. It is part of a program of radical change in Luke: 1–2, 4:16–30 (Gentiles), 6:20–49 (community), 14:7–24 (banquet). And all of this is started by a young woman on the margins of society. As she says, “Jesus shatters contemporary notions of how one goes about being a ruler and a

17. MILLER, *Rumors of resistance*, 69–71.

18. *ibid.*, 73. See KELLY, *The Roman Empire: a very short introduction*, 28; and RIVES, *Religion in the Roman Empire*.

19. MILLER, *Rumors of resistance*, 81.

20. LONGENECKER, *Remember the poor*.

21. See KAUTSKY, *The politics of aristocratic empires*, 105–6.

22. ANDERSON, *Charity*; DOWNS, *Alms: charity, reward, and atonement in early Christianity*, who is taken to task by his *RBL* reviewer for his failure to acknowledge the importance of the idea of spiritual salvation behind the Biblical concept, at least in late centuries, and for failing to see its relation to Christology in Christianity. On charity and evergetism, see RICHES, *The world of Jesus. First-century Judaism in crisis?*

king.”²³

Nazareth is at the center of the proclamation in Luke 4.²⁴ It continues the infancy story of revelation to a socially weak woman in an unknown village. Jerusalem and the temple are incorporated in the story but not at the center of the action.²⁵ Two things of importance therefore: 1) the openness and inclusion of foreigners (“nations”), and 2) the decentering from Jerusalem, temple, not Torah? Nazareth becomes a mediator between Zion and the nations. See Isaiah 61:1–2; 58:6.

On ἀφέσις in Luke 4 and Acts 10 (Cornelius the centurion officer), Miller suggests that the more encompassing meaning seen in the quotations of Isaiah in the Nazareth episode is narrowed down to the forgiveness of sins in the rest of the Gospel and in Acts to avoid confronting Roman institutions in the open.²⁶

The image of the yoke is used by prophets like Isaiah or Jeremiah (מוטה, a pole or bar).

SATURDAY, 12 AUGUST 2017

Reminder this morning at our schmooze of King Lear’s moan: “How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is to have a thankless child!” On another, smaller matter: when signing on a private website, I am presented with security questions that I often cannot answer. For instance, in accessing my PAMF new site, I discover I can give a clear answer only to one of the ten questions: What was the last name of my first grade teacher. The nine other questions cause hesitation or cannot be answered: What is the food you least liked as a child (lard?)? What was your favorite place to visit as a child (Port-Blanc? Le Royau? Perros?)? What is the name of your first stuffed animal (none? nounours? did I have a stuffed animal? Did we share one?)? Name of street on which your best friend lived (Kergwenn hamlet? no best friend as a child, only in teen age years). Etc. A set of questions appropriate for my sociological set would be: what kind of tree did you climb in your childhood? What animal did you fear most? Favorite drink of your father or mother? Name of barber? What day of the week did you go to confession? An incommensurable Joycean world.

23. MILLER, *Rumors of resistance*, 124.

24. *Ibid.*, 134.

25. BOVON, *L'évangile selon saint Luc (1, 1–9, 50)*, 151

26. MILLER, *Rumors of resistance*, 188–89.

TUESDAY, 15 AUGUST 2017

Three things of note today. First, I began reading Derrida's *Mal d'archive*, which encouraged me to think about the development of the archaic and Mosaic as palatial monument and a function and cause of authority claims in ancient Israel or Judah. Second, I went to Los Gatos to get a new mac computer which I then spent a few hours setting up as I use LaTeX, homebrew, etc. for my installations. Writing my journal long hand this morning, with my old Japanese pen, reminded me how futile my quest is for a similar feeling of continuity when I typeset, even though I use tools that demand skill and continuous tinkering of the kind one meets when using paper and pen or pencil. Third event: we went to a party at Helen's, in a beautiful, Japanese-tiled-roof house we have long admired. The get-together was organized by Faye to celebrate Helen's 82nd birthday. Amy put on her new Mycenaean-like dress—très moulante—a simple black gilet and her medium-heel sandals. To walk the three blocks to the sea along with her was a Ulysean joy! Many people we knew at the party: Jack Michaelsen and Hannah, Michael and Lynn Wolcott, Mark, Alan Christy and Alice Yang, and many more.

WEDNESDAY, 16 AUGUST 2017

Everyday, Trump's angry or moody face on the first page of the paper, often with his right hand extended, his thumb and index finger pinched as if an idea has been grasped, with the wild hope of showing authority. No ideas there except the occasional smartness and smarting of a poorly trained political fighter. A few members of his CEO council and American Manufacturers have announced their resignation from these cuddly bodies, beginning with Frazier, the single black CEO of a large company, Mercks (sp? pharmaceutical company).

THURSDAY, 17 AUGUST 2017

Quotation today by Charles Blow of John Ehrlichman's 1994 interview with Dan Baum regarding the southern strategy in Nixon days and ever since:

The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people. You understand what I'm saying? We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or blacks, but by getting the public to associate the

hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did.

The drug “war” was waged for entirely politic reasons: to disenfranchise poor and especially black people, streamline and scare the middle class into stupefied silence or concern, and ensure that the right decisions about capital and manufacturing be made by the “right” entrenched political party. The moral or even health concern were cover for a much nastier goal of maintaining power to ensure the continued, expansive, extraction of riches from labor. Many in the democratic party participated. It continues today with Sessions’ policy as well as the sophisticated redistricting and gerrymandering that “big data” presently allows. The present quiet and speedy removal of southern confederacy monuments triggered by the scandals of alt-right demonstrations at Charlottesville and Trump’s bigoted comments is part of a much larger struggle to allow all to reclaim the right of disposal of labor and body in dignity and not have them stolen and vilified by capitalist institutions whose visage (or at least one of its faces) is Trump’s.

I was moved to respond to another *NYT* article by a certain Julius Krein who has decided to abandon his active support of Trump because of the chaos and especially because of his failure to condemn the white supremacist movement:

The end of this article explains its beginning, that is, the temporary trust put in Trump. The author says he is not ready to give up on trade policies, foreign policy, health care planning, infrastructure work (privatized?), and what he calls “entitlements” (Social Security vouchers?). He was willing to bet on Trump and ride on the back of this chaos of a man to get more right-wing policies enacted as he says at the beginning of his article. Now he sees that he and like-minded peers may lose their temporary advantage. He dresses this loss as a moral tale. No matter the lipstick, it’s still a pig.

Reading *Mal d’archive* by DERRIDA²⁷ leads me to reflect on the beginning of monarchic rule in the Iron Age Levant. Why were the eleventh century BCE spear points found in Bethlehem and elsewhere inscribed with names? Aside from the practical need of retrieving these metal spearheads

27. DERRIDA, “Archive fever: a Freudian impression.”

and returning them to their “rightful owner,” are inscribed names that invoke filiation early signals of the transformation of property rights and the beginning of a heroic age soon transformed into a scattering of kingdoms? I obviously need more information, more traces...

In relation to this notion of *archeion*, archive, *archè* as origin or beginning and power principle, what is the Science Library debacle a sign or moment of? We (the users? the public? This “we” claims a bit much) had what we thought to be long-lasting libraries, collections, and archives. Does this notion of archive call into question the “to-come” of the future, how we’ll dwell in it, or how our children will dwell in it? Less theoretically: what is at stake in the notion of past and future assumed by the various parties?

Was the revelation of the Sinai enabled as a divine written narrative (several claims here: divine, writing, part of a story—not just an arranged code) because of the archival developments inherited from royal power? There was a royal archive, unified by its location (the palace rather than the temple, against the story in 2 Kings 24) or presented as such, including what exactly? Annals of the kings and their feats in succinct form, lineages, songs of glorification, perhaps other traditions about ancestors, and a law corpus restricted to certain topics (cult, basic principles about property and justice)? At stake here, as Assmann recognizes, is the repeatability proclaimed by ancient royal ideologies of power and its opposition to the uniqueness of the contracted promise of salvation, beyond kings (before and after them).

Would there be “no future without repetition?”²⁸ Repetition is necessary but of what exactly? Of the constantly reasserted belief in the openness of the future, and countering the royal ideologies that promised repeated returns to a golden age or at least an approximation of it. By oedipal violence, then, isn’t one to understand the rebellion, the rising against the founding or kind of foundation claimed to be built by kings and fathers, the necessary rejection, and its repression (*Verdrängung*)? [So, Freud not so wrong after all?]

Derrida comments at length on Freud’s analysis of Wilhelm Jensen’s *Gradiva*. He quotes Freud passage on the anamnestic quality of modern archaeological work, in which the scholar,

Together with them [the inhabitants, “perhaps semi-barbaric people”] he may start upon the ruins, clear away the rubbish, and, beginning from the visible remains, uncover what is buried.²⁹

28. DERRIDA, “Archive fever: a Freudian impression,” 52.

29. *ibid.*, 59

To my mind, the “rubbish” needs to be conceptualized. It is everything that has been piled up, forgotten, and deemed to be the dross or waste of what has been elected to be resurrected as *ab origine*. What has not been considered worthy of a look and attention (“history”) is rubbish. There is the power of the *archeion* in archaeology. The selection of beginnings (a sort of circumcision or baptism), as foundations, is the basis for the erection of strata of cultures and the elimination of others as “cabanes.” And the delusion of *saxa loquuntur*. Behind the principle of the archive, as Derrida says, there is the rise and justification for authorities-in-becoming to discourse, institute, legislate, declare proper(ty), and affiliate.³⁰ So, in light of this discussion and what I think I understand of it, I reflect on ancient Phoenician city-states, Aramaean kings, Hebrew, Moabite, Ammonite, Philistine kingdoms. Were their laws collected and which? What sort of institutions came to light: archives for contracts, war decisions and prophetic corpus, technical aspects of the cult, justice? What was the relationship between palace and temple(s), between royal family and priests? How was the transmission of power guaranteed, and the filiation principle actually transformed religiously?

The origin of antisemitism, according to Freud, selon Derrida, was or is “the jealousy with regard to a people which presented itself, he says, as the favored eldest son of God.” So, in *Moses*, the isolation of the people, their circumcision (castration), could lead to this separation and story of envy patterned after that of Cain and Abel. Though in reverse order, necessarily, as Abel is the younger brother. The jealousy takes on a new depth, I think, with Christianity and goes much beyond ancient xenophobia. It is now the privileged tool of something lodged deeper in many Christians’ souls: a repeated inability to “follow Christ” and change the world, a proud though secret refusal of salvation, and a dark, shaming sense of treason regarding one’s true nature.

When did Jews begin to sign documents or books with dates reckoned from creation? I couldn’t get a definite answer to this question. Maimonides used multiple eras, and apparently no single system had been universally accepted yet by the thirteenth century. I need to check what was the practice in letters and contracts in Mediaeval Egypt.

The scene in John 19:34 is part of a large inclusion looking back to the Cana miracle story, as many have seen. Two main aspects of this inclusion haven’t been seen by exegetes, that I’m aware of. The first one

30. *Ibid.*

is about the scene at the cross. I argue in my notes that there is a strong textual tradition that has ἀνοιξεν, “opened”, supported by Syriac and Latin. The possible meaning would confirm my interpretation of the Cana miracle and would suggest the opening of a fountain or wine cask. Whereas with “piercing,” the idea is not only more reserved or timid but other. Why the change or the existence of two traditions, then? The first idea is to check the Septuagint’s textual tradition (psalm 69?) and see if a change occurred because the initial meaning of the text was misunderstood and a substitute was found. But why?

The second aspect of this scene at the foot of the cross is the presence of the mother. In the Cana miracle, she is in the role of concerned provider. As I argue elsewhere, she is totally in character when she notices the running out of wine: either from conversations of servants, concerned looks of people not daring to speak up about something potentially shameful, or her own sense of things formed by years of worry about reserves at home. Because of their role in milling, cooking, providing, women were most likely to be extremely aware of the state of reserves in their household, and most concerned about it. Men too would be interested in this but they were not directly affected in the day-to-day situation. So, her noticing of the running out of wine, her remark to her son, his reply and cryptic note on “his hour,” bind mother and son in a dramatic story of providential, miraculous supply that needs to be made right later somehow, as they both know. She cannot help noticing the lack, bringing it to the attention of Jesus, as he cannot help responding to the need. His “hour” here brings up a question: what was the notion of timeliness of things in ancient agrarian societies? If miracles could be hoped for, was there a price to pay, and how? Michaels and other commentators cannot see any of this, as the appearance of wine and its volume cloud their judgment. They’d rather think of it as a humorous situation and not think about the material conditions under which both the “miracle” and the death are bound together.

FRIDAY, 18 AUGUST 2017

News: Bruce Malina died yesterday, surrounded by his family (Diane Jacobs Malina is his wife). *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*. Via Eric Stewart, Doug sent a nice message to the list to which I answered:

Thank you for your message that I received via Eric. I’ve been thinking about Bruce and the Context group since I received news of his passing. I agree with you about his book on the New Testament

World and his Christian origins. They are on my shelf and I've often gone to them to rethink critically our modern ideas of the ancient world. He has had great influence and helped many of us rethink our ethnographic approach to ancient texts. Our views of Mediterranean societies, application of group and grid ideas, notion of limited good, or our decrypting of our own social ideas, may take many turns, thanks to Bruce who helped us develop ethnographic and sociological questions. His writing also reminds me how important it is to think of students and lay people as readers and thinkers, not simply of other scholars.

Bannon, the main adviser for Trump since last summer and until a few weeks ago, has quit the White House. Did he resign, was he fired? These words have no meaning in this period of continuous negotiations between vested interests. CEOs of large companies and some Republican representatives or senators could show some moral fiber *à peu de frais*. Is Trump next on the list of people to be booted out? By whom? Jerry Neu fears martial law, generals mutiny, then Pence...

Note on Luke 16:16: *καὶ πᾶς εἰς αὐτὴν βιάζεται*, which the NRSV translates: *and everyone tries to enter it by force*. Miller notes that many commentators want to see in the puzzling expression a positive note, a strong urging.³¹ As Miller says, this effort to put a positive note and conceive of salvation as a somewhat narrowed passage cannot be easily reconciled with the deponent form of the verb and a clear denotation of violence the word normally carries. Miller proposes to retain the note of violence and translates: "And everyone is using violence against it [the reign of God]." However, she metaphorises this violence also as an attempt by different groups to fashion their own idea of the kingdom of God and pervert it. I have another idea or metaphorical interpretation of violence based on my interpretation of the parable of the dishonest steward. This story is really about a whole class of people, represented by the steward—that is, in charge of the affairs of a distant lord—, who mismanage the "domain" to their own advantage, hide behind the distant superior authority, and who, when caught, trick the lord into forgiving debts to hide their own misdeeds. This class of managers uses force, there is violence done to the law of contracts, a kind of theft. I assume therefore that verse 16 of this chapter 16 is meant to introduce the parable.

This "spiritual" problem has no solution of continuity with materiali-

31. MILLER, *Rumors of resistance*, 231.

ties (salaries, food distribution, violence in enforcing contracts, use of shame and honor, etc.). It is entirely political. What kind of distribution should a just society incorporate in its daily doings? The parable of Lazarus and the rich man introduces the widest social discrepancy, while that of the dishonest manager calls forth a more complicated image with many presumed actors. The complexities of distribution of labor, capital and consumption are the topic of this second parable. The whole chapter hangs together and needs to be conceptualized as a unit. What was the context for the telling of these stories in Luke 16? I assume that the temple of Jerusalem has been lost by that time. Roman domination continued and was taking other managers than the priestly families that were part of the temple's authoritative supervision over spirit and matter (including taxes). Pharisees, however, were now prominent as leading "managers" of the proper way to come close to the Lord, the proper way to live in tension under the post-messianic (or hidden) hope that there would be a Coming.³² "Managers," therefore, included not only Pharisees in the author's and audience's perceptions, but others too, perhaps including authorities within the early Christian communities. This interpretation is not far from that of Miller. It pushes further the notion of abuse of subsidiary authority than she does. It understands the author of Luke to be warning all communities that ostentatiously protective behaviors can be tricks.

Fair summary of the parable of the dishonest steward in MILLER.³³ She uses a magical combination of letters and numbers to estimate the social and economic status implicit to the stories in the gospel of Luke, after Steven Friesen and others.³⁴ This attempt to quantify seems too superficial a rhetorical ploy that goes little beyond more discursive markers of social ranking. The parables of chapter 16 invite a broader look, with a basic separation between elite landowners and those dependent on them (hence, even lowly army officers), people at subsistence level or just below. The important question, not raised in the depth it requires by Miller's very good book, is of structure. She mentions "downward mobility" as being common in the Roman empire, whereas "upward mobility" was difficult. These modern terms—scale of poverty or revenue, "hidden transcripts," or "social mobility"—risk masking the need for more thoroughgoing,

32. As we learn from Josephus in his "following" Pharisee teachings and portraying himself as a potential one, as well as his descriptions in *BJ*, *AJ*, and the *Vita*.

33. MILLER, *Rumors of resistance*, 234.

34. *Ibid.*, 76–77.

structural explanations.

How was the distribution of labor and consumption enforced by the economics, politics, religion, and culture of the time? How did it practically work that a very few, helped by retainers or knights type elites, had the continuous power to extract enormous wealth from so many? It doesn't seem to add to a more mundane language of comparison (very few vs some vs most) to say that the top elites constituted 3% of the society. One may even wonder what desire is entertained by quantified estimations in the description of past history. As for the second tier of elites, there was the large problem of local power... 7% according to Friesen's scale. The total for the "exploiters" was therefore a suspiciously round 10%, vs the 90% (=most) living right above subsistence level with little security, at that level (subsistence defined by whom?), and below subsistence.³⁵

Luke's text makes an arc from the birth narrative to the dispersion of disciples in the book of Acts. The divine revelation to a young woman in insignificant Nazareth rather than Jerusalem is meant to show that divine powers (of change) are not to be found only in Jerusalem or Rome. This develops an older theme found in Ezekiel and elsewhere. Still, the story keeps Jerusalem, Rome and many other places (a whole new geography) in tension with each other.

SATURDAY, 19 AUGUST 2017

As I'm revising JF's book on Blyenbergh, I realize I have to make certain changes that go beyond the cosmetic or stylistic, while keeping the force and clarity of his arguments. Where I don't understand either because I don't know Spinoza or because JF's argument is not sufficiently developed, I leave it open and have to indicate it is an open question, a kind of path JF would have followed if time and leisure had been granted him.

About archives: I am retracing the meanings given to Greek words. Archontes control the *arkheion* and have the *arkhè* built in them or on their side, or so they claim. They advertised the singularity of their access to the origins, which was at the same time a claim to leadership. How did Bronze Age groups go from ancestral transmission of cult and presumed absence of private property to a narrower filiation, transmission of private property, and cult of more distant divinities? Speaking of distant divinities: was

35. Friesen's design of an income scale is criticized by OAKES, "Constructing poverty scales for Graeco-Roman society."

the power attributed to them a function both of their putative distance and a fantasy of intimacy or proximity created by festivals, sacrifices, and other rites? Did priests (and prophets) appear to provide a somehow neutral means of approach to these redesigned divinities (or “enlarged” divinities)?

A strange question came up: Has there been any attempt to do a dictionary of Biblical Hebrew based on modern dating of books as it presently stands? Even though it might be premature, it would help to understand better the evolution of the language.

Note on scholars: reading last week’s *TLS*, I’m surprised to discover that Moses Finley’s previous family name was Finkelstein. I knew he was Jewish but didn’t realize he had changed his name.

SUNDAY, 20 AUGUST 2017

Rémy Chapelain let me know today about France-Culture’s broadcast of the mass celebrated on the occasion of the feast of Saint Loup (of Sens) in Guingamp. The mass was introduced in Breton and was mostly in Breton (hymns and readings, including chapter of the letter to the Romans by a child). Many people spend their vacation right now in Brittany. A famous competition of Breton dances and choirs also occurs on the same date. The use of Breton for this mass looks like a large PR operation: how many people could participate, and even more importantly, who spoke Breton once outside the basilic? No matter, I still appreciate the use of Breton by the celebrant (St Brieuc’s curé, Loïc Le Quellec) and especially the readers. The homely was in French and the priest did recognize at its beginning the limits of the use of Breton. Looking at the défilé of the Saint Loup made me imagine Anabaptists who would dance and play Celtic music.

MONDAY, 21 AUGUST 2017

RBL just reviewed a new textbook in German on the history of early Christianity: TIWALD.³⁶ The book is in Stanford libraries, not in the UC system. It questions the notion of “parting of the ways” between Judaism and early Christianity and reintroduces more complexity and plurality.³⁷ The politi-

36. TIWALD, *Das Frühjudentum und die Anfänge des Christentums: ein Studienbuch*.

37. See *ibid.*, 257–94. According to the 2017 *RBL* review by Witetschek, this has already been taken into account by other scholars, for instance BECKER and REED, *The ways that never parted: Jews and Christians in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages*; and by

cal and economic networks of Jewish groups (Judaeans mostly?) in the second to first centuries BCE are analyzed in a separate chapter.³⁸ Contrary to many interpreters, Tiwald doesn't detect an economic crisis in the Palestine of Jesus' time. His fifth chapter focuses on the competing interpretations and practices surrounding Torah and temple,³⁹

TUESDAY, 22 AUGUST 2017

About the origins of monetized relationships:

La monnaie représente les morts ; c'est-à-dire que la clef de voûte des relations horizontales qu'entretiennent les vivants les uns avec les autres se trouve dans la relation verticale qui les rattache aux morts.
(SCUBLA, *Logiques de la réciprocité*, 38)

In his article on the origins of coinage and money, Thérét is right to say that it is difficult to accept the notion that humankind had a notion of transcendence only with the appearance of the great universalist religions.⁴⁰ I agree with his argument and that of Hénaff that humans have long felt that their manipulation of nature was an encroachment on the powers of “cosmic divinities” and implied an indebtedness toward them.⁴¹ In fact, all humans, even before the neolithic revolution, had this capacity. It is tempting to think of the debt between social partners as “horizontal” but it had a “vertical” aspect also. Matrimonial exchanges—the most visible form of exchange—cannot be dissociated from filiation, which is its *raison d'être*. There is no measurable way to free oneself from that vertical debt except through death or revolution, while “horizontal” private debts can be paid in a lifetime.

WEDNESDAY, 23 AUGUST 2017

George Mitchell's interview by NPR this morning showed how difficult it will be to bring any kind of solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The major long-term issue is that of the settlements. Mitchell made clear that

NICKLAS, *Jews and Christians?*

38. TIWALD, *Das Frühjudentum und die Anfänge des Christentums: ein Studienbuch*, 237–56.

39. *Ibid.*, 257–310.

40. THÉRET, “*Monnaie et dettes de vie*,” 165.

41. HÉNAFF, *Le prix de la vérité. Le don, l'argent, la philosophie*, 301.

both center-left and right-wing governments have allowed or actively pursued a settlement policy and that the US position for fifty years has always been that all implantations were illegal. He was asked also about the personalities presently in charge and whether they made things more difficult. His realism showed: this is what you have to deal with.

THURSDAY, 24 AUGUST 2017

Amy went to Emeline street this morning. She is volunteering for hepatitis A vaccination and reaches out to people who spend their days and nights in the streets, parks, parkings, and other semi-public places. I am at the library. I came instrumented: glasses (a new pair), the computer in my backpack, notebooks and pens, imagination fired by reading Joyce's *The Dead* (in *Dubliners*), should I list the library proper—now a summering castle fallen silent, food at the beckoning, trust in flimsy images of past political figures I can pass along to the cashier if I don't use electrons to convey my faithfulness and credit-worthiness, and most of all the feeling—an instrument also—that we might be entering a new form of fascism without knowing it, the feeling that I'm standing on the upper ledge of a very tall building and that my job, so equipped, is to peer into the far horizon and look for the Lilys of the past.

I received a disturbing email from Rémy Chapelain regarding [the pope's message on migrant labor](#). Rémy thinks that he is threatening the cultural fabric of the European nations:

C'était l'époque où l'Eglise défendait nos cultures. Les temps ont changé. As-tu lu les 21 propositions de Bergoglio pour les migrants. Il met les Européens dans le pétrin et à mon avis il signe l'arrêt de mort du catholicisme en France... Rémy

The pope calls all believers to reflect on, and practice, two basic texts regarding the support of strangers and weaker members of any society: Lev 19:34 and Matt 25:35–43. I don't see how our "cultures" are threatened by this more systematic sharing of our countries and ways of living. And why use this language of "culture" in French? it used to mean degree of learning. It has become a synonym of *Gesellschaft*?

Trump got a hearty welcome two days ago in Phoenix from an audience that had been selected among his most fervent supporters. It was a strange campaign event, with the president fanning hate of the elites, news media (whom he seeks for broadcasting), duly elected Republicans, and above all

immigrants. Build a wall, a transparent one, a see-through wall! Two political representatives were on hand. Trump wanted to have them on stage. One got up, shook hands, while the other remained seated for a while then got up, awkwardly. Worried about shaking hands with someone who can turn against them, worried about the 2018 elections? Whom do they represent? Many middle-class people retire in Phoenix. The city has a big share of expansive suburbs, apartment complexes, retirement homes, entertainment venues. How many retirees in this audience? They are not threatened by emigrants, at least economically. If anything, they are served by them. Yet, they choose to be led by feelings of hate rather than thought and, gasp, reason. Trump has been using the fascist playbook all during his campaign and resorts to it every time he needs consolidation of his “base.” He tried it with the boy-scouts and got some results. The appeal to the gut works. Are we on our way to a new form of fascism? I would like to safely believe that the passion of a football-like event will die soon enough and cannot compete with the draw of sofas and Fox watching. And yet, I also know full bellies and guts can rage when the heart and head are empty.

The refusal of mercenary knowledge is the title of the introduction to part one of HÉNAFF,⁴² on mercenary figures. Diderot or Rousseau reacted negatively to the idea that especially wisdom could be monetarized.

Back to the question of the rise of sovereign states in the Levant. It is in part a practical question: how did a family become a main player in politics, military decisions, property acquisition, and religious affairs, in such a way that it was accepted by unrelated people and even considered sacred by them? It supposes that large kin groups relinquished (or lost?) power and smaller parts of a kin group took over.

About the development of money in the early sixth century BCE: Rider examines the phenomenon closely, including the metallic composition of coinage and its nominal value, and concludes that a main reason for its sudden appearance was the need of Lydian kings and others to raise taxes.⁴³ Was this taxation system enabled by a more frequent separation of social and economic family-based units? The development of the concept of property required a development of the notion of person (which was not the equivalent of the modern individual, as the person in “charge” of the household as we see in Mesopotamian texts and presumably in the Levant), The changing relationships implied by these smaller units whose economic and social

42. HÉNAFF, *The price of truth. Gift, money, and philosophy*, 23.

43. LE RIDER, *La naissance de la monnaie; pratiques monétaires de l'Orient ancien*.

horizons were not only the clan, village, or even city, required new representations of this broader political unit in accounting units (*unités comptables*). General idea about currency: its value doesn't originate with its use for exchange but with the bonds of the social unit. Currency represents the community (or aspects of it), not debt.

Idea to be pursued therefore: does the development of the notion of foreigner and resident happen on a new basis, beyond clans with whom one cannot marry (cf. Druzes to this day), in parallel with the development of more expansive forms of accounting (eighth and seventh centuries according to the documentation). Does the more formal and expansive alienation bring about a more thorough doing away with reciprocal, barter economy? Practically speaking: in the transition from LB to IA, is it possible to trace a development of economic exchanges in parallel with that of enmity, and the move toward a form of state?⁴⁴ How can one explain the birth (or re-birth) of a separate political order, the royal house, empowered to direct and regulate. What allowed this resurgence in an agrarian society (here are to be sought marks of differentiation in the twelfth and eleventh centuries, and this can only be done by the interpretation of archaeological discoveries). One can theorize a withdrawal on the part of the "people," a self-disciplining, a negation of its freedom in the short term (or in certain areas), in exchange for a greater "rayon d'action." How? Traces of this?

FRIDAY, 25 AUGUST 2017

For the third time this week, I biked up to campus and walked to the library from Cowell. Ideas and half-baked notions pass through the mind and are soon gone, like dew. Thoughts about death (could it happen tomorrow and shouldn't I do the maximum writing now?), probably triggered by yesterday's reading of Joyce's *The dead*. A story à la Jeanne Hamel or à la Yvon, at the same level of intensity. In fact, a story whose charge framed our childhood. Thoughts about "mercenary knowledge," a phrase I read in Hénaff's *Le prix de la vérité* (2002) and that points to an immense chain of contracts in which something like our modern version of the original sin is lurking. Moderns think they have left that concept behind and can escape judgment, an infinitely remote judgment, or rather they think the notion became deliquescent. And finally, among this train of thoughts that winds its way under the sequoias and quickly dissipates, a re-imagined preface to

44. This requires that state be defined: see my paper on monotheism.

my essay: in what sense is it an essay? What problems came to mind and why? Challenges: the historical and literary interpretation of the Bible, its enormous importance and iffiness... Second challenge; the interpretation of archaeological discoveries.

Useful article on sabbatical year and the jubilee by BARRIENTOS-PARRA.⁴⁵ While reading it, I think again about the reasons for the development of debt as much as the need to curb it: a) the weakening and eventual absence of social protection by kins, paralleled by the rise of social differentiation based on access to land and labor; b) the existence or rise of competition: this is tied to both irregularity of yields, difficulty of predictions, weakening of social kinship system; c) difficulty of calculations and need for spreading of risk; d) religious transformation, from cult of ancestors (near transcendence) to more distant, protective gods.

A panorama of forms of labor will be needed. What was the role of debt in bringing or shaping subjection?⁴⁶ Was there exclusion of lineage in case of failure to honor a debt contract, or in establishing a debt? Would this lead to new affiliations? Religious framework (religious is not the right word here: divinely enforced?)—especially Exodus' insistence on faith and community of believers—had a limiting effect (mitigating but also reshaping). The evidence is in Exod 22–23, Deut 15, and Lev 25. Compare Greek Solonic laws, at about the same time as Exodus and other priestly shaping of the Torah after the fall of kings. Compare also Roman *nexus*, in which citizenship contradicted and marked servitude for debt as a paradox. In Israel and Judah, the same kind of political difficulty may have risen in the eighth-seventh centuries, then was taken up by exilic communities and given a larger, more important place.⁴⁷

The situation described in Nehemiah 5:1–11 reflects that of Late Roman Antiquity in which freedom and citizenship lost their reference values. It makes me understand better why, in contradistinction, the social role of the Exodus story, its socio-revolutionary role anchored in a divine, unquestion-

45. BARRIENTOS-PARRA, “La notion de jubilé comme principe applicable dans la résolution du surendettement dans l’Antiquité.”

46. For Egypt, see GARCÍA, “L’organisation sociale de l’agriculture pharaonique: quelques cas d’étude”; for Babylonia, many authors given in my Notes on debt.

47. See HARPER, *Slavery in the Late Roman world, AD 275–425*. For evidence of the role of debt in Egyptian domestic agriculture, see GARCÍA, “L’organisation sociale de l’agriculture pharaonique: quelques cas d’étude,” 53. It was a major mechanism in increasing social differentiation, acquiring land, animals, and labor. Philanthropic actions are sometimes advertised but one suspects that it needs to be set in the context of patronage.

able authority, was so important in the post-exilic period. Furthermore, it helps explain why it could be adopted in Samaria.⁴⁸ So, I theorize that debt slavery increased in the Persian period, when the local equivalent of “citizenship” (see the vocabulary of land, citizenry, people in classical Hebrew, beginning with Neh 5:1) and lineage did not play as important a role as under kings. Did political-religious definition of Israelite and Judaeans have an impact and provided new protections on the basis of faith? I am beginning to understand how Exodus, Nehemiah, and Ruth are part of a response to political and military changes. The book of Ruth is particularly clear on what is at issue. Moabites were—rhetorically speaking—not “brothers” (in the Deut or EN view), not kin either, especially since they shared language, customs, techniques, social and even political systems. They are the exemplar of people who do not and cannot reciprocate. The story of Ruth makes clear that another form of sociability can be built on faith (faithfulness and risky trust in this case)—like in Exodus—, as well as a devotion that has an economic aspect, namely the extraordinary giving of labor without expectation of reciprocity: pure gift. The Exodus story and Ruth frame the notion of debt exploitation as unjust and in need of divinely approved, near permanent or blanket remissions. Contrariwise, new forms of socio-religious markings that authorized indebtedness, servitude, and exploitative labor, needed to be invented (interpreted) from within the community of believers, for instance by developing the notion of “people of the land” who didn’t exhibit the proper faith.

Note on eyesight: as I’m sitting on the fourth floor of the McHenry library at UCSC, I realize that if I look through the large window at my right without moving, my view of the world outside is blocked by the small dark dots covering the outside pane of the window (a 1/4” grid or nearly so). If I move, however, the landscape becomes clear.

Reading Koschorke, I’m struck by this passage:

A menacing vacuum emanates from *Mein Kampf*—a license for adherents to react to opposition with a “Just you wait” that bristles with lustful sadism. (KOSCHORKE, *On Hitler’s Mein Kampf: the poetics of national socialism*, 50)

There is joy in seeking a language freed from the demands of truth and trust, creating pandemonium, claiming authority, showing the weakness of rea-

48. Annequin’s note on subjection makes me think about this: ANNEQUIN, “*Formes et raison des modes de sujétion*,” 13–144.

son, and smashing “elites”... Anti-immigrant claims are an excuse for something much darker.

SATURDAY, 26 AUGUST 2017

Schmooze got stuck in politics and philosophy of law this morning. Great dinner at N & S: coho salmon, potatoes in the Irish fashion with a little celeri, kale, cooked carrot sticks, salad, and a cabernet sauvignon blanc. In between, a walk, talk with Todd at Ivéta about blue birds and the book he is reading, *Why write poetry?*

SUNDAY, 27 AUGUST 2017

Petit mot à Bruno dont les deux derniers messages m’ont paru à la fois confus et brillants:

Je travaille à mon projet : la corne de brume de la pointe et les aboiements des lions de mer que j’entends de la maison m’y engagent. Je lis un livre de Marcel Hénaff (2002, trad anglaise de 2010), *Le prix de la vérité*, sur le don, le sacrifice et la vengeance.

Ce matin, balade sur les pentes au-dessus de Santa Cruz. Nous nous arrêtons au terrain de sport que tu connais qui surplombe la ville. Conversation avec un hongrois qui parle allemand, russe, français, espagnol, italien, un peu de japonais, et bien sûr anglais et hongrois. On en vient aux émigrés : on a droit à une déferlante, comment l’Europe (la France surtout) devrait les mettre en camps, expulser, etc. Comment ils aiment la saleté et s’y vautrent, la paresse, etc. Amy passe aux aspects concrets : vaccination pour l’hépatite A qui est endémique chez les gens à la rue (elle est volontaire), le lavage des mains (donc l’installation de fontaines publiques), quant aux camps, quel en serait le coût, que nos impôts sont déjà assez élevés, etc... Ils sont assez d’accord. Voilà, c’était notre première conversation avec des trumpistes de la plus belle eau !

Reading and reflecting upon vindictory justice, the rise of individualized vengeance, and the possibility of forgiveness with HÉNAFF.⁴⁹ In kinship-based societies, vengeance was highly structured before central states came of age. It is an exchange very much like gift. It is group based—however one defines “group”—vs other groups. Inside the group, vengeance is prohibited. Discipline and penalties are expected to correct

49. HÉNAFF, *The price of truth. Gift, money, and philosophy*, 215–16, 230–31.

imbalances (often tied to a cosmological view). Between groups both alliance and vengeance systems develop. The obligation is felt as a matter of honor. No guilt is involved, it is a matter of order (and honor: the Latin etymology is not clear, but the meaning of *kavod* is clear). The group performs this vengeance, it is not an individual matter. So, inside the group and outside the group—with neighboring groups that alliances can be formed with, vengeance is a matter of reciprocity. War, on the contrary, doesn't pursue reciprocity as a goal. But what of ancient heroic war or agonistics?

So, in non-centralized kinship systems, three positions exist in regard to the distribution of gift(s) and vengeance:

1. solidarity within the group and use of punishments as control;
2. alliance or aggression with neighboring groups, with vengeance possible;
3. war or peace with enemies, i.e. with groups deemed to be beyond those one may contract alliances with;

The middle position was excised when central power developed (or: centralization occurred against and beyond level 2, fusing groups in a new, larger group: how does one explain this?). Only two positions with a kingdom: solidarity inside the group(s) and hostility outside. So, vengeance came under the control of the central authority (divine in part?) and arbitrational justice developed as a consequence. Stories in Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings illustrate this?

What justifications were brought to bear (religious matter)? What were the technological and social conditions? Demographic development, more investment in local agriculture, hence development of property towards individual households and weakening of clanic identity? Level two was clearly dangerous for supra-group leaders. In other words, the boundary insider/outsider was displaced. Gods and temples must have been an important part of this development.

In politically centralized units (kingdoms), the weight of groups and their alliances was wearily watched (I presume: that is one essential part of ancient politics, and the engine of religious evolution as well as exploitation?). Did kingdoms interfere with and seek to restrict "clanic" vengeance? Can one detect changes in this structuring of vengeance in the texts that clearly come after the swallowing up of small kingdoms into larger political and military units of Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia? Or did the restructur-

ing of divine laws of judgment after the fall of monarchies and states continue and expand what monarchies were doing, rather than revert to intertribal “vindicatory system”? In this reconstruction, delayed historical and otherworldly punishment would play a large role?⁵⁰

Are there traces of this in the Hebrew Bible? One possibility is to follow Lemos’ analysis of marriage alliances. Can a real evolution be detected in the texts?

Is the absence of a discussion of forgiveness significant? It doesn’t appear in the index, though “fraternity” does, in a discussion of Weber.

On another matter, the politics of our country, this message to Susan in response to a paper she sent along about the security danger Trump represents:

Thank you for drawing my attention to this text. He is a security threat in all kinds of ways, I agree. I do fault Bush 2, however, for initiating the kind of abyssal (and abysmal!) foreign policy that becomes an excuse for continuous adventurism and the eradication/privatization of social programs. Don’t you feel Trump is the chaotic continuation of what was introduced by Bush? Even Obama was torn by the demands made by the militarization of our society and made an honest effort to begin the absolutely needed draw down of our forces (not simply from Afghan. and Irak and Persian Gulf, but from the hundred bases we keep throughout the world). He couldn’t go very far, probably for all kinds of prudential and economic reasons. Trump’s business-based message during his campaign was that the military was a waste, but his staff and present foreign policy decisions are another matter.

I just reread a passage of Rabelais’ Panurge on debt. Trump strikes me as a perpetually and massively in-debt corporation who like banks in 2008 claimed/claims that he is too big to fail. He is willing to spend everything that his creditors—those who trust him to “deliver”—spent on him, psychologically speaking, because he knows they won’t do anything about it. No return for them, they are too deeply invested. His show at Phoenix made me realize he is really dangerous.

50. On this vindicatory system, see LEMAIRE and VERDIER, *Vengeance, pouvoirs et idéologies dans quelques civilisations de l’Antiquité*.

MONDAY, 28 AUGUST 2017

There are few stories of interpersonal forgiveness in the Hebrew Bible, according to REIMER.⁵¹ The Joseph saga, Hosea's first three chapters, Malachi 3:24 (reconciliation of parents and children), etc. What of the story of Jonah: an ironic twist on divine forgiveness? And what of debt forgiveness? Ah, list of calls for revenge (*neqama*, pp. 86–89): Jeremiah's laments? Micah 7:8–10? The author doesn't reflect upon what constitutes forgiveness until page 89 where he discusses forgiveness between people and between groups. He misunderstands, after Gregory Jones, the point of the book of Jonah, which is about the question of a mechanism for restoration of peace for Israel.

I find it interesting that the author frames interpersonal forgiveness against inter-group forgiveness without asking himself if something like an individual (assumed to be the center of the universe in modernity) could be a moral agent separate from his or her group in antiquity. Ruth perhaps would be a symbol of this, and it is a late book.

Forgiveness is almost entirely framed in vertical terms in the Bible: the divinity and Israel. Does this focus explain the lack of mentions of interpersonal forgiveness? I don't think so: something else is at work that Hénaff and other ethnographers or anthropologists are trying to understand. Forgiveness needs to be understood as part of a social structure, or arising from it, at a certain stage, rather than supposed to exist of all eternity and then found here and there in texts that are reputed to be foundational for Christians or a post-Christian world.

As for basing human inter-individual forgiveness on divine forgiveness, this needs to be explained differently: why was forgiveness framed that way in ancient societies? We are still in need of an ampler philosophical view than what is available at the moment.⁵² Reimer ends with what I see as the first question: “repairing fractured human relationships requires divine participation.” It requires something that looks precisely impossible to a rational mind and self, that is, going beyond the accounting of causes and effects, but does that mean invoking the “divine” rather than a broader notion of reason? Or is “divine” a way to denote this capacity that all humans actually have in them?

“Ceremonial gift exchange is not the sharing of a good”.⁵³ It is not the

51. REIMER, “Interpersonal forgiveness and the Hebrew prophets,” 81.

52. See DERRIDA and VATTIMO, *Religion?*

53. HÉNAFF, *The price of truth. Gift, money, and philosophy*, 133.

world of contracts and its separation of spirit and matter. I take this to be true in the mind of the author and readers of the story of Cana. The qualms of some commentators regarding the amount and quality of the wine conveniently mask the real risk and public, festive, glorious demands of ancient nuptial arrangements. A remark by Hénaff about alliance and filiation makes me think that both are at stake in the Cana wedding story.

TUESDAY, 29 AUGUST 2017

Houston examines what he calls “an almost universally held assumption in the study of ancient society” that its social system opposed rural exploited peasantry and an “unproductive urban bourgeoisie.”⁵⁴ Since at least the seventies, I’ve been under a different impression, namely that there was also “exploitation” within towns and cities (walled), that land-control and priorities in access to labor could be in the hands of rural “gentry,” and that the words “bourgeoisie” or “ancient capitalism” do not point to any reality in the ancient world but are lazy uses of analogy. One may readily agree that farmers and rural labor were not stripped of their entire surplus (p. 102; though what is meant by surplus here, since we don’t know the extent of needs?). In any case, the moralistic aspect of many studies is not helpful.

Houston follows Faust 2005 in analyzing the social situation in cities and villages. Walled cities exhibit social strata and economic specialization. Villages did have some defensive position too (and walls), but no means to withstand a siege. The quality of houses in villages was better than heretofore expected: fairly large, meant for an extended family or household (115 to 130 m²), with a second story. No evidence of drastic social stratification, though some differences of wealth (exactly what I would expect). Communal wall, storage, and press installations (I would add threshing floors, but I need evidence). Houston mentions the storage capacity, after Faust: what quantities exactly? Villages would have specialized for markets, according to Faust and Weiss 2005.

Cities were characterized by generally smaller houses (again no surprise! animals? size of household?). Size of Hazor VI: usually about 70 m², only a couple larger houses (2x). A third series: small, poor structures built without discernible pattern. For nuclear families? This kind of variation was clear in all cities. Houston mentions de Vaux when describing the social

54. HOUSTON, “Exit the oppressed peasant?,” 101.

stratification in cities.⁵⁵ By the eighth century, one had: ruling elite with extended family structure (large kinship system: I would add this is basic to the social structure); what Houston calls a “middle class” of lower officials, shopkeepers, service workers, farmers (“as the cities all had land attached to them”: this needs to be unpacked!), and “the poor” which he describes as having been “unable to find a secure foothold in the system.”⁵⁶ Their poverty was characterized by their need to hire themselves (I would say it is precisely this absence of property or access to land (hired) that needs to be explained, together with the debt-slavery. I would strictly connect both aspects, and add that it would be the interest of the king to protect these classes, at least to some degree, hence the *deror* declarations, even if irregular originally).

Houston does not analyze the systemic aspect of class stratification, development of cities and states, relative wealth of the “hinterland”:

This *intervention* [sci. of the state] appears to have normally led to a very rapid breakdown in the traditional social structure, as a traditional *rule by the ‘elders’*, or heads of the extended families, was replaced by state control, and state officials settled with their families, while *poorer elements flooded in to take advantage of the wealth* and opportunities provided by the new foundation. The *co-operative ethos* of village society would have generally enabled the farming families to withstand the shock of hard times, and not require recourse to the *moneylender*, or at least to discharge their *debts* without disaster. But the new conditions of the cities gave rise to a more *individualistic ethos* and thus exposed everyone in humble circumstances, including the original farming population, to far greater risk of debt and exploitation. (HOUSTON, “Exit the oppressed peasant?,” 105, my emphasis)

Many things in this substantial quote need to be analyzed and reframed. *Intervention*: the modern language of “intervention” and “state control” assumes all too quickly the similarity of ancient and modern states. As for the *rule by the elders*, also an assumption, it would be critical to analyze what this could mean. *Poorer elements*: how does one explain that they became poor or does one assume they simply were so by nature? Part of this problem would be indeed the changes in the *co-operative ethos*: I think the path is to see how systems of “reciprocal recognition”, to borrow from

55. VAUX, *Ancient Israel: its life and institutions*, 68–79, esp. 72–74.

56. HOUSTON, “Exit the oppressed peasant?,” 104–5.

Hénaff, were weakened by the move toward rule by a single group, and the move from a three-fold structure (kin-group, alliances between some of these groups, fluid boundaries with outside groups) to a two-fold system (kin groups, outsiders as enemy). *Moneylender* and *debt* have to be seen as a major reason for the changes, except that the expression *moneylender* is anachronistic. The creditors were the leaders of major groups. The *individualistic ethos* did not exist, the society remained organized in kinship groups in which individuals could not be separated from the group to which they belonged. A plausible explanation is that the competition between groups won by the king's group led to the weakening of groups because of the threat they individually or especially in alliances posed for the princely house. That evolution does not imply individualism however.

Houston does a better job of questioning the analysis made of village structures by Holladay or Faust (105). Size and quality of buildings go only so far. Storage facilities are not direct guides on yield and surplus production. Rapid changes could occur, say in the eighth century, and not be visible in the archaeological record. Urban and rural societies cannot be treated separately as Faust does (106). The inequalities were greater in cities than in villages.

Houston assumes that Isaiah 1–12, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Micah 1–3, and Zephaniah “are of monarchical date.” He analyzes them briefly in the rest of his article. About Amos first: the author thinks that the crown controlled a sizable share of the corn via city markets—he speaks of crown monopoly.⁵⁷ Amos 3:9 does mention the “heaping” (האוצרים חמס ושד) of violence and devastation and connects it directly with the looting by Assyria. It implies an unjust system of collection (markets, says Houston, but one could imagine a complicated system of rents > granaries > selling > silver > distribution to army and officers > war > looting). On granaries, see my bibliography.⁵⁸ Control of the most important crops, starting with grain, I presume, meant surveillance by many interested actors of crops, threshing floors (public and sacred places), transportation, granaries in farms, villages,

57. *Ibid.*, 108.

58. CURRID, “The beehive granaries of ancient Palestine”; GREENBERG and PAZ, “The granary at Tel Beth Yerah—new assessments”; ILAN, “The socioeconomic implications of grain storage in early Iron Age Canaan”; for Assyria: FALES, “Grain reserves, daily rations, and the size of the Assyrian army”; Ugarit: HELTZER, “On tithe paid in grain in Ugarit”; Hellenistic period: RATHBONE, “The grain trade and grain shortages in the Hellenistic East”; Rome: ERDKAMP, *The grain market in the Roman Empire: A social, political and economic study*; for a more general outlook: DOLCE and ZACCAGNINI, *Il pane del re*.

and towns, market, etc. The exploiters who tamper with measures for grain and silver could be in the towns as well as the capital (Samaria in Amos' case). How they got to the grain (lifted it from threshing floors) remains to be described.

Then Isaiah: 5:8–10 (grabbing of land); 1:21–26 (justice); 10:1–4 (widows and orphans and grabbing of land); 3:13–15. Homelessness (ch. 58, post-exilic text) points to Jerusalem. As for Micah 2:1–5, the setting is clearly Jerusalem. One important question is that of the property system in the eighth century: larger landowners in Jerusalem near king's palace and temple for political and military reasons, I presume. How do they acquire more property? Theft, says Micah: via debt? Numerous isolated farmsteads around Jerusalem at the time? (Faust 2003; 2005). Do these farmsteads reflect “the penetration of the countryside by the managerial arm of the city-based administration?”⁵⁹ I doubt this was a “more efficient mode of exploitation of the land” by more “individualistic” Jerusalem-based people.⁶⁰

WEDNESDAY, 30 AUGUST 2017

Another visit of the so-called deuterio-Isaiah (= pseudo-Isaiah) under the guidance of CLIFFORD.⁶¹ Page 267: Yahweh and Israel would be here in “an on-going relationship that is laden with struggle yet deeply redemptive:” What on earth can this sort of mythic use of language mean? Page 268: “Yahweh the creator God is the foundational belief that guides the theology of Deuteron-Isaiah.” How did this notion of creator arise and develop? I think that it is initially a logical continuation of the notion of a divinity that moves all of history and yet is not bound by time.⁶² It may also have a political, even revolutionary aspect, inasmuch as it is defined as a divinity that is not part of the world, even at its most elementary level, as are the Mesopotamian divinities. Assmann doesn't sufficiently see that this aspect of a creator god is as important as his notion of a god intervening in history. And indeed, Clifford notes the claims of 40:13–14 that Yahweh is in no need of being surrounded by a council like Marduk is. I think Clifford is wrong to see Marduk as a creator god: he is presented as a fighter who

59. HOPKINS, “Farmsteads.”

60. HOUSTON, “Exit the oppressed peasant:”

61. CLIFFORD, “Deutero-Isaiah and monotheism.”

62. Cf. L'HOUE, *Genèse 1–2, 4a. Commentaire*, 20–23, 222–28. Note that L'Hour doesn't address at all the political aspect of this new concept.

brings order and powerful, incontrovertible leadership, to a chaotic world. That world preexists. Is the notion of creation essential and particular to monotheism? Clifford hesitates but says that Isaiah 45:18–19 for instance points in that direction. Indeed it does, and clearly separates the notion of post-chaos divine arrangers of the cosmos from a creator outside of this cosmos and involved in its history not only as a redeemer but more generally in a way that questions all monarchic and oligarchic political projections. No theomachy indeed either. Clifford doesn't see this political aspect or, at the very least, doesn't sufficiently underline it. Still, he says page 269: "The claim that Yahweh is the creator God goes hand in hand with Yahweh as sovereign."

Important aspect of Yahweh creator and sovereign: that he makes his will known through prophetic voices.⁶³ It looks like something that flows naturally out of his sovereignty. The "telling" and the "proclaiming" clearly are anchored into the Exodus tradition by the time of the writing of this part of Isaiah 40–48. And there is a radical novelty about them (Isaiah 48:5–7), not the perpetual return to a golden age and mythical renewal age that served traditional political systems. I do agree with Clifford's summary:

Chapters 40–48 provide a climactic dismantling of the supremacy of imperial Babylon and its gods (44:24–47:13; ch. 48 summarizes chs. 40–48), whose pantheon head was Marduk. (272)

I would add that this kind of critical move had already been done in a less discursive, yet radical way, in Ezekiel's visions. Question: how does the author know that "no image of Yahweh had been removed from Jerusalem's Temple, as was the practice in war, so Yahweh had never been visibly defeated."⁶⁴ I'm less sure about all of this. I think the possibility exists that this author, like Ezekiel before him, is being more radical and goes beyond the notion of images not because there was no image of Yahweh but because the response to this removal had already been prepared by the events that happened to Israel under Assyria.

It is possible that the notion of monotheism was also encouraged by external factors such as the squabbles between Nabonidus-led devotees of Sin, the lunar god, and defenders of the traditional cult of Marduk.⁶⁵

63. CLIFFORD, "Deutero-Isaiah and monotheism," 271.

64. *Ibid.*, 272.

65. So MACHINIST, "Mesopotamian imperialism and Israelite religion," 244–45, quoted in note by Clifford.

Date:⁶⁶ are the derisive passages on idols from a later author in the history of the formation of Dt-Isaiah? So, they would not be simply explainable by exilic sentiment regarding Babylonia, but by much later writers continuing to reflect on the engine of history?

About exclusivity claims: are they as absolute as thought to be by many scholars such as Assmann (my question: he is not mentioned by Clifford)? The formulas of incomparability could still be accommodating a measure of relativity... Re-read Assmann and correct his view of a truth claim of monotheism vs a faith claim. Attached to this question: in the theology of the Dt-Isaiah, is there any room made for a council of gods, El, etc.?⁶⁷ Monolatry rather than monotheism? Answer: it looks like El and Elohim have become more generic appellations (=god). Divine council scenes are de-deified.⁶⁸

Implications of monotheism: toward violence or justice?⁶⁹ The latter of course, since it is freedom from oppression that is being sought. Was monotheism closed to “others” and intolerant? My present notion is that the modern question had little meaning then. What was meaningful at the time was the redefinition of ethnic communities on the basis of faith in their gods rather than on a biological, inheritance basis. That is a very clear notion in Exodus and it is pursued, I think, in Dt-Isaiah. It is enlarged to its radical consequence: openness to all believers in Yahweh alone. It remains to be explained what this could mean in terms of social and economic arrangements.

66. CLIFFORD, “Deutero-Isaiah and monotheism,” 274.

67. *Ibid.*, 276.

68. *Ibid.*, 277.

69. *Ibid.*, 277ff.

9 September

FRIDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 2017

For his book on the role of the New Testament in fostering anti-Judaism, Donaldson gives a clear summary of important views held by Jules Isaac, Gregory Baum, Rosemary Ruether, and James Parkes, among others. He gives their main ideas at the beginning of the book and returns to them in his chapter on the gospel of John.¹ In spite of the contradictions involved in setting “the Jews” as foil from inside the *ethnos*, does the real parallelism made by the gospel between “the world” and “the Jews” help to understand the author’s purpose? Does it somehow alleviate the tone? The universalization of “the Jews” would, so goes the argument, have both a positive and negative effect. It would not be a simple matter of demonization. Not convincing or, rather, a costly exercise if seen from the Jewish point of view...

I am not proposing to analyze the relationship between the religion of ancient Israel—be they called religious “aspects,” or “religious structures”—and the social structures of ancient Israel. Social analysis does not provide a reductionist background for “other” realities that are believed by many to be atemporal and preternatural. Yet it is not enough to realize that the concept of “religion” is limiting and misguided.² Religion was not a sphere of human activities somehow separated from the rest (neither structurally nor neurologically). What is needed is a theory of mediation and we have it with Gagnepain’s (pace Bergson: there are no *données immédiates de la conscience*).

1. DONALDSON, *Jews and anti-Judaism in the New Testament*, 81–85.

2. See BARTON and BOYARIN, *Imagine no religion. How modern abstractions hide ancient realities*.

SATURDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 2017

Yesterday and today, we had very high temperatures: 40 °C along the coast, up to 46 °C in the hills, Watsonville, etc. I called Françoise-Thérèse this morning: Aziliz is pregnant (due Dec 20), which is great news. I told her about a thought expressed by Callum: he would like to learn French so he can talk with his cousins in France! The house “au bas du pont” will be ready by the end of October and Aziliz, Paco, and Alana will be able to move in before the birth. Françoise-Thérèse also told me that she worked hard on the Runan little house (painting, tiles, etc.), and was able to receive vacationers from Marseille who love the place and its old-world feel. Finally, she will be able to get an implant for a tooth that got broken in a little accident not long ago.

SUNDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER 2017

“History, Stephen said, is a nightmare from which I’m trying to awake,” to which Deasy answers, “All history moves towards one great goal, the manifestation of God.”

MONDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2017

We heard today’s first drops fall on the dust-cushioned skylight as we sat for our kibbutz breakfast: red and orange tomatoes, cucumbers, spicy onions, avocado and a small blanket of an omelette. Yogurt? We ate as the last lines of *Ulysses*, its Andalusian rose and perfume reverberated and echoed a long, cramp-inducing yes. The rain didn’t come and hush the crows’ caws.

The reviewer of a collection of essays in honor of Jacob Milgrom signs, “Mark A. Awabdy, Arabian Peninsula.” Did he mean to be discrete and not compel the authorities of the country where he resides to interfere, because he is writing on Judaism as a very ancient phenomenon?

TUESDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 2017

Long, warm day. Reading Markus Tiwald and not too happy with his chapter on the economy and society. Useful nonetheless as a foil.

President Trump thumped his chest and meekly kicked the dossier on DACA to his extreme-right souffre-douleur, Sessions, the attorney-general of the US. DACA is *Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals*. It was started

in 2012 by Obama, in the absence of Congress decision on immigration. Sessions in turn pretended to pass it along to Congress for a decision in the coming six months. In the meantime, tens of thousand of young children of immigrants who came here as babies or children will live in fear that their status will never be clear and worse, that the information in the government's possession might be used, illegally, to go after them. Amy and I went to Noreen and Susan's house. We walked to the Town's Clock, joined a group of about fifty or more marchers, and waved signs protesting the recent cruel decision by the "government" (the word does need to be put in brackets). Many drivers honked in approval. Amy had a wonderful idea: make a sign that said "tseDACA ve-hesed."

Before that, we conference-called with Rémi, Callum, and Lucie. Leslie was at a teacher-parent conference at the Bloomfield French school where Callum is going to be this year. He seemed happy so far. Even Lucie mentioned soccer (I corrected to "foot").

WEDNESDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 2017

Very pleasant lunch at Bargetto's with Miriam and Elliot.

SUNDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2017

About the hurricane due to arrive in Florida this evening: the papers are full of pictures and alarming stories, while nothing is said, at least in the first pages, about the earthquake that hit Mexico this week, the terrible storms in India, etc. Caribbean islands and Cuba are mentioned as a kind of propaedeutics on the path of Irma, though little interest is shown in them, particularly Cuba. The rhetoric used in the media makes it difficult to appreciate the extent of the damage and the nature of the feelings. "It's like waiting for a monster," one person is quoted to say, something that makes sense in a story world of fanciful creatures. What is taken by instinct to be the mundane, orderly, and civilized world is opposed to a natural event described as "savage" and "wild" or even "vicious." Prayers are said that reduce a god of *צדקה וחסד* to its Wettergott roots. I think of roadways, high towers, large houses with swimming pools, telecommunication systems, pleasure harbors, enormous cruise ships, the devotion to the pleasures of sunning oneself, drinking, sport fishing, and gambling as the height of disorder and "wildness."

ANNIVERSARY

As we bike down the slopes of the great meadow,
 her love words spread and scatter in the rushing wind.
 Zillions of molecules of her breath rush by and find home
 among the running ground squirrels, dry grass, sequoias,
 quizzical deer, berry-bearing bushes,
 gliding eagle, and her favorite animals, humans.
 An infinite number of elements for a second or two
 in a story of 1,450,656,000 seconds or so...
 The few atoms that brushed by my ears left a tiny mark,
 enough to begin telling the story softly.

WEDNESDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 2017

Lunch at Gabriella's with Bruce, Peter, Forrest, Alan, who is just back from Japan (mostly Okinawa).

A few thoughts on the meaning of ancient sacrifices follow. With pastoral and agrarian activities, even in LB-IA I, multiple pantheons emerged, or so I imagine because of the strength of the information from the Levant itself.³ The remoteness of the deities and the structure of pantheons reflected (figured) a hoped-for regulation of social relationships, while projecting the gods as the only reliable anchors for a life in which technical manipulations of plants and animals, the remaking of social groups on a new basis, and normative values were considered necessary investments in maintaining and expanding life. The new forms of control of nature were perceived as a disruption of it—a change in cosmic order to be compensated—, but also the letting go of a fluid relationship with the milieu, for a risky, new form of more mediated social structure. Elites and kings have been able to emerge in these new differentiated societies and claim management roles in the new social and religious dynamics.

Strangely enough, the deities too became sedentary and in charge of society, rather than in an uneasy equal relationship of kin alliance as it was for hunter gatherer societies.

Sacrifice establishes the gods and places them in a distant position of superiority as it renders communication with them possible and

3. See Elayi on Phoenicia, Mouton on Hittites or Hurrites, Dion, Sager, Lepinski, and others on Aramaeans.

allocates them a position of reciprocity. (187)

In other words: the *distance* “allocated” the gods in the pantheons of agrarian societies figured the (lesser) distance that was embedded into the technology of plant and animal growth, preservation, sharing, labor attributions, capitalization (herding and access to arable land and labor). All mediations evolved at the same time.⁴

Why did sacrifices fade away in modern times?⁵ He argues that the main cause was the autonomy of the technological mastery of the world. Then, as he says, why not more sacrifices rather than less? And why no conceptualization of Christ, the notion of divine sacrifice, and development of the Eucharist? Was sacrifice rather directed at the *cosmos* than the *socius*?⁶ I think both aspects cannot be separated and no priority of the one over the other can be established, although this doesn’t mean that one adopts the viewpoints of Girard and others regarding “renunciation” and “victimization” as being at the origin of all cultures (see my notes on this elsewhere). I agree with Hénaff’s formulation a little later, however, that

sacrifice makes it possible to adjust those relations within societies that have begun an active process of transforming nature and controlling living things. (197)

However, the following paragraph on the same page required some explanation:

Sacrifice acknowledges the *gift* of the civilized arts that the *deity bestowed* on humans. It returns the benefits of civilization to the deity in order to preserve them. (my emphasis)

Sacrifice frames it as a bestowing by *more narrowly defined, more distant projections* of the capacity humans have to suspend or negate the asperities of the world presented to them, restructure their approach of it, and reinvest it as being “natural.”

4. It will be necessary to develop this point in detail: in which way exactly did grain growing, its transformation, and animal domestication, become part of a vast technological system in which both places and times were reconfigured as partly concepts and images?

5. HÉNAFF, *The price of truth. Gift, money, and philosophy*, 197–201.

6. *Ibid.*, 197.

FRIDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2017

Conversation yesterday afternoon at Gary Miles' with John Lynch. We talk about classics, the "mésaventures" of hiring... Lavarout e reont diñ eo bet tamalled da DS gant unan bennak e oa bet kopïet tammou eus e levr diwar ur yezhadur all...

Today, at Ivéta where I'm working upstairs, I meet a young NZ woman who asks me for the password to the local network. As we talk a bit, I realize that we share a number of views on the world but have little language in common. She doesn't know the basic lineaments of the Exodus story and she has to ask me what the words "agrarian" or "polytheistic" mean. It gives me the idea that it would be a good idea to develop a sharing vocabulary and concept tool for beginning students—say in history classes—that would help everyone acquire some basic common language for description and inquiry.

MONDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2017

I'm reading about "the idea of a flat ontology" in BARRETT.⁷ It would be the source of a new understanding of archaeology in which biological and mineralogical transformations of "ruins" (does the word still make sense?) would not give any priority to possible human uses and intentions behind those uses. "New materialisms" is the name of this new way of approaching "the past". No past, anymore, just changes. This view stems from a partly justified criticism, namely that there is no "past" yonder that would shine because of its humanness and claim to exception, particularly in its claim of power over nature and ways of seeing (epistemic view of things = domination). See Meillassoux, Latour, etc. Reality would be the "equable interplay of things." I'm sympathetic to this imaginary Martian point of view that things of the "past" don't bear their significance in consequence of a/contradictory human interpretation(s). Yet, isn't it a new antiquarianism that these "new materialisms" are offering? The problem is: what ontology of the depths or "depth ontology" shall we awake? The answer is that there is a kind of multi-dimensionality and depth to chemical systems, the concatenation of biological systems that follow, emergence of life, including that of human animals and their quirks in the environments they maintain and degrade. There would be some depth to their existence and

7. BARRETT, "The new antiquarianism?," 1682.

consequently the possibility of a multi-dimensional reconstruction and interpretation of their lives. In Barrett's words:

It was slaves who built the Hadrianic aqueduct that served Corinth, a 'raw physicality' that seems to be forgotten when we read that: "The Hadrianic Aqueduct would be non-existent without the raw physicality of mortar, brick, and stone, combined with geometry, survey labor, and craft experience" (Olsen *et al.* 2012: 120). (BARRETT, "The new antiquarianism?," 1685)

Video conversation with Callum and Lucie. Callum answers a clear "Bonsoir" to my salutation. I get the impression that both are hearing a lot of French coming from their "petits camarades" and teacher. Bunny bleu will have to work hard these coming weeks.

TUESDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2017

"In a system where most look at THIS PLACE as a way to profitize off those looking to build a future YOU can make a difference." Graffito? or found in a Harvard report of Sep 15? The coining of the "profitize" neologism is meant to mock and ruin the ethical pretense of "privatize" which is a battle cry on the right. Both greedy verbs.

The collection of texts and analyses by Donaldson on the views of universalism in ancient Judaism is very useful and balanced.⁸ Both his work and Stern's three volumes on Greek and Latin authors on Jews and Judaism provide a complex view of a dynamic (changing) and varied interaction between Jews and their neighbors (real and imaginary). Donaldson's second part presents an analysis of the texts quoted and commented in the first part (pages 15–466, the bulk of the work), according to the following main criteria: sympathization, conversion, ethical monotheism, and participation in eschatological salvation.

I looked at his short chapter on "ethical monotheism."⁹ The analysis is solid, as far as I can judge, especially regarding the reasons for the adoption of certain positions by Hellenistic Jewish intellectuals. There is little social analysis, for instance regarding Philo and the possibility of a strong correlation between elite status and wisdom of theological choices. Yet, I'm going a bit too far perhaps. Donaldson does recognize that Philo is thinking of philosophers mostly. There is no mention either of the role played inside

8. DONALDSON, *Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish patterns of universalism (to 135 CE)*.

9. *Ibid.*, 493–98.

Judaism by the notion and belief in a god creator standing outside of the space- and time-continuums of creation. So: Jewish thoughts about their monotheism—I add the possessive for good reason—, as Donaldson argues, could be generous in not only granting its possibility or some equivalence among Gentiles (Highest God = Zeus, etc.), but also in not requiring their sympathizers to adopt Jewish cultic and ethnic demands. So, everyone in this view might have access to a similar natural theology. But how did that theology align with Mosaic law? Much gymnastics at that level (Philo: cult = philosophical askesis; Aristeas, Philo, or Josephus: superiority of Jewish law). Donaldson thinks that the views of these Jewish elites is that both Judaism and philosophy are two paths to the same destination. René Bloch would question this last opinion and say that Jewish elites like Philo did use Greek philosophy and literary evocations but placed Biblical Judaism higher.

Still, what of the practice of the law (divinely enjoined!)? One way is to look at rational explanations, or allegorize: *Aristeas* 130–71; Philo. Another is to downplay it or even ignore the difficulty completely under a bland “virtuous living.”¹⁰ Donaldson makes much of the apparent equation of Zeus and the biblical deity (most high, etc.: a profusion of names since images are in short supply!).¹¹ I suspect that the willingness of Gentile authors to “translate” divinities has more to do with political necessities than real theological developments.¹² Donaldson questions this “strain of generous ethical monotheism.”¹³ What was the role of Scripture in encouraging or allowing it? The example of the wisdom literature? Yet, forces at work in the surrounding Hellenistic environment probably counted more. So, secondly, was this hesitating openness caused by internal questions regarding the philosophical (and I add, social) status of Jewish cult within the Greco-Roman environment? A need for reassurance? For instance, why deem Ptolemy an ethical monotheist, as did the letter of Aristeas?

Donaldson uses the phrase “ethical monotheism:” there is no index of subjects, so I can’t find the origin of its use, if he gives it. It makes me think of Mendelssohn’s take on the enlightenment and Judaism and his successful

10. Donaldson gives examples from *Sybilline Oracles* 3: 548–50; 624–29; 733; 740; 763. Or the *Testament of Joseph*.

11. *Letter of Aristeas* 16 and Aristobulus, frag. 4 = Eusebius *PE* 13.12.6–7.

12. I think of Smith, Assmann, and their *translatio deorum*: equivalences of divinities in various conquered territories, from Greece to Gaul and Britain.

13. DONALDSON, *Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish patterns of universalism (to 135 CE)*, 496.

attempt to put Judaism “in conversation” (the big word used on all radios and in universities these days) with a post-Christian, “ethical” enlightenment.¹⁴ The basic view of traditional Judaism that it is enough for Gentiles to stick to Noachide laws has always struck me as narrow, naïve and crude, yet perfectly understandable as a view from behind the old parapets.

Message flatteur de BC ce matin:

Très cher Gildas,
certains furent l’homme des révolutions mais toi tu l’es des révélations : de Jérusalem and around au plus loin du temps antique tu t’es posé près de Silicone Valley d’où nous arrose la nouvelle superstition de l’Algorithme (mot arabe !!!) qui nous enrobe dans ses big data au sein de cloud pareils au brouillard du matin qui cachait le Sinaï aux yeux des Hébreux. On inventa alors une colonne de feu pour mettre 40 ans d’obscurité pour parvenir au mont Nébo ! Aaron

David Brooks at it again in today’s *NYT*: “Most religions and moral systems have aimed for self-quieting...” Tell that to Pietists perhaps, but to Jesus, Gandhi, MLK, Quakers, Shakers? Follows it up with two straw candidates for the best story about self-actualization (thank god my computer didn’t explode typing that last word).

WEDNESDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 2017

I keep going back to psalm 23, pronouncing the words under the sequoias and thinking it might still be a prayer that reaches beyond the Yahweh of the first line. I raise a full cup and summon the “flat ontology” I half believe in:

מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד יְהוָה רִעִי לֹא אֶחָסֵד:
2 בְּנֵאֲוֹת דָּשָׁא יִרְבִּיעֲנִי עַל־מִי מִנְחֹת יִנְהַלְנִי:
3 נִפְשִׁי יִשׁוּבֵב יִנְחֲנִי בַמַּעְגָּלִי צֹדֵק לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ:
4 גַּם כִּי־אֵלֶיךָ בִּגְיָא צִלְמוֹת לֹא־אִירָא רַע כִּי־אַתָּה עִמָּדִי שְׁבֹטְךָ וּמַשְׁעֲנֹתֶיךָ הִמָּה יִנְחַמְנִי:
5 תַּעֲרֹךְ לִפְנֵי | שְׁלַחֵן נִגְדַּ צַרְרֵי דְשִׁנְתָּ בְשִׁמּוֹן רִאשֵׁי כּוֹסֵי רוּיָה:
6 אֵךְ | טוֹב וְחֶסֶד יִרְדְּפוּנִי כָּל־יְמֵי חַיִּי וְשִׁבְתִּי בְּבֵית־יְהוָה לְאַרְבַּע יָמִים:

14. See Lods, Nikiprowetsky, et al. This ethical monotheism is the outcome of the prophetic currents, not of the Mosaic revelation per se. Modern view therefore, in contradistinction to the older stance exemplified by the liturgy which does the opposite, giving the Torah pride of place, and the Neviim as *haftarot*. See Mendelssohn’s *Jerusalem*.

THURSDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 2017

Picture of Callum this morning (fig. 9.1) reading the Torah with his finger right under the word “the LORD.” “Look!, there’s Hebrew!”

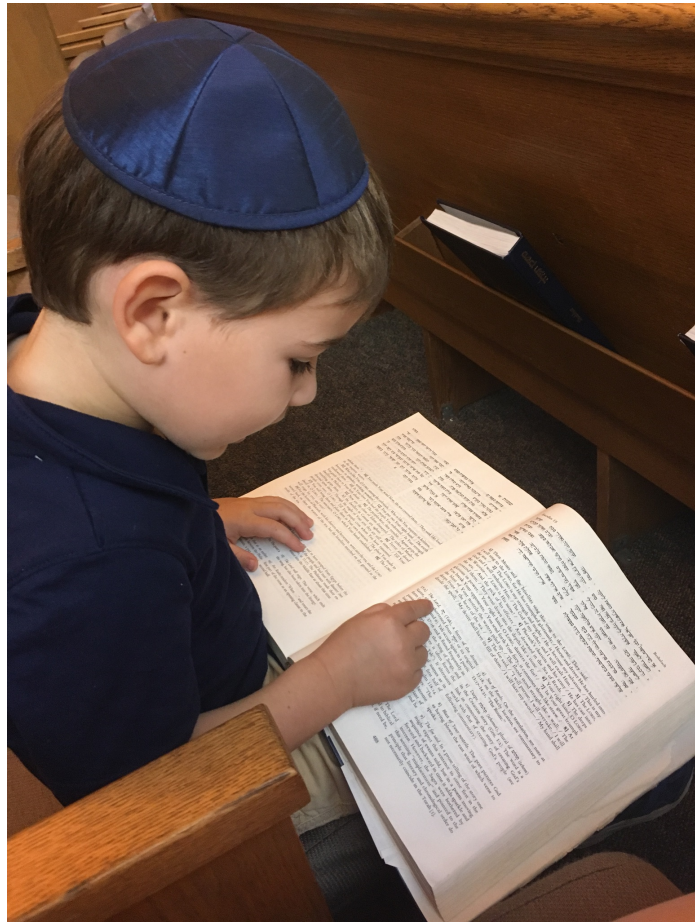


Figure 9.1 – *Callum reading the name...*

FRIDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2017

This morning, I sent the following message to Senator McCain:

Dear Senator McCain, Please vote NO on the Graham/Cassidy bill. In giving more freedom and financial power to states, a seemingly worthwhile goal, this bill will actually allow health companies driven

by profit motives to game the system even more than before adoption of the ACA. The states' freedom in deciding Medicaid matters, prior conditions, and weakening the individual mandate, will end up costing families throughout the nation. I dare add that your NO vote on this fourth incarnation of the misguided attempt to do away with ACA rather than fix it is not in contradiction with your friendship and political ties with Senator Graham and Governor Ducey. They and we need you to lead the way in demanding that the higher interests of the nation be rationally examined and not simply be abandoned to a market that is anything but a free market, given the urgency of decisions in health matters. I thank you for your previous NO vote of July 27. Please, say NO again to the present attempt to skip full rational analysis of costs and outcomes.

I learned he did announce his intention to vote no on the measure by noon today.

Our present government is not populist but slouching toward fascism. In appearance, it is proto-fascist, as presidential "executive orders" are not dictatorial orders. These orders cannot quite mask and do away yet with the rule of law. The situation is evolving day by day. We are in a struggle that is a world-wide expansion of the conflict between elites and workers. It has been going on for over a century and a half now. Demagogic, racist, antisemitic appeals to middle and lower-middle class have long been used to counter socialist mass movements. For a while, particularly in the aftermath of world wars in which armies were made of global levies of whole nations, economically stressed workers could appeal to social democratic elites and demand that the most negative effects of the capitalist system be blunted. Rule of law, basic financial protections, regulated pensions, free or cheap public education systems, universal health-care systems were devised in such a way that the privatization of profits and socialization of risks could still proceed, in the main. These protections and more generally a sense of shared social obligations have been erased since the late seventies. Cooperative and socializing movements have been systematically marginalized. To unionize has been disparaged, attacked, radically weakened. The result is that many employees and workers today see little alternative to exploitation and insecurity, except brutal, racist, nationalistic fascism. Trump et al oblige.

SATURDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2017

Hayden writes us this morning that he went to emergency care (blood in bladder). Both he and Elliot have had multiple infections recently.

Notes after reading Hénaff on debt and grace. To set a price in a market place amounts to setting a world under a kind of control that is measured and rationed without external agencies or divine grace-givers. A *cogito* has come by and changed the landscape. A secondary aspect of this development for historians is that it makes no sense to apply the modern notion of market to an ancient world still shaped by the idea of ontological debt.

On grace: MH sees grace as an opening made necessary by the age of sacrifice, which was characterized by a perpetually renewed debt that resulted from the expanding mastery over nature. Even where sacrifice appeared as ritual, renewed debt remained. Grace then could be a different relationship to the Ur-gift? Grace comes into view when kinship systems were replaced by city-states and the civic bond needed to be “secured in a new way.”¹⁵ I would have to show that the same happened with small monarchies in the Levant, though this political system was less of a departure from kinship systems. Needed: to trace the meaning of “grace” and “gift” both in Hebrew and Phoenician (with reference in comparison to Akkadian). I wonder if the history of grace has been done by others than Hénaff?

MH thinks that the monotheistic belief of Israel “emerged in very ancient times.”¹⁶ In fact, it was a recent development that created conditions similar to those created in Greek or Phoenician city-states, though with a very different vocabulary because of its different political origins. Monotheism emerged only after the fall of a monarchy in which a movement toward a larger political unit subject to kings could not go very far beyond the bonds created by a hodge-podge of kin relationships rife with tensions. After 600 BCE, in a long development, the previously wrecked social bonds got secured by the belief that a gift had been made to all and was recognized and accepted by all (Exodus fidelity and trust).

SUNDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2017

We went to Kensington Park, walked on a beautiful trail, played and bathed at a lake’s beach. Hot day: 93 °F, hottest recorded heat at this date since 1891.

15. HÉNAFF, *The price of truth. Gift, money, and philosophy*, 243.

16. *Ibid.*

MONDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2017

Wonderful party for Lucie's second birthday with Grandpa, Gigi, David, us... Cake! Chocolate! Callum was quite excited by this idea. Main menu was burritos, which is Lucie's favorite dish.

TUESDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2017

A new book argues that the idea of resurrection of the body is a late development of Christianity, picking on something already there in Greek antiquity, whereas, Hebrew Bible and later Judaism believed in the resurrection of the soul.¹⁷ See Festugière and many others who argue otherwise. Finney argues that Plato was not all there was in Greek antiquity. Many thought that at least some heroes were entitled to an embodied afterlife, No pure belief in the continuation of an immortal soul, at least among the "masses." Was "the conviction that immortality must include the eternal union of soul and body" as strong as the author claims?¹⁸ As a reviewer notes, such convictions are hard to defend, as they are based on texts and art (the translation of Heracles). Inscriptions lead to a different evaluation regarding the importance of the belief in the afterlife of the soul (separate from the body).¹⁹

The second chapter on Biblical views of death and resurrection is also misguided. The texts from Isaiah, Ezekiel 37, and even Daniel 12 do not support Finney's view that the souls continue in the "shades" of the *sheol*. Corpses and souls (or shades and *sheol*) are not separated, contrary to what the author implies.²⁰ Finney interprets passages that imply bodily resurrection as concerning national restoration (as it may well be, but this argument does not pre-empt the notion of bodily resurrection or continuation). Similarly, the notion of bodily resurrection cannot be wished away, as the author does, from second-temple Jewish texts. Against all evidence (*DSS 4Q521* and the old ' *amidah*) the author proclaims there is no allusion to resurrection in these texts. Even his use of more recent texts (*Pesiqta Rabbati*) is

17. FINNEY, *Resurrection, hell and the afterlife: body and soul in antiquity, Judaism and early Christianity*; just came out also on the same topic: ELLEDGE, *Resurrection of the dead*.

18. FINNEY, *Resurrection, hell and the afterlife: body and soul in antiquity, Judaism and early Christianity*, 17.

19. See John Granger Cook's [review](#).

20. LEVENSON, *Resurrection and the restoration of Israel: the ultimate victory of the God of life*, 186.

slanted in his rejection of the idea, clearly found in the text, that the resurrection of the dead is in view (without limiting it to souls).

Pace Finney, Paul has much to say about the body (note: such a study should examine the notion of glory). His commentary on 1 Thess 4:17 misreads what the text says clearly in an un-platonic way: “We who are living... will be seized...” Interesting note of the reviewer concerning the absence of *psychè* from Paul’s vocabulary in regard to afterlife.²¹ Finney interprets the *σῶμα* of 1 Cor 15 as meaning “new life,” “new creation,” “new entity,” instead of plain “body.” It seems to be the height of despair to torture Paul’s views of the body into a radically binary flesh and Platonic soul.

In chapter six, the author misreads the passion narratives of the gospels. Chapter seven recognizes the overwhelming weight of belief in resurrection of the body but with characteristic interpretations and misprisions, for instance of Clement or Alexandria.

I’m still reading Hénaff on grace and the role of Seneca in developing a new conception of graceful giving that tries to escape the all too obvious lack of generosity and over-calculation of all of traditional giving (traditional, meaning, that of large political agrarian systems). Later on he brings up Jesus’ story, the gospels and especially Paul, for whom the gift is framed as making it impossible to expect a return. See Anderson on charity.

What is at stake in the conjunction of religious Reform and birth of capitalism is the notion of charity or gift-giving as “the primary condition of the social bond.”²² A turn has occurred in the notion of the social bond. It is radicalized by Calvin who insists we need to act righteously purely *ad maiorem dei gloriam*. But how did grace become this final act of divine judgment? Grace was expected to bring the world and God closer, yet here grace makes it radically distant.

WEDNESDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 2017

Div pe deir eurvezh diñ epad mard eo aet Amy hag ar vugale ti G. ha D. araok ober ur valeadenn e zoo. Oberataet e vo L. hirie: soñjal a rae dezhi eo re vras he bronnoù ha c’hoant he deus bet d’ober se aboe pell, marteze evit bezañ gouest da redek ha neuïal e redadegoù ha koñkourioù.

Pages 279–81, Hénaff gives a summary of his theory in three stages: gift giving (societies based on recognition of the other in kinship system), grace

21. Quoting BREMMER, *The rise and fall of the afterlife*, 3.

22. HÉNAFF, *The price of truth. Gift, money, and philosophy*, 272.

and faith with some gift giving that doesn't constitute the society (ancient agrarian monarchies, city states, and empires), and radicalization of grace as purely divine (at different degrees in the Christian world, from the Catholic church to the Reform and its heirs). His words:

We have considered three different types of gift-giving relationships: (1) the system of ceremonial reciprocal gift exchange found in traditional societies, the main purpose of which is recognition of the partners and the development of a network of communal bonds; (2) unilateral giving on the part of a deity, ruler, or city, various versions of which are provided by the Greek *kharis* and the Biblical *hén*; this is what is called grace—a favor generously granted regardless of the merit of the recipient; and (3) individual giving of a moral type, which is based on a free decision on the part of the giver and may or may not be reciprocated but involves, above all, generosity and compassion; this is the gesture that Aristotle considers a virtue and that Seneca advocates for all to practice. This is probably the level at which what Weber calls “the religious ethic of fraternity” can be situated. (279)

I think Hénaff's stages of development make sense, especially the second one, which is a shift from traditional forms of ritually enforced bonds to a more centralized system in which both ceremonial gift exchange and vindictory justice suffer a wide transformation. These new political systems with a center of one kind or another—monarchies with dominant pantheons or city states—required a transformation of the bonds of trust between people: this meant the development of divine “grace” and in parallel acts of individual *philia*. I would think this may account to some degree for the transformation of belief system under the Israelite and Judaeon kings, and the radicalization of “grace” after their removal.

Think about Israelite counterparts of the Antigone and Creon story: she is representative of clanic interests, he is a “state modernizer” who seeks to move beyond kinship systems.

THURSDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2017

Busy morning: we got Callum and Lucie ready for school by 7:45 and went to west Bloomfield where they attend a kindergarten French school. Ten little guys in Callum's class, about the same in Lucie's. She goes Thursday and Friday mornings, Callum goes everyday, mornings only. It takes twenty-five minutes to get there (696 and 10), which is long for everyone, but it is



Figure 9.2 – *Merenn el levraoueg skol-veur*

wonderful to see Callum and Lucie learn French. I've been speaking it more continuously with them, and they take it in stride. The accents are perfect. Lucie gets angry at her maman when she can't go *à l'école*.

During the three free hours we had ahead of us after dropping the children at school, we visited the Cranbrook schools, library (extraordinary as far as I'm concerned), the gardens, and peaked at the art museum which was closed because of a private visit. We also visited the summer house of the Scripps-Booths, which is used by the school's administration. The art school is famous for its imaginative, open programs that feature artists in residence and groups of ten to sixteen students who do not attend courses

but work on their own project for the whole duration of their M.A. The art school was originally directed by Eliel Saarinen who also designed much of the campus, with the help in time of Alfred Kahn, in the Art Deco and Arts and Crafts style. It has been most influent in American design, especially architecture. Amy and I loved the sculptures, especially the *Jonah and the whale* fountain by Carl Milles, which he made in 1931 upon being called to be the first director of the Cranbrook school), and Marshall Fredericks whom Milles invited to join him. Driving around the Bloomfield suburbs and seeing this extraordinary place in the elite Anglican preparatory school style of England made me think how much some very rich people treasured education. I doubt most of the present wealthy families of Bloomfield, whose houses look like glorified farms from the old country, care that much about education proper. They probably think programs, names, reputation, i.e. a game of mirrors.

Hénaff, continued. (1) Christian charity to neighbors was patterned “after” that of God, i.e. gracious and without calculation. No usury, but returning more as token of gratitude encouraged! Rather than contract and justice, commutative or distributive (tied to social orders of the past). The loans remained within the sphere of social bonds and subject to them, which meant that plenty of abuse could be integrated in these relationships. So, as in ancient societies, a de facto economy without (modern global) economic aim, i.e. without rationality of investments geared to profits and further investment, but still stuck in *sacra auri fames*. (2) The relationship of grace supplied protections and guarantees, but there was no specific legal process (i.e. contractual, based on notion of strict justice). Patronage was its norm (from kings or popes down to local imitators of saints, patrons they also...). Grace is refined into predestination in the Reform, especially calvinism, whereas it was charity, favors, family-like relationships, “elegant” reciprocity or gratitude, and beauty of the gesture (the three main meanings of the name) in the classical world as well as in late Judaism and early Christianity (I’m adding to Hénaff).

Why the different paths in northern Europe and Roman territories (with exceptions galore, beginning with northern Italy and its relationship to early capitalism). A few times, H. repeats after Weber that “the Protestant ethic turned out to be in concordance with the business world and emergent capitalism.”²³ It is not enough to contrast urban, progressive North, and agrarian, traditional South... Early capitalism started in north-

23. HÉNAFF, *The price of truth. Gift, money, and philosophy*, 288.

ern Italian republics. Or business centers in eastern France and in Flanders? One obvious answer is that they are geographically and demographically rich areas, yet Roman in spirit. Hénaff doesn't address the take off of agriculture and industry in the twelfth to fifteenth centuries, including the important role of monastic movements and theology in bringing logic and reason to the worldly world while raising the dignity of work.

The theology of grace got radicalized. Weber didn't realize that the theology of grace was a major restructuring of the doctrine of unilateral giving.²⁴ Sociologically speaking, the question of grace concerns three elements:

1. it emerged in response to the critical passage from kinship-based multilateral reciprocity (exchange would be a better word but it gives the idea of an economy that would lead to ours in a smooth, unproblematic line) to centralized authority—with singular gift from above. General debt or obligation was generated for all at this stage.
2. the second aspect is the authority of truthfulness that is associated with the idea of a single giver who is the source of the law—whether in city-states (republics) or monarchies. A form of state is in charge (with laws going beyond traditional in-group customs), and representative of the god(s). It goes with attempts to enforce trust or loyalty as being “true.”
3. With Luther and especially Calvin, divine grace was made so absolute and pristine—beyond the reach and contact of all intermediaries—that human responses became *futile*. This radical departure eliminated all mediations and remediations by political and religious authorities, and mooted their claim to contact by imitation or closeness with divine power. No theologically shaped economy, I would add, so, no charity as imitation or part of a symbolic triangle.²⁵ No salvation that could be object of a calculation, but rationality and attested trust on the contrary had to be applied in worldly matters, while being severed from theological attempts to make the world habitable (hospitable?). Pascal's view, says Hénaff a couple of times. But something else is at work: the possibility of social organization beyond the received religious ethics of enforced control (no envy, no *luxus*, etc.).

24. HÉNAFF, *The price of truth. Gift, money, and philosophy*, 289, summary.

25. see ANDERSON, *Charity* on this triangle formed by the giver, poor recipient, and the god.

At a later point, Hénaff says that “The theological history of grace is the history of a disgrace.”²⁶ I see exactly the opposite, namely the possible extension of grace to the whole world whereas it was reserved before to exceptional individuals and moments. Unconditional generosity (< from *genus*) became part of our most public life, i.e. taxation, systems of health, pension systems. “Giving” seems to have lost all grace, all visibility that makes it “generous” (well born), both in the paying and in the receiving. Notice, however, that humiliation (the humility of gracious Mary and all of this dynamics) becomes problematic. Can grace be maintained, and how? Hénaff is inclined to say no. So, the order of *justice* only? However, justice throughout the centuries inclined to צדקה וחסד. Is this smoothing of hard edges over and are we to live forever in the perspectives opened by cold reason?

FRIDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER 2017

Away from Hénaff and back to the idea of marketable knowledge that would replace the notion of common good. The problem presented by money and market as the measures of all things is that they tend to mask real long-term costs and benefits as they can only be applied to “visible” things. The systematicity and cybernetic aspects of money and market are limited.

New article on the Magnificat by BALCH.²⁷ It came out soon after the publication of a full analysis of the whole Luke infancy narrative by MILLER.²⁸ He doesn’t mention her work. Let’s see. Balch reviews the political and religious interpretations of major commentators: Nolland (middle of the road), Brown and Fitzmyer (spiritualization, including the pious poor or ‘*anawim*’), Horsley (political reading), Mittmann-Richert (political also). No mention of SCHREIBER.²⁹ My own take is that the vocabulary of humility and humiliation should be studied together with the vocabulary of grace and gift, and the role of mediators, if any, carefully analyzed. In the infancy narrative, what is paramount and unfortunately not sufficiently insisted upon by commentators is that the divine agent shows itself to a poor woman (or at least not rich and entitled), in an unknown village far away socially and religiously from Jerusalem. This is against all rules of a society built on the notion of divine gift, debt and

26. HÉNAFF, *The price of truth. Gift, money, and philosophy*, 290.

27. BALCH, “Mary’s Magnificat (Luke 1:46b–55) and the price of corn in Mexico.”

28. MILLER, *Rumors of resistance*.

29. SCHREIBER, *Weihnachtpolitik. Lukas 1–2 und das Goldene Zeitalter*.

sacrifice, and unilateral grace(s) shaping the landscape into an ordered society. I see Mary as an anti-Moses in that sense that power doesn't rest anymore with pharaoh- or king-like figures but with a young woman who hasn't yet been accepted in the social and ethic networks of her society.³⁰

SATURDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2017

Callum drew a complex picture at his school sometime this past week (fig. 9.4). It shows his name in a small cartouche at the top left, saying "CAL" and right under it four dots that he said was Braille. Other parts of the drawing are a house (with a large chimney, always on the right side, spewing generous billows), a train on its track, a large tree, another house where he used to live "two hundred billion years ago".

While singing *au clair de la lune* to Lucie, on an evening walk, I stop before the last word of every line and am surprised to discover she can provide it, including Dieu at the end!

Regarding the evaluation of the background of the infancy narrative as an either/or, a two-step dance between an ersatz Judaism and an ersatz Hellenism (note the -isms), Balch is right to demur and question "this binary," which he finds "unrealistic."³¹ He thinks that the story told by Dionysius of Halicarnassus regarding the early conflict between the Roman senatorial class and plebeian peasantry closely parallels the Lucan narrative, especially the language of hunger vs wealth (abundance), and haughtiness vs humbleness: *πενία πρὸς πλοῦτον ἐστασίασε καὶ ταπεινότης πρὸς ἐπιφάνειαν*. His framing of this patrician-plebeian conflict in terms of an urban vs rural opposition can be misleading, however, as "urban" needs to be qualified. The conflict evoked in the Magnificat definitely parallels the Roman one, but with some significant differences. A major one is that the plebeians were needed as soldiers in the raiding of neighbors or their own system of defense. Conquest of enemies and distribution of spoils was considered basic. The dispute concerns the order and magnitude of the distribution. More importantly: I don't think that this kind of story circulated in first-century

30. Note that the secular worshipping of Mary in the Catholic church and her glorification in art have transformed the figure for the male theologians and priests in charge of education and liturgy, not necessarily for women who are much more likely to see the revolutionary elements of the story. Other commentators simply do not see the religious aspect of ancient kingship. Celsus' attacks provide a solid entry into the concerns of the ancients when presented with the kind of claims made by the Lucan narrative.

31. BALCH, "Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46b-55) and the price of corn in Mexico," 657.



Figure 9.3 – *Callum's drawing of a house in the tub*

Greco-Roman cities with the purpose of decreasing exploitation and injustice. Its concern seems to be order.

Balch accepts the notion that the diversion of land by rich landowners toward speculative crops (olive orchards and vineyards mostly?) caused hunger. This would need to be proved and probably could be contemplated, given the progress of modern archaeological research.



Figure 9.4 – Dessin de Callum

10 October

SUNDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2017

On my way to the Red Hook, a father is sitting on the cement by his young son, perhaps four. He is playing with tractors. I just left Cal, Lucie, Amy, and Leslie in the rumble dome (downstairs) and think how much fun it might be to play with the little neighbor. All relations have become so individualized and monetized that it takes a special effort to simply play with or meet your neighbor.

Here is an intelligent comment about Ross Douthat's raging, self-indulgent column after Hugh Hefner's death (Hefner of *Playboy* fame):

I could quibble with a couple of small points in this essay, but I won't. The important point is that Mr. Douthat succumbs to the manipulation he condemns by imagining that the vulgarity & the selfishness of our culture are the effects of a moral relativism originating on the left. In fact abortion rights, gay rights and most of the other things Douthat hates are not attacks on traditional morality & standards, but expansions & refinements.

Of course those who exploit the left for profit are no better than those who exploit the right for profit. The former tend to be entertainers, the latter tend to be right wing "journalists." But it is the Right, and only the Right, that has relentlessly & explicitly campaigned to surrender all standards to the marketplace. It is the Right that keeps electing unqualified entertainers as leaders. And it is the right that would replace all values with the narcissism of the mindless & manipulated consumer, whether of pornography & fossil fuels, or of Fox & Republican politics. (NYT today)

Hénaff addresses the nature of money in his last three chapters. Most economists, and even anthropologists, tend to think of tokens of exchange found in many traditional societies as part of an exchange system that developed in a straight line toward its achievement, modern money and econ-

omy. Mauss himself actually wavered and did not completely jettison the evolutionary view concerning money. He saw clearly however that “primitive money” was not about acquiring consumer goods but about prestige and recognition. Yet, he seemed to accept that this money had both economic and symbolic value: it involved forms of exchange that have no place in the modern economy, yet its apparent capacity to be an objective, reusable, neutral reference made it a primitive form of later economy and rationality.¹ In passing, I note the remark about the so-called “bride payment.”² Hénaff argues that “ceremonial money” and “commercial money” must be kept completely separate.

How did the second one emerge? In the classical city, according to Aristotle, money is a sign or pledge to each other, as citizen to citizen. See his *NE* 1133a, 11 (translation Bekker):

δεῖ ἄρα ἐνὶ τινὶ πάντα μετρεῖσθαι, ὥσπερ ἐλέχθη πρότερον. τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶ τῇ μὲν ἀληθείᾳ ἢ χρεία, ἢ πάντα συνέχει: εἰ γὰρ μὴθὲν δεῖοντο ἢ μὴ ὁμοίως, ἢ οὐκ ἔσται ἀλλαγὴ ἢ οὐχ ἡ αὐτή: οἶον δ' ὑπάλλαγμα τῆς χρείας τὸ νόμισμα γέγονε κατὰ συνθήκην: καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τοῦνομα ἔχει νόμισμα, ὅτι οὐ φύσει ἀλλὰ νόμῳ ἐστὶ, καὶ ἐφ' ἡμῖν μεταβαλεῖν καὶ ποιῆσαι ἀχρηστον. ἔσται δὲ ἀντιπεπονητός, ὅταν ἰσασθῆ, ὥστε ὅπερ γεωργὸς πρὸς σκυτοτόμον, τὸ ἔργον τὸ τοῦ σκυτοτόμου πρὸς τὸ τοῦ γεωργοῦ.

It is therefore necessary that all commodities shall be measured by some one standard, as was said before. And this standard is in reality demand, which is what holds everything together, since if men cease to have wants or if their wants alter, exchange will go on no longer, or will be on different lines. But demand has come to be conventionally represented by money; this is why money is called *nomisma* (customary currency), because it does not exist by nature but by custom (*nomos*), and can be altered and rendered useless at will. There will therefore be reciprocal proportion when the products have been equated, so that as farmer is to shoemaker, so may the shoemaker's product be to the farmer's product.

My questions regarding Judah, Israel, and other Levantine nations: 1) did money penetrate them early? See evidence in Meshorer et al. Was it weighed silver—not coined? 2) did it become necessary because of professional differentiation, or kings' and elites' exclusive needs?

1. MAUSS, *The gift*, 100.

2. HÉNAFF, *The price of truth. Gift, money, and philosophy*, 305.

MONDAY, 2 OCTOBER 2017

Amy and I took Cal to his school, then went to a café in Franklin, the closest place we could find. Large homes rise above huge, well-kept lawns. Medium income is \$450,000, according to the lady in the café. I try to imagine what people do with their and our lives: automobile execs, lawyers, financial officers, doctors (what kind?), advisers? I hear the small groups left in the café talk about professional dreams, what path to take... No thought given to helping people.

Aristotle: “Between knowledge and money there is no common measure” (*Eudemian Ethics* 7.10.1243b). Gift-exchange relationship instead? But this relationship is characteristic of clan systems without centers (I understand by this: a center beyond their own...) and it cannot define the relationship of justice in the city. In the city or any ordered society, quid pro quo, vindictory justice became unjust because it didn’t take into account the hidden aspects of life that political life made possible. Or in an extension of the logic preventing vindication within traditional groups, the collection of citizens couldn’t tolerate it inside their group. Traditional reciprocity (*ἀντιπεπονθός*, to be reciprocally proportional, from *πάσχω*) does not work. Think about this in regard to Johannine “hour” or “season” in Cana story.

From the *National Catholic Reporter*, Sept 23, 2017, this gem of historical information: “References to the evil eye appear in the Bible and Sumerian texts, making the concept at least 5,000 years old.” The word “Bible” appears before the word “Sumerian,” which makes the first at least as old as the second. How early was the first reference to the evil eye in the Sumerian corpus? The older mentions in the Bible come from Proverbs, it seems: about 2300 years ago? The explanation for the phenomenon seems to come from the Context Group: “It is based on the notion of a limited amount of good in the world, and the idea that one person’s envy can deduct from another’s fortune.” The article doesn’t bother to quote Matthew 20:15: οὐκ ἔξεστιν μοι ὁ θέλω ποιῆσαι ἐν τοῖς ἐμοῖς; ἢ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου πονηρός ἐστίν ὅτι ἐγὼ ἀγαθός εἰμι; This verse gives a better commentary on the evil eye than does the newspaper. “Are you envious of my kindness?” says the master. “Be my guest, take it over!”

The older Biblical passage on the evil eye do not come from Proverbs, except tangentially, but from , a text dating to the beginning of the second century BCE. Greek text: “μνήσθητι ὅτι κακὸν ὀφθαλμὸς πονηρός. πονηρότερον ὀφθαλμοῦ τί ἐκτισται; διὰ τοῦτο ἀπὸ παντὸς προσώπου δακρύει.” NRSV translation:

Remember that a greedy eye is a bad thing.
 What has been created more greedy than the eye?
 Therefore it sheds tears for any reason.³

While I'm on this subject, here is the shaky translation by Porter and Abegg of Ben Sira 31:13 in [BL Or. 5518, B IV Recto](#). Mid-verse spaces are indicated by double square brackets, marginal emendations by angular brackets.

4r:3 <Know> Remember that greed is evil.
 4r:4 God hates the greedy eye [[]] and there is no creature more evil than it is.
 4r:5 For this reason: the eye shifts about <flits around> because of everything else [[]] and weeps tears <causes tears to go astray> from the face.
 4r:6 Evil that comes from the eye <Evil that comes from the eye is God's portion> is not God's portion [[]] therefore because <therefore all from before> fluid flees from everything.

Hebrew text from the same web page:

4r3 זכור <דע> כי רעה עין רעה:
 4r4 רע עין שונא אל [[]] ורע ממנו לא ברא:
 4r5 כי זה מפני כל דבר תזוע <תזיע> עין [[]] ומפנים דמעה תדמע <תסיע>:
 4r6 רע מעין לא חלק אל <רע מ' חלק אל> [[]] על כן מפני <על כל מלפני> כל נס לחה:

TUESDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2017

Nobel prizes in medicine and physics went to US scientists (Brandeis, MIT, CalTech, etc.). And fifty-nine people were killed, five hundred wounded, by a sixty-four year-old individual in Las Vegas two evenings ago. He shot at a large crowd of concert goers from a suite he rented at a nearby hotel. No sensible weapon laws, no universal public health plan. Banks and big companies are doing well, professional servants and scientists also.

Aristotle sees need as composed of demand for goods and of interdependence of citizens. Price and exchange values are set in proportion to this dependence. I ask myself: the more dependent one was, the less possible it was to set price? Everyone may have been free in the city but some were freer than others and could therefore drive a hard bargain? How did interdependence (socially and politically determined) and demand for goods (real need

3. Note that the tearing of the eye, or yawning, are considered today to mean a “tamed” evil eye.

for subsistence) work? I note that Aristotle didn't speak of work (like Ricardo and Smith) or number of hours (like Marx) and primary materials as being the real units built into relational prices.

NB Kings and elites redefined *dependence* as existing only in regard to the gods. Their privileged access to them (by contiguity, shaping of temple and law, maintenance of cult and justice, conquest) justified taxation and other levies. They used the latter for more war equipment (guards and soldiers), buildings (temples and palaces), feasts (religious naturally), servants and especially officers of the administration.

It is clear that pure need for goods did not drive ancient economic relationships. The ideology of kingdoms and city states managed over and over to transform the religious sense of ultimate values (life of group, including ascendants and descendants) into claims for the priority of their own "needs" by framing them as the cost of serving the gods. In the *Nicomachian Ethics*, Aristotle describes a stage in which some notion of corrective justice was reached and applied via laws and money (*nomoi* and *nomismata*). This stage was still glued (other word?) to social values that hadn't been reconsidered. The same transformation can be seen in the late kingdom of Judah and the exilic discussions and texts. Aristotle sees that money "establishes equality between disparate goods,"⁴ but isn't the question also that it reinforces inequities between disparate citizens? Hénaff explains why merchants are not mentioned by Aristotle in relation to money: they didn't fit in his view of the city (some or many were slaves even). Aristotle sticks to an ideal of interdependence and recognition (kléos!), with grateful (and graceful?) recognition thrown in?

There was no market in the modern sense in the classical city.⁵ Still, there was supply and demand, movement of prices, investments.⁶ But there was no autonomous market place in which things move in ways that are unwilled or unknown by the agents (or most of them). Aristotle's horizon was the *oikos* and the city. The economy couldn't be in charge, neither could the old gift-exchange economy.

Hénaff discusses money and autonomy pages 331–44, quoting for instance a passage from *Père Goriot* on Rastignac's exhilaration and feeling of unbound future possibilities upon receiving a little money.

In regard to knowledge and money, Aristotle can serve as introduction

4. HÉNAFF, *The price of truth. Gift, money, and philosophy*, 327.

5. *Ibid.*, 328.

6. Hénaff refers to BRESSON, *La cité marchande*, 263–308.

to the modern question of mercenary knowledge. He thought that “Between knowledge and money there is no common measure.” The reason was presumably because knowledge cannot be easily divided into units, like houses or shoes. Philosophy can only be the object of gift-giving, “as with our parents or with the gods.”

WEDNESDAY, 4 OCTOBER 2017

Last chapter of Hénaff on the price of truth: after Jaeger et al, he rehabilitates the sophists as a phenomenon that reflected the passage from an aristocratic, restricted ideal of *arété* or *virtus* to a broader conception of education (via alphabetization) and professional knowledge, and was necessary to the emergence of Socrates and Plato themselves, pace their criticisms.⁷ About alphabetization, the absence of a powerful priesthood, and the intellectualization of the society, he follows Havelock and Goody,⁸ His (and their) argument holds even if alphabetization is understood to be a sophisticated development of reading and writing, which does require a much more significant amount of time than what is sometimes implied by references to its revolutionary nature.⁹ As Sini shows, there was a definite progress in the conception of consonants (voiceless and voiced) and vowels, over the more syllabic approach of alphabetic writing in Semitic languages.¹⁰ I would add that this development was caused in great part by the nature of the Greek language when its first writers used Phoenician alphabetic writing as starting point.

Legitimation of the merchant in Montesquieu is described by Hénaff 358–63: commerce as factor of civilization. Practiced “asceticism in the world,” focusing on useful exchange rather than luxuries, brings peace, etc. Substitutions of interests to passions? Montesquieu and Hénaff seem too quick here, when passions such as envy are going to be seen as cybernetically self-correcting, with no end in sight.

Finally, a few pages on the emergence of a market place of knowledge: Hénaff 364–73. The book and its multiple copies raises an interesting question: what is the difference between the object as commodity (so replica-

7. HÉNAFF, *The price of truth. Gift, money, and philosophy*, 352–56.

8. HAVELOCK, *Origins of western literacy*; GOODY, *The logic of writing and the organization of society*.

9. See ROLLSTON, *Writing and literacy in the world of ancient Israel*, 92–93.

10. SINI, *Ethics of writing*, 23–25.

ble) and the work of the author (which is more like a singular painting)²¹ They couldn't be profitable as objects before the technical change. No common measure between knowledge and money. Think of the present problem: ease of duplication, falling prices therefore, yet rental systems... Rise of copyright style of ownership claims with Diderot, Kant, etc. Notion of property of the author but problem: need to separate between personal law (intellectual property) and real law (publishing rights, which could be ceded, perhaps temporarily). But I note that in parallel with this, enlightenment figures fought for dissemination and notion of universal knowledge, leading to national repositories and libraries. Call to dignity at the end, pages 402-3, and indeed, beyond all commercial exchanges that we like to think rational (i.e. exactly and justly distributive), we know better. We still stick to the *decet*, the decent, the *decorum*, even though we know the range of this gesture is limited. I like Hénaff's last words on this idea of dignity: a promise, a space where we may meet and feel the honor of existing. This is followed by the story about the role played by Miss Amelia's café in the dreary depression town of Carson McCullers' *The ballad of the sad café*: "There, for a few hours at least, the deep bitter knowing that they are not worth much in this world could be laid low." I read this with great sadness, as I imagine the despair, anguish, anger, outside these few minutes of possible self-respect at this fictional café. As I read with sadness also the quote from Primo Levi about Lorenzo, "someone still pure and whole, not corrupt, not savage, extraneous to hatred and terror, something difficult to define, a remote possibility of good, but for which it was worth surviving."²²

THURSDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2017

I'm led to think differently about certain parts of my own research by a few aspects of Hénaff's book, but I'm less enthused by others. The most interesting and valuable parts were his discussion of grace and money. He did clarify the structural aspects of gift exchange, after Mauss, of political societies and city states after Seneca and Aristotle, and of radical grace and capitalism, after Weber. Two aspects of the book were disconcerting. The first was the absence of discussion of the passages from one structure to another, for instance from the apparent equilibrium apparently achieved by traditional kinship societies to politically centered societies. The other one

11. HÉNAFF, *The price of truth. Gift, money, and philosophy*, 365.

12. Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, 121.

was the choice of philosophers and theoreticians chosen for what in the end struck me as a history of social forms. Aside from those just quoted, there were pages on the sophists, Montesquieu, Diderot, Kant, Simmel, Lévinas. No real discussion of monotheism (superficial and wrong in this case), of the gospels and their huge influence, and no explanation of their absence, though their influence in the shape of mediaeval theology was felt in the background.

This morning, I saw a text by André Markowicz sent by Rémy Allain to Bruno. I agree with many of the sentiments. The question of the present states' ability to foster more democracy is in dispute. Why couldn't regions like Catalonia become states within Europe? But the more fundamental issue of social justice and equality of chances doesn't seem raised by these cultural movements. Wouldn't they be swallowed whole by global capitalist institutions? The other thing I don't quite understand is the notion that Denez was the leader of Breton independentists and a direct continuation of Roparz Hemon. I thought Denez himself was more complicated than that and the situation rather tangled. The problem arose out of a bitter intellectual, political, and personal dispute between Françoise Morvan (Markowicz's partner in life) and Per Denez.

Désastres, oui. Ce qui se passe en ce moment, là, à côté, en Catalogne, est une suite de désastres, de toutes les façons.

Désastre de cette fièvre de l'indépendance. Je ne comprends pas ce que la Catalogne pourrait gagner à être indépendante : est-ce que Madrid l'opprime tant que ça, aujourd'hui ? — Je ne parle pas de ce qui se passait sous Franco. Non, — maintenant ? En quoi est-ce que Madrid est un frein au développement de la Catalogne ou, je ne sais pas, de la langue, ou de la culture, catalane ? Est-ce qu'il s'agit seulement pour la Région Catalogne de ne plus payer sa quote part au budget national, — c'est-à-dire, pour une des régions les plus riches d'Espagne, d'aider au financement le développement des régions les plus pauvres ? Et donc que gagnerait la Catalogne autonome à être indépendante ? — En dehors du fait de ruiner l'Espagne tout entière... Tout le monde le fait remarquer, si elle devient indépendante, elle sera, de facto, en dehors de l'Union Européenne, puisque non signataire d'aucun accord... Et, là encore, c'est l'évidence, comment la Catalogne pourrait-elle intégrer l'Union européenne, puisqu'il faudra pour l'accepter l'unanimité de ses membres, et que pas un seul Etat d'Europe n'a dit qu'il l'aiderait — sans parler même de l'Espagne, exsangue, dont personne ne voit comment elle ne mettra pas son veto à une telle demande ? — Et, de toute façon, ça prendra des années —

des années essentielles pendant lesquelles, au lieu de s'unir, ce ne sera que polémiques, frontières, douanes, régressions de toutes sortes.

Désastres de la fragmentation. Comme si ce spectre nouveau qui erre aujourd'hui sur l'Europe pour remplacer celui du prolétariat, le spectre de l'identité, pourra aider à régler les problèmes sociaux. Pas seulement le chômage, mais la nouvelle conception du travail, fragmenté, lui aussi, miséreux, celui du CDD accordé comme une grâce. Comme si c'était de cela que nous avons besoin, à l'heure où toutes les — déjà si faibles — sécurités du monde du travail sont anéanties, dans toute l'Europe, — à l'heure où il ne reste rien que la loi du plus fort, et où plus un seul Etat ne cherche même à protéger un tant soit peu ses citoyens. Et c'est là que des millions de personnes, dans un élan qui, — faut-il s'en étonner ? — unit la droite et la gauche, découvrent qu'ils sont Catalans et pas Espagnols, qu'il y a une impossibilité entre les deux « identités », une impossibilité qui n'avait trop gêné personne depuis le XV^{ème} siècle. — Je suis bien incapable de refaire l'historique du mouvement indépendantiste catalan, mais je me souviens de ce que nous disait le chef des indépendantistes bretons, héritier spirituel et politique de Roparz Hemon, Per Denez qui venait d'être décoré de la plus haute distinction catalane par son ami Jordi Pujol, — les Catalans, ce sont les vrais modèles, parce qu'ils ont réuni le patronat et les employés dans un même combat. — Et ça, c'est une conversation qui remonte bien à 25 ans.

Désastre que de perdre son temps à ça, aujourd'hui, alors que rien, personne, ne menace le catalan, la culture catalane, le peuple catalan (notions à définir, mais, aujourd'hui, laissons).

Désastre de ces millions de gens qui votent pour ça... parce que, finalement, pour quoi votent-ils ? Pour une Catalogne indépendante ou contre un gouvernement de droite à Madrid, lequel gouvernement n'est lui-même que l'expression locale d'une politique européenne, ou, pour mieux dire, mondiale — politique que ne feront qu'appliquer les autorités catalanes au cas, peu probable, où elles finiraient par être admises par Bruxelles ? Une politique que les gens qui votent refusent, dans presque toute l'Europe, j'ai l'impression, et qui continue imperturbablement, plus ou moins dur, parce qu'il n'est du ressort de personne de la changer. Et comment dire que le peuple a voté, quand il n'y a que 42% des gens qui ont voté ou pu voter — et comment ne pas le dire, puisqu'il y a bien eu un vote, dans des circonstances déplorables ?

Parce que c'est un désastre, aussi, et tout autant, de voir la façon dont le gouvernement espagnol a répondu à la situation. Désastre de ceux

qui n'ont pas pris au sérieux la détermination des hommes au pouvoir aujourd'hui en Catalogne, alors qu'ils ont été amenés au parlement de Barcelone sur ce programme de l'indépendance — et qui, donc, ne sont pas allés voter, ou, puisque le référendum était objectivement illégal, ont donné des consignes d'abstention. Du coup, les seuls à aller voter ont été les partisans du « oui ».

Désastre de la répression policière du gouvernement de Madrid, qui est tombé dans le piège médiatique tendu par les leaders nationalistes : évidemment que le vote était illégal, et évidemment qu'il fallait laisser voter, parce qu'une urne confisquée vue à la télé devient dix urnes indépendantistes. Du coup, le référendum est devenu un plébiscite. Désastres de ces centaines de blessés.

Désastres de cette haine qui monte, des deux côtés... Désastre qu'il y ait, de facto, deux côtés. Désastre de voir aussi réapparaître un vocabulaire franquiste dans les contre-manifestations de Madrid, certes pas encore majoritaire, et de loin — mais bien présent. Avec cette joie fragile, pour l'instant, qu'il n'y a eu pas de morts. Mais on sait bien que quand les politiques jouent avec le feu, ils finissent toujours par faire tuer.

Je ne suis pas du tout certain que l'indépendantisme en Catalogne est le courant majoritaire. Mais la machine est lancée — de part et d'autre. Cette machine, je ne sais pas qui peut l'arrêter, je ne sais pas où elle pourra s'arrêter. Et, bien sûr, pas qu'en Catalogne.

FRIDAY, 6 OCTOBER 2017

Dream: I am at a conference and having breakfast with middle-aged women. I talk to a young female scholar who has written an exceptional book and I urge her to follow up on her intuitions. I mention her to my older women colleagues. I have arranged to meet with a well-known, whimsical intellectual whom I'll be seeing for the first time. It is time to go and see the secretive, eccentric figure. It may have required crossing Paris. Now I am in a kind of attic. His back is turned to me, he speaks softly, I don't know about what. Another shadowy figure is there, young, I don't know who it is. A paper bag of presents has been prepared for me. I'm surprised, "for me?" I leave the attic and walk through the streets (perhaps) while taking each item out of the bag and admiring it. There are several cards, sometimes folded, of different sizes, with collages, writing, and painting. There is also a booklet that may contain the same but I don't open it. I'm content to walk and enjoy the beautiful things in the bag.

Comment. I recognize two sources. One is a concern that has surfaced fairly recently about finishing and closing my projects in fiction, biography, and ancient history. This vague worry has aesthetic and ethical dimensions that are hard to dissociate: is my writing true, such that its structure and discourse call no attention to themselves? Is it needed or what is its purpose? The other origin is simply Callum's writing and drawing, that is, his profuse throwing of life and signs at the world and his long-to-come in-gathering. It was wrong to think of two roots or themes. There was but one, a question about the fitness and dignity of my life.

As I step out of the house, raincoat and umbrella on, the majestic oaks and maples above the grid of streets trigger a musing, perhaps a thought, about my walking, thinking, writing, teaching. Does it ease the breathing of students and readers, such that they may think of being in the world as an exhilarating adventure, as an infinite canvas for creation?

Reading the *NYRB* on labor and economic issues, I see that Tillie Olsen is mentioned in an aside of a piece by Diane Johnson on Grace Paley, "Post-modern Mom." In his review of a book by Van Parijs and Vanderborcht (*Basic income: a radical proposal for a free society and a sane economy* Harvard, 2017), Benjamin M. Friedman starts ominously:

The loss of jobs in a high-technology society—and, more than that, the downgrading of skills required and therefore of the wages paid for many of the jobs that remain—are likely to be the primary economic and social challenges facing the United States over the coming generation.

The problem is not the absence of jobs or tasks, but that they will be low skilled, low paid in regard to most expectations, and I would add, low dignity or even indignity that no amount of modern ethics (attempts to show respect to everyone) or even money can compensate for. In industry, "only 8 percent of the country's labor force works in manufacturing." High skill levels will still mean higher salaries, whether for steel workers (photo [10.1](#) taken today) or surgeons. The skill level of truck drivers at FedEx or UPS will be the same as that of McDonald's workers or Callum's at four: to carry packets up to the front door, then press an image to confirm delivery. So, driving, retail trade (where 15 million employees are still working), financial operations, will be automated. Only a few highly skilled employees and workers are needed and therefore, for a while at least, more highly compensated.

In the past two centuries, new technologies introduced new goods that were in demand or came in demand and were "naturalized". These



Figure 10.1 – Steel framing, *W Nine Mile and Planavon, Ferndale, MI*

past technologies required skilled workers and employees. Friedman is optimistic: “Over time some version of this process will presumably play out again.” Granted, complex new tasks are being created, but aren’t they all replicable? What is striking is that an enormous part of human work cannot easily be duplicated or algorithmed out, in spite of efforts to do so: infant care, education of children, care of people who are ill, weak, or in need of comfort and support... The needs do not fit the objectives of modern economics and yet have become the clear goal of any human economy worth its name. “The one job that everyone believes will multiply in the years ahead is nursing home attendant.”

What to do? More education? That looks like a losing proposition, given the high labor offer and the low demand. Income transfer program? The economic and political difficulties of a universal plan are too daunting at the moment, especially in the US.

SUNDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2017

Beautiful novel by the 2017 Nobel prize in literature, Ishiguro: *The remains of the day*. I was particularly interested in the discussion of the notion of dignity, something Stevens summarizes in his discussion with the doctor at the end of the book as not undressing oneself in public. More seriously, it is marked by the freedom to define and control one's behavior and thoughts, even those that others would rush to describe as undignified or slavish. Both Lord Darlington, even when turned into a tool of Nazi propaganda, and Stevens remain dignified, no matter the broken or unfulfilled end. The most tragic part of the story for me, then, was this barely acknowledged, systematic grinding of labor at its best and trust at its most devoted for politically fraught enterprises. It even encompassed the sacrifice of one's feelings and personal life for one's master, the acceptance of sadness and lack of fulfillment for the expansion of regal and imperial authority. Yet, this case of the lord and butler is not an either or, as Darlington shows how sensitive he can be when he sees his butler slighted by guests. There is a recognition of each other's worth. There remains the matter of Mrs Benn or Miss Kinton: what prevents Stevens the butler from declaring his love: his overwhelming formality and sense of propriety? His overriding ambition? His fanatic sense of obligation to the Darlington house?

MONDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2017

Large demonstration in Catalonia yesterday, perhaps 350,000 people, double or treble that number according to some participants. The images are extraordinary: hundreds of thousands of people reached for the Spanish flag as symbol of unity, while being well aware of its fraught history. Another demonstration in Madrid called for dialogue and cooperation: its flag was white. On which side would Casals be today? Or Per Denez? The present prime minister of Spain is a right winger who has long showed but contempt for autonomy and independent aspirations. Hate and scorn are now increasing on all sides. What will happen if, as is still possible, the parliament of Catalonia declares independence tomorrow (Tue) and starts moving toward the formation of a new state? Does Catalonia's government immediately follow with an application for membership in the EU? Not surprisingly, The German chancellor supports the prime minister of Spain. She calls for the dialogue that has been missing all along but declares she is against the independence of Catalonia, which means that the first item of a

real dialogue on independence is off the table. Her call also implies that Catalonia's application to EU membership is doomed from the start. Offices of several banks and large companies might move out of Catalonia. No discussion in the papers I read this morning of the economic pressures that global interests put on national states and their constituencies. Could Catalans in an independent Catalonia stay the global logic of labor exploitation, automation, and inequities better than Madrid and Brussels—which is not saying much—, or would their independence accelerate the logic at work? What is going to happen?

Reading Josephus' *AJ* 4.226–27, I'm reminded that the concept of timeliness (in season, in time, etc.) was paramount, especially regarding trees (olives, grapes, etc., in this passage):

for when nature has a force put upon her at an unseasonable time, the fruit is not proper for God, nor for the master's use; but let the owner gather all that is grown on the fourth ear, for then it is in its proper season. And let him that has gathered it carry it to the holy city, and spend that, together with the tithe of his other fruits, in feasting with his friends, with the orphans, and the widows. (Whiston's translation)

This inquiry started because a Hebrew College grad student wrote to ask what I think about the absence of the “foreigner” in Josephus' paraphrases of Deut 14:28–29 and 26:12–15. Here is the text of *AJ* 4:227:

καὶ συναγαγὼν εἰς τὴν ἱερὰν πόλιν κομιζέτω, καὶ σὺν τῇ δεκάτῃ τοῦ ἄλλου καρποῦ μετὰ τῶν φίλων εὐωχούμενος ἀναλισκέτω καὶ μετ' ὀρφανῶν καὶ χηρευουσῶν γυναικῶν. πέμπτου δὲ ἔτους κύριος ἔστω τὰ φυτὰ καρποῦσθαι. (Niese)

And here is the text of *AJ* 4:240:

Ταῖς δὲ δεκάταις ταῖς δυσίν, ἅς ἔτους ἐκάστου προεῖπον τελεῖν, τὴν μὲν τοῖς Λευίταις, τὴν δ' ἑτέραν πρὸς τὰς εὐωχίας, τρίτην πρὸς αὐταῖς κατὰ τὸ ἔτος τρίτον συμφέρειν εἰς διανέμησιν τῶν σπανιζόντων γυναιξί τε χήραις καὶ παισὶν ὀρφανοῖς:

True, “friends” here seems to avoid the issue. One possible reason is that Hebrew *גַּ* had long been translated by *προσῆλυτος* in the LXX. Why would they need support? Possible answer in examining where the word for stranger appears in Josephus?

This morning, Callum and Lucie stayed in their room talking and playing until about 8am. Later on during the day, they played a lot together,

for instance with plastic tokens they put on trucks and unloaded in turn, or building “eggs” or “houses” on the sofa. Lucie’s language is developing and she imitates Cal in all kinds of ways.

TUESDAY, 10 OCTOBER 2017

This is regarding Josephus’ views of the Torah laws regarding the stranger. He doesn’t seem to use the terms *πάροιχος*, a common LXX translation of *גַּל*, or *προσήλυτος* as far as I can tell after checking Niese’s text of *AJ* on Perseus. He does mention strangers in an earlier passage of *AJ* 4.234 on gleaning laws but uses *ξένοι*, not *πάροιχοι* or *προσήλυτοι*. I wonder if Feldman or Goodman can be helpful.¹³ It is tempting to look for a political explanation, namely that when he writes his *Antiquities* after the war, “residents” and “foreigners” are suspect and can be safely left out. To show that Josephus had his own reasons not to mention “strangers” would require examining his attitude to foreigners in the entire *AJ*. I suspect the result would be that Josephus had an ambiguous attitude that much depended on the understanding he had of his readership. Yet it may well be that the omission is simply a mistake. After all, he switches the order of the rest of the text (orphan and widow), and doesn’t mention Levites. The more I think about it, the more complex the problem seems to be.

So, what were Josephus’ reasons for not mentioning “strangers,” if it was not simply forgetfulness? In regard to this aspect—Josephus’ occasional carelessness—Naomi Cohen has written on his interpretation and paraphrase of the bible. She concluded that he is rather like a story-teller until book 6 of *AJ*, but follows the text fairly closely from that point on.¹⁴ So, it would be more likely that a contemporary “outlook” would have slipped in Josephus’ paraphrases in the first 6 books of *AJ*.

As for the attitude of other Jews regarding foreigners (whether these Jews were Judaeans, Galileans, lived in cities of Roman Palestine, or in other cities of the Mediterranean Sea), I would venture that they were both tense and subdued, as Judaea had been conquered again. Messianic ideas went through a period of tense revisions, I would think. The strength of the feelings is obvious since it took another war, even more violent—with more Roman military power needed to put it down—to repress the Bar Kokhba revolt. That war did dampen the political aspect of messianic aspirations

13. FELDMAN, *Josephus’s interpretation of the Bible*; GOODMAN, *Mission and conversion*.

14. COHEN, “Josephus and scripture.”

and forced them to take new turns.

An argument by Theissen is that Galilee, like other regions, was taking off economically, and that this development triggered a crisis of values.¹⁵ The kingdom of God, based on the divine promises inscribed in the Torah, was invoked by Jesus and others as a reality in the making that stood against the politics of the day and their demands for a perpetual patient wait for the promise. The kingdom of God is not a futuristic, eschatological event. Now, thinking about this basic issue with the gospel of John in mind, I'm struck how political and historical the author of the GJ is, in the sense that the concept of the "hour" is offering the same view as that found in the synoptics regarding the timeliness and urgency of the kingdom of God. Not a utopia, of the kind that a stern, critical history eventually demolishes (Mumford). But an immanent history in the making that steadfastly refuses to be drawn into political arguments on transcendence and the proper conditions of its contemplation or even its realization.

WEDNESDAY, 11 OCTOBER 2017

This morning, I heard Cal and Lucie getting up around 7am, talking quietly with each other for about fifteen minutes. Rémi was up but Callum was reluctant to let him go to work. Our return to California was also on his mind as he asked me if we were leaving today. Soon he was in bed again with Amy, talking and writing. He writes words like bunny, door, go, in capital letters (the branches of the N are inverted, though).

THURSDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2017

For the second time of its history, the US stomps out of the UNESCO. It was quickly followed by Israel. The recent semi-secret vote on Hebron as world heritage site, and the present vote on the directorship, which is likely to go to a Qatari, were the superficial triggers. More consequential: the US are withdrawing in chaotic fashion from their position in the world as undisputed power and hardening their military positions, or resolving to do so. Still a retreat.

15. TIWALD, *Das Frühjudentum und die Anfänge des Christentums: ein Studienbuch*, 245, commenting on THEISSEN, *Die Jesusbewegung: Sozialgeschichte einer Revolution der Werte*.

FRIDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2017

An eclectic attempt to defend the historicity of the exodus, its traditional dating, and an early date of the Biblical book (earlier than Achaemenid period) appears in a new collection of essays.¹⁶ What to do in the absence of Egyptian records from the fifteenth or thirteenth centuries (dates calculated retroversely)? The authors of the book of essays believe that memories of such events can be trusted. The arguments can be linguistic (borrowings from Egyptian), but how to avoid the possibility of earlier or later borrowings? About the long-discussed name of Moses: problem of the Egyptian sibilant “s”, raised by Kenneth Kitchen. Richard Hess prefers a West-Semitic origin. I agree with Pieter de Vries, the reviewer (*RBL* 10/2017), who says that wordplay must also be considered. But when he defends an earlier date for the event—the fifteenth century—based on calculations of details given in the bible, for instance 1 Kgs 6:1, about the starting of the construction of the temple 480 years after the exodus, I cannot follow him. The number itself is used rhetorically, and there are several reasons that point to the legendary aspect of the story of Solomon.

Another linguistic argument is brought up by Joshua Berman: the “mighty hand” or “outstretched arm” of Yahweh could be influenced by New Kingdom’s vocabulary. Rendsburg argues in his essay that the account of the plagues in Exod 11–14 benefits from a wholistic reading rather than from the usual source analysis. De Vries concludes that the potential unity of this passage would support the historicity of the event. I don’t see how literary unity or lack of it does any such thing. Smooth arrangements of memory are usually taken to be inventions.

K. Lawson Younger Jr argues that the reconstruction of the origins of the Aramaeans in the same zone provides a model for reconstructing the origin of Israel and its relationship with Canaan. Invasion, migration, and symbiosis (?) are not exclusive. So, no contradiction in the biblical account. I note the number of jumps (comparison between history and story, absence of contradiction taken to be sufficient to accept the story—I wouldn’t trust him as a lawyer).

Finally, an argument about the use of the *hifil* of אצו, which is taken to be a mark of the exilic or post-exilic nature of the whole book. The *comparandum* is the use of the *hifil* of עלה by the “historical” prophets: Amos,

16. HOFFMEIER, MILLARD, and RENDSBURG, “*Did I not bring Israel out of Egypt?*”: *Biblical, archaeological, and egyptological perspectives on the Exodus narratives.*

Hosea, Micah. De Vries accepts the speculative solution by Hwang to what they see as a problem, namely that Hosea's use of הָלַע would be polemical.

This evening, as Callum happened to play with Amy's phone after she videotaped him, he discovered a new program called "memories" that mixes pictures and provides music. After seeing pictures of himself at age 3, he began to cry and wanted to go back to this time. They were pictures of a family outing taken at a park and river one year ago (he had a chance to go back to the same place this year, on October 18, see page 295). I'm not sure what picture triggered the emotion, and I can only speculate about the role of music and the particular choice of photos made by the algorithm. As I was near him, I was very surprised to see his face suddenly go sad. He didn't want to grow up. The crying lasted a good amount of time, interrupted by moments of peace. At bedtime, after a bath and quite a bit of bantering and excitement, he went back to this memory and cried again. Quiet finally, at almost 9pm...

SATURDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2017

This morning, I heard Lucie wake up at 5 or so and went immediately to her room as I was concerned she would be bothering Callum. I found her behind the door. She didn't object when I suggested to her to go back to bed with tadkozh. She resisted a bit but soon asked me to do "X marks the spot" again. I fell asleep. Later, I discovered that Callum actually got up at 6 and joined Bahbish in bed. Quiet breakfast and play at 8am. We are thinking about going to the park before it begins to rain, but Leslie thinks the grass needs to be cut, as it would be the last time it is done before the winter. We all work outside. A bit before 10, time to get ready to go to the last meeting of little footballers! Cal doesn't want to go, stomps his feet, ends up with time out, cries and shouts some more. They go, Amy and I take a walk. It begins to rain. Later, as it is still raining, the gang comes back from soccer. Cal has dropped all his clothes—all!—and we learn he had a very good time at the field. Mood up: Yeah! We take a puddle walk all together. Lucie likes to go flic floe in the *flaques d'eau* or throw *petits cailloux* in them. Back home, we enjoy a wonderful lunch (potatoes, sausages, avocado, omelette à la Rémi). Time comes to take a nap. Callum is very sad to see us and especially Bahbish return to California. Surprise however: he'll be able to go after his nap and use the money Bahbish leaves with Leslie to get the rake and broom he saw at the children's store on our walk and that we couldn't buy then as we had no money. And there is a secret reserve of Southwest

peanuts for afterwards too. Further, there is a calendar with our return dates shown in bright colors. Still, it's hard to say goodbye. No crisis however, just moments of deep sadness.

Very good piece by Sudemann (?) in the *NYT* today on the internal dissolution of the Republican party. Its acme came under the presidency of Bush II who ended up creating a foreign and domestic policy mess that nobody wanted to own. The process, however, strengthened the Republican administration in thinking they were unmovable. The answer to this for the Republican hardcore voters was to go for the wackiest possible representatives and president.

MONDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2017

Dream. I meet Amy somewhere in the US. She is guiding Donald Nicholl who is near blind. A big guy, an ex-student of his from Michigan (no details on the exact university: U of M?) is begging him to give him a pass for a course he took long ago. Donald asks for my advice. Follows a muddled conversation with the ex-student about the seriousness of plagiarism or faking one's name. Very soon afterwards, when I'm again alone, I meet Peter Kirkup, who doesn't know that Donald is back. I don't tell him and wonder how to handle the situation. I encourage Peter to get a coffee for both of us, he goes and stands in a long line. Meanwhile, I intend to call Amy to ask for suggestions about the situation. Peter is still in the long, busy line, waiting for his turn. I find myself moving along and noticing someone dressed in white who is trying to get a bus to go back to the area where I met Donald and Amy. He runs after a vehicle and misses it. I find myself in a throng of people, looking for my nexus phone and finding in my pockets two pieces of radio equipment—a two-way radio for instance—but no phone. This is how far I got. I don't get back to Donald and Amy in the dream.

Today: re-draft the Cana paper, at long last? In the hot afternoon, I began cleaning the siding of the house, sand rough spots and flaking paint, bead up or spackle holes, and prime. Painting tomorrow.

TUESDAY, 17 OCTOBER 2017

Lakoff and others have worked on the metaphor of the body as container. The body as a corpus, not the negative of mind and soul, but the container of mind, soul, words, emotions, thoughts... perhaps also blood (life) and water? What is inside it is wondrous, as in Alcibiades' image regarding

Socrates. Its skin is breachable, as pots are, though perhaps not stone jars? The Cana story then suggests that the body-container contains life beyond one's expectations. One can draw an effervescent liquid from it.

Skeptic Hugh Trevor-Roper, master of Peterhouse at Cambridge, kept the Aeneid in his prayer book and used it for sermons. This tidbit about a highly selective culture, not inhibited by self-doubt, makes me think of Chanoine le Fell and his quoting of "le poète", by which he meant Homer, in his short introductions to out morning meditations at the seminary.

George Saunders got the Booker Prize for his *Lincoln in the Bardo*. His stories in *Tenth of December* have colored my views of Ferndale and other Michigan places. I was surprised to hear that Paul Auster's *4321* made the short list. John Berger's speech upon receiving the price for *G* was scathing of its origins—the Bookers started a sugar company in Guyana that used slaves. He donated the money.

I learn about Ruskin's early education in the *TLS* of September 29. One of my earliest memories that will serve as counterpart of his life in nature and early traveling with his father and mother was the gathering of the eggs laid by independent-minded hens on the *talus* behind the house, which was covered with primroses in the spring. There were also the intricate hedges and *balliers*, meadows, and the mythic little stream that was our wilderness, at the bottom of impeccable fields.

In his new large biography, Philippe Denan's thrust is that the life of Montaigne and even his *Essays* were dominated or framed rather by his deeply anchored effort to ensure his place in the aristocratic world of politics, perhaps in his case as a substitute for the lack of sons (one daughter of six survived). The reviewer doesn't dispute the idea. He simply juxtaposes the sheer complexity of Montaigne's world and reflections. I'm struck by his account of his critics: his possible ignorance should be no crime. As for his reasonings, he "can scarcely vouch for them" to himself and is not satisfied by them.

THURSDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2017

Conference at the Digital Art Research Center on our computerized world, artificial intelligence, an ecology of the mind, and more. Discussion about the network nature of the mind, its already being part of a much larger milieu and not this superb self that classical philosophy seemed to entertain for such a long time. I'm surprised to hear that Gregory Bateson is back in favor with his *Ecology of the mind*. The political aspect of the discussion had

two sides as far as I could tell. One was on the narrowing down of human functions that the ubiquitous use of computers and smart phones seems to encourage, the self-tooling of humans, the farming of individual minds and selves for profit. This farming—by yoking email and search engine to each other—can go quite far in collecting bits of everyone’s life and organizing or shaping them in profitable ways in the long distant future (prediction engines teamed with memory of past searches). The question of profit for what was not asked. Or why the legal shape of corporations should endure since the early nineteenth century. The other side of the political discussion was about cooperation, ways to resurrect it, the difficulties of our recent history (socialism a dirty word).

Lunch at Eda B.’s place today, with neighbors and friends. Eda asked me about my project. I found it difficult to explain its nature to a small company with little background on the topic.

FRIDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2017

I finished putting the first coat of paint on the southern side of the house. Amy has begun sorting the boxes in the garage. We are planning to put a staircase in the garage and finish a room above it, with access to a bath room and the attic. We also plan to finish the attic (plaster board), and perhaps put a floor above the back room.

Reading KIPPENBERG¹⁷ regarding the political organization of ancient Israel: the texts do not justify Weber’s view that ancient Judaism arose from a pact between “pariah” groups (nomads, artisans, merchants, and priests) and warrior groups. Israel was not founded like the Roman republic as a society and state of landowners but was based on two principles: tribal affiliation and belief. The compact was not between landowners and landless peasantry but an alliance of all Israelites (promised a land for all) in contradistinction with the Canaanite lords (landlords). The essential question for a proper history of the whole exilic period is the role played by the story of Exodus—the reshaping of the people through a narrative of hope—in resisting the elite centrifugal currents that will become so important under the Ptolemies and Seleucids. Kippenberg’s ideas are very helpful in analyzing the evolution of the situation.

17. KIPPENBERG, *Religion und Klassenbildung im antiken Judäa*, 11.

SATURDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2017

I put the second coat on the southern side of the house in about two hours, as Terra Nova volunteers were setting the Whitleys' garden with new soil and plants. It looks very good now. There was a wonderful block party (more like half a block), with young and old mixing it, and simple picnic food.

We got a picture of Callum (fig. 10.2) who went today to the park and river where he had such a good time last year and that an infamous "memory" by Apple transformed in an unsurpassable, overpowering souvenir!

MONDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2017

Yesterday afternoon, I went to Dorothea's place to look at the books left by Gary Lease who passed away ten years ago. She gave me as many books I could take away, all in German: a complete edition of Weber, letters or journals by Jacob Burckhardt, V. Klemperer, Rosenzweig, Scholem, Schalom Ben-Chorin, many books on the history of German Jews, and a recent encyclopaedia of gnosticism. There are larger parts of his library, however, which should be in the hands of specialists of Schoeps (many papers and books), of the history of modern Germany, or canon law experts. Perhaps to be placed in university departments interested in that sort of things, but not at UCSC.

About the already-always book on the history of ancient Israel (a portrait...) by Dever, Ziony Zevit writes:

Beyond the Texts is the most significant, original synthesis of archaeological and biblical data relevant for understanding Israelite history produced in decades. Dever's devastating critique of mistaken and misleading assertions by some scholars and his evaluations of what is and is not relevant for advancing scholarly discourses establishes this book as a bedrock that will make yet-to-be-written twenty-first-century histories of ancient Israel possible.¹⁸

I'm working at fulfilling that last wish and don't find Dever's old recriminations helpful. His critique of the so-called minimalists doesn't secure any solidity for his own historical views, on the contrary. The title of the book alone is misleading. What is to be found "beyond the texts?" And do we need another portrait, another frozen, idealized picture?

18. DEVER, *Beyond the texts*.



Figure 10.2 – Callum, 18 October 2017

I've been reading Victor Klemperer's journal (*Tagebücher 1933–1941* and *Tagebücher 1942–45*). It has many philological discussions on the evolution of German that were the basis for his *LTI: lingua tertii imperii* (1947).¹⁹ As Camus said in *Poésie 44* (1944): “mal nommer un objet, c'est ajouter

19. I don't have Jean-Pierre Faye's *Les langages totalitaires* at hand (1973; 2d ed. 2004): does he mention Klemperer?

au malheur de ce monde.” American English is evolving under the kind of political pressures that existed under the nazis. Fortunately, no economic fears of the kind that existed in Germany in the twenties and thirties. Yet, our president speaks of “great victories to come” as Hitler did. Hitler talked about “meine Soldaten” while Trump mentions “his generals.” Cracks and shifts in our language—nothing surprising in itself—worrisome, though, when they reveal it to be a dried, thin shell that can let us fall at any given moment into the lava flow.

WEDNESDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2017

It took a few hours yesterday to clean the eastern side of the house, scraping the flaking paint, caulk, etc. Today, about six hours painting the windows and trim (a lot of it). The “bone” color should go faster tomorrow.

To the divine function of the king (savior, benevolent, divine), Kippenberg adds a philosophical justification: middle Platonism and neo-Pythagoreanism that promote the king as divine image.²⁰ I would add for the notion of order the idea of return to a golden age, or to an approximation of it. A look backwards therefore as a political justification that was rather opposed to the biblical notion of promise of a future dispensation. See the Hellenistic view of ages of humanity. About some of this in the Hellenistic period, compare the ponderous book by BAZZANA.²¹ I see the apocalyptic visions as projections of another possible order, with proximity built in (and negotiated). So, against the Hellenistic political view of authority, the Biblical or Jewish resistance insists on return to the ancestral law. The notions of fair treatment and brotherhood are based on these developed notions of the Persian period. I agree that “Die beschwörung der väterlichen Gesetze wurde zum revolutionären Akt.”²²

What of the messianic response? It comes to a head in 66–73, in two main groups, Zealots and Sicarii. Kippenberg notes that the first action of the Sicarii was to burn the debt archives (why were they kept in the temple?), while the Zealots sought first of all to reestablish the purity of the cult. Two sorts of people were behind those groups: the lower clergy and the indebted peasantry. An old story was being repeated, since Nehemiah, the Maccabees, and under Herod the Great.

20. KIPPENBERG, *Religion und Klassenbildung im antiken Judäa*, 134.

21. BAZZANA, *Kingdom and bureaucracy*.

22. KIPPENBERG, *Religion und Klassenbildung im antiken Judäa*, 135.

THURSDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2017

Cleaning of northern side of the house with brush and water, scraping, then took Amy to the 17 bus. She texted me about an hour later, from Palo Alto where she was waiting for Gayne to come and pick her up. Tomorrow: finish the eastern side, more scraping on the northern and western sides, and begin painting these walls also.

Brooks (NYT): “The profound equality of every individual was an idea that flowed directly from the Hebrew Bible.” Hard to prove. Brooks follows Jonathan Sacks and is presumably thinking that the Sinai covenant treated people at the bottom of the mountain as if they were not only universal citizens but also classless. It would take indirect paths, including the grafting of the Jesus story and Greek philosophy, to get us there. Brooks is looking for a new Moses, like Hardt at UCSC (“Where have all the leaders gone?” was the title of his conference).

SATURDAY, 28 OCTOBER 2017

I finished painting the eastern and northern sides of the house. We are in Palo Alto where Blaise took us to a party organized by his cycling friends at a luxurious home in Menlo Park. I brought a couple breads I bought this morning at Compagnon in Santa Cruz. Blaise had made a salad and a pork dish (boiled the Dutch way?). Tonight we met with Aviva and Israel who just came from Israel to meet their new granddaughter Maya. The parents, engineers at Google, live in Mountain View. We spent some time at a very noisy pastry, then took a leisurely walk around an eerily quiet, moonlit Mountain View.

MONDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2017

Miller’s recent contrarian book on baths, stone vessels and purity debates concerning Roman Galilee has been reviewed by *RBL* (Matthew J. Grey). I quote a passage of the review:²³

Chapter 5 (153–83) considers the origins, functions, and interpretation of stone vessels, which first appeared in the Herodian period and remained in use well after 70 (even if they gradually became fewer in number). Miller again argues that we should not impose rabbinic

23. MILLER, *At the intersection of texts and material finds: stepped pools, stone vessels, and ritual purity among the Jews of Roman Galilee*.

literature onto our understanding of these vessels and that, contrary to the traditional assumption, their origins may have had nothing to do with ritual purity concerns. Instead, Miller suggests that their initial popularity was influenced by stylistic tastes attending Herodian construction projects and that (as with stepped pools) their later ritual uses in rabbinic circles grew out of their more common usage.

And further about Miller's view that stone vessels were a by-product of Herodian temple-building activities and that I found skewed already in his article on the subject:²⁴

These include his suggestions that stone vessels should not be viewed as a Jewish identity marker but were originally a stylistic by-product of Herodian construction (In that case, why do we not find them in comparable quantities at contemporary non-Jewish sites?);

On stepped pools, see also MILLER.²⁵ What Miller is right to emphasize is that the practices of rabbis in the fourth or fifth centuries AD should not be blindly applied to situations, objects, texts from the first century. Secondly, the role of priests already before the fall of the temple but certainly after 70 CE should be viewed as not necessarily as prominent as is usually the case in the scholarship, though Miller goes too far in this case. Finally, one has to be careful in using archaeological items in raising ethnographic and political issues. One should try to find some kind of measure between the all too clearly defined "sects" (Neusner) and a more centrally defined and shared Judaism (Sanders).

TUESDAY, 31 OCTOBER 2017

Reading Gauchet again.²⁶ Challenging and thoughtful, also repetitive. One feels the ideas could be expounded in a more compact way.

24. MILLER, "Some observations on stone vessel finds and ritual purity in light of Talmudic sources."

25. MILLER, "Stepped pools and the non-existent monolithic "Miqveh"."

26. GAUCHET, *Le nouveau monde*.

11 November

THURSDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2017

I edited my lectures on early Christianity because Nathaniel D. is thinking of teaching the course—an important course in the first-year curriculum of history students (or should be)—and asked me about sharing syllabus and other ideas.

At John's, with Gary and Barry, I listened to a strange discussion on the historicity of Jesus' resurrection between an evangelical professor and "l'agnostique de service", Bart Ehrman, who was sharp yet managed to remain benevolent. The talk was on Christian Radio and the moderator was one-sided. The main argument of the evangelical professor was that there was a core of facts on whose existence all scholars agreed, and that the gospels' or Pauline letters' passages on the resurrection were therefore to be believed by rational minds, in spite of the differences in the accounts, differences that didn't bother him and could be chalked up to "elasticity," a concept he repeatedly used. He had three facts, he said, that were accepted by everyone: one, that Jesus died on the cross. Two, Paul in his 1 Corinthians 15 reported on the "fact" of Jesus' death and resurrection. Three, there were a number of testimonies and visions reported in the gospels and Acts. Ehrman was quick to correct him in two ways. One, the facticity of Jesus' death didn't translate to that of the resurrection. Two, the account by Paul in 1 Cor and the other reports of visions were one single argument, namely that the tradition early on reported these stories.

SUNDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2017

I was interviewed by Avery Weinman of the *Leviathan* UCSC paper about my recollections of the June war between Israel and neighboring nations.

MONDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2017

Note from 2008 (?) on forgiveness according to Jankélévitch: it is a dated event; a gracious gift; a relationship marked by passion. These three things remain invisible outside, except through the absence of tension or war. I would add the appearance of irrationality, as the mounting passion invokes codes of conduct, the law, reason narrowly defined. Forgiveness leaves traces that are hidden. It transforms in depth the people involved and their relations to each other, without advertising itself. It *creates* some room for others to breathe and create or expand because it destroys or at least relaxes the bonds and calculations of history and nature.

TUESDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2017

Long conversation with N. Deutsch this morning at the Abbey café on the importance of the history of early Christianity and ways of approaching this topic, broader views of human history. He inclines to a macro-view of history that would subsume and deflect the narrow, “presentist” approach of our humanities. Christianity is perceived to be a European phenomenon that caused what are considered to be the worst horrors of history. Modern states, colonization, exclusive and domineering scientific developments, environmental degradation, past and present injustices, resort to extreme violence, all of these and more are blamed on the white man. Everyone is developing their own ethnic, fractured, view of the world. To me, the task or solution to the presentist narrowness is not so much to locate the whole span of Judaism and Christianity as a brief development in the history of agrarian societies since the neolithic period—though that too is of interest to me—, but rather to have a deeper understanding of Christianity and what it means to live in a post-Christian world. It is striking that many ethical claims regarding society or environment are presented as if they had no background or origin whatsoever and floated down to modern, miraculously enlightened people. They have a history, including our attempt to do away with it. I tell him a bit about my view of the evolution of labor, logic, technological development: we course through ancient, mediaeval, and early modern periods. He thinks that is the book I should write. It makes me think that my history of labor and gods needs substantial introduction and conclusion or afterwords.

SATURDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2017

We're getting ready to go to Baltimore, Boston, and Detroit. Video call with Callum and Lucie: Callum wants me to teach French to California Bunny. I oblige and imitate a horrible American accent when impersonating bunny, then shake my head in despair, which sends Callum in fits of laughter that Lucie imitates. We use Bunny Bleu to help, or I ask Callum to give the correct pronunciation, but nothing doing. Peals of laughter. We set to write the Hebrew, Greek, and "English" alphabets, or at least the capitals. I have Bunny draw each letter with a marker on a small pad, show it to Callum, who sometimes doesn't wait and shouts, "I got it!"

WEDNESDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2017

In the public library of Catonsville, south of Bayle an ti Mhoir (my spelling of the Irish is suspect). Gayne was waiting for us at the airport and had prepared a very tasty late dinner of shrimps and salad. We had a chocolate mousse cake (smallish slice), even, against our firm resolution not to have desserts while travelling. It took about 35 minutes this morning to come to Catonsville. I saw some grand houses on the way, good roads, little public transportation, except on memory plaques. Downtown Catonsville: a couple cafes, law offices, investment and tax offices, four or five churches (Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Messianic, etc.), hair salons, some specialty stores. No hardware store, large food market, clothing..., All done by internet, I presume: delivery trucks are ubiquitous. I find a bagel place that seems Jewish in tone, at least on the outside, and am served by a Korean young man. Many of the small markets and cafes in the area are managed and owned by Korean Americans. Baltimore's crime statistics are dismal: 344 murder victims this year.

THURSDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 2017

At Atwater's, an old-fashion café. I'm upstairs and look out over the main street of Catonsville to a bright cloudy sky. Today's *Washington Post* carries stories about tomorrow's opening of the new Museum of the Bible located not far from the Washington Mall. Its location alone near the heart of political and military power is enough to dismiss its claim to biblical inerrancy. What museum would Jesus have advised the Green family to build with their Hobby Lobby money? Would he have said something like: "Invite politicians and wealthy people at 2,500\$ a pop and have a party tonight

in my memory?” The inerrancy the museum claims for the Bible is code for the exercise of power over minds and bodies, a rearguard action that actually reinforces the view that the modern American world has of Christianity as one of its cultures. By making a claim on US minds at the center of its political world, its effort to repeat a master narrative becomes a sorry demonstration of scientific and modern impotence. The reasoning behind the museum is entirely based on the notion of origin and priority of a certain kind of “antiquity” instead of principle in its logical, critical, scientific sense. By dint of location and timing, it is trapped into a modern version of the Exodus story. In this story, it is not Moses who leads the people into a risky acceptance of a covenant without kings, On the contrary, it is Trump who acts like a pharaoh and who calls for a return to the mythic golden age of divinized kingship. Do the supporters of this new museum realize what they are doing? Don’t they see that they are parting the Red Sea in order to return to the country of flesh pots?

FRIDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2017

On our way to Boston. Politics of the day: a tax package that deepens the deficit by lowering taxes on corporations and rich individuals made it through the house more quickly than expected. Many economists doubt that companies’ access to more cash will create more jobs.

Yesterday evening, at the SF airport, Blaise and Liz learned that their flight to Wisconsin was cancelled. They were very disappointed and called us as they thought we could get together. The company simply reimbursed them, no other compensation.

Tonight, we just learned from Blaise that Liz got a job offer from Udacity and decided to go visit her parents for a few days next week. We may meet in Michigan later on this coming week.

SATURDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2017

The session on poverty in the biblical world this morning was excellent. Douglas Knight, the first speaker, went through some of the themes he has so clearly laid out in his book on law:¹ difference between urban and rural, rich and poor, in terms of law (written rhetorical legal tradition vs custom traditions of more rural areas), marriage, property, slavery, poverty. He re-

1. KNIGHT, *Law, power, and justice in ancient Israel*.

ferred to the so-called “humanitarian laws” of Deut 15. Note: these texts would have a different import if/when they were issued by kings (in this form or another). Kings pursued their interest in tamping down social inequities, at least to some degree, and the credit or trust they received from people they “protected” (or “saved” in imitation of the gods?) presumably translated into services to the monarchy, Changes in the military and political context brought about changes in the religious framework and in particular the so-called “humanitarian laws.”

Sam Adams gave the next paper, on the ambiguous nature of sapiential and apocalyptic literature. Yet, they are valuable sources regarding ancient thinking about economic matters. How does one explain the interest in afterlife and the notion of judgment? What were the social locations of the authors and did that drive an agenda? Marginal or central? Can apocalyptic literature be considered revolutionary, after Weber (check), or was it a new ideological tool to calm and dissipate people’s impatience? Regarding some of these sapiential texts, Adams’ view is that there is some candor, vs Boer who thinks it was a manipulation by elites. I think (with Boer but different model) that all of this literature and its concerns should be replaced in a structural model of the ancient economy. About the mention of poverty in *4QInstruction*, what vocabulary is used? What kind of poverty was this? Immortality claimed in these DSS documents: pursue that idea. Must we return to the ideas of Paul Hanson about the apocalypics? See Dan 7–12 and 1 Enoch to get a sense once again of the stakes.

My main thought about this paper is that the situation under empires may have accelerated the social differentiation that was kept within bounds by the indigenous kings. The central administration of the Achaemenids and Ptolemies (differently) of course needed local elites, and didn’t need to feel fear from their greater wealth accumulation. It was not a danger for them at all, whereas they needed to control their own ethnic elite families.

Kelly gave an analysis of Revelation and the historical framework given by visions. Last paper was by Dick Horsley, who once more insisted that the Jesus movement was inscribed in a long history of resistance focussed on collective action aiming at independence, with basic HB stories such as exodus esp. in the memory of people. I would add: transformed and rehearsed as well as reinforced by liturgy and calendar, as well as the modest use of specific markers in food, family life, funeral customs, etc. On this background, Dick builds the portrait of a Jesus who catalyzed resistance via the Mosaic renewal theme and its declaration of salvation. It was a political and economic movement. The moral economy of Galilean peasantry was

centered on making the communities viable (pressure of debt at all levels). The gospel tradition makes it clear that the needs of neighbors came first (I would frame it more broadly). The goal is restoration, fertility and abundance, yet through persecutions. It is the renewal of Israel's storied hope of liberation, already in evidence in prophetic literature (Jeremiah). As for the temple episode, Horsley doesn't see it as a cleaning but a condemnation of its role in economic exploitation.

The questions by K. Murphy (Santa Clara) were illuminating. For Knight: why does the Hebrew Bible not carry stories of revolts? Were the Hebrew Bible authors in the elite? Even so, is it prudent to suppose a dichotomy between elites and the poor here? Isn't it possible that even an ideological production of rhetorical law has an indirect connection to the real problems of the people (even though they had their own "parallel" customs and ways). The ideologically-driven texts would still try to say something about real conditions. Weren't kings' interests sometimes aligned with those of the poor (indeed)?

To Adams: what was the location of the writers of sapiential literature? Since we observe a deepening social and economic differentiation under empires, isn't it possible that elites (priests and scribes?) developed a theological argument to resist the social developments?

To Horsley: if Jesus' movement was revolutionary, why was Jesus the only one arrested? Why tax collectors in the movement? A critique: the temple was and remained at the center of people's piety. The story of the widow and the mite shows this clearly. I would add the fact of James and the saints being centered on the temple. Also, there is no reference in the gospels to covenant law (?). Isn't a hybrid view possible (between protecting interests and promoting independence and salvation)? About Jesus' times: weren't they fairly calm (twenties and thirties)?

At the same time as this session, there was a discussion of the concept of class in the Social Scientific Criticism of the NT session presided by Sarah Rollens.² James Crossley reflected upon the urbanization of Galilee: was there a change in the material standard of living under Antipas? Rightly to my mind, Crossley asks about the notions of perception and the range of

2. See ROLLENS, *Framing social criticism in the Jesus movement: the ideological project in the Sayings Gospel Q*; short account in ROLLENS, "Conceptualizing justice in Q: narrative and context"; and also in her reviews of FIENSY and HAWKINS, *The Galilean economy in the time of Jesus*. See further her review of JOSEPH, *Jesus, Q, and the Dead Sea Scrolls: A Judaic approach to Q*.

reactions, from reactionary to utopian, and a critique of “pre-existing relationships of exploitation.” Anthony Keddie examines the concept of class via the mortuary practices described or alluded to in Matthew: Gadarene demoniac, critique of scribes and pharisees, and Jesus’ burial.

In the afternoon, a more theoretical paper on theorizing (re-theorizing) premodern exchange by Joseph Manning. He notes that trust-creating institutions would have had a very important role in ancient exchange. Seems to mix everything at both ends, meaning the concepts that may have operated in ancient markets, as well as the collection of modern economic theories he wishes to bring to bear on the ancient situation.

Later on in the afternoon, I went to the session devoted to the new book on christianity as an ideological enabler of ancient exploitation. It would do that through land tenure (exploitation of land via debt?), colonization (city dominating chôra), and slavery. As Murphy commented later on, of course any surplus was “produced” by maximizing debt and labor exploitation (slavery, esp. in cities?). I found her much less incisive than this morning in the session with Knight et al, and much more accommodating here. We don’t seem to have left Kautsky behind yet, in spite of the new clothing (regulation theory). Why would slave trade be central to the development of markets? Importance of animals in a proper picture of agriculture: of course!

A little before 11am, I went by the OUP stand to see if Steve Wiggins, an editor, would be there. I had texted him in the (unlikely) event he would have some time for discussing my project this weekend. I didn’t see him but saw a young dominican when I was on my way to a coffee in the back of the exhibition hall. I said “bonjour,” and discovered they were, or at least one was, from the École Biblique. They had a stand for Études Bibliques and Peeters. I explained who I was and my double connection to the school as auditeur libre in 1966–68 and as being from the same Breton village as Jean-Jacques Pérennès. The assistant director (I didn’t catch his name) took a picture of my name tag and face as I didn’t have a card... The author of a recent book on Osée and the use of metaphors in the ancient world told me JJ lost his brother to cancer and his father Jean also passed away. His mother is still among us (Anne as we called her, Madame Pérennès for us children).

In the afternoon, there was a paper on Jeremiah and Judah by Carly Crouch that I missed. It argues that the concept of Judah evolves in Jeremiah in reaction to the destruction of Judah’s institutions in 586 BCE and following “the identity implications of colonial domination and internal displacement” (language from the abstract of the paper).

I also miss an important paper by Pakkala on the post-monarchic composition of the Deuteronomy. The book's success answered the concerns of a templeless, stateless, and kingless society, while indicating new possibilities. He presented the main arguments for this dating as well as the counterarguments and alternative theories, already presented in part in a 2009 article.³

SUNDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2017

After meeting with the Dominicans from St-Etienne at Peeters' stand, I decided to write directly to Jean-Jacques who answered this morning:

Gildas,

Quelle surprise de te lire en ce dimanche matin à Jérusalem !

Nos routes se sont passablement éloignées et voilà qu'elles se croisent. Je te savais aux USA. SI je comprends bien, tu enseignes toujours. Moi, j'ai repris du service comme directeur de l'Ecole biblique, poste très inattendu pour moi, qui m'a probablement été confié en raison de ce que j'ai fait avant : 15 ans de responsabilité à la tête de l'IDEO (Institut dominicain d'études orientales) du Caire.

Je n'ai guère de plaisir à vivre dans ce pays si peu heureux, contrairement à l'Egypte plus pauvre, mais chaleureuse. En revanche, l'Ecole biblique est un lieu passionnant et les 3 membres de l'EBAF qui sont à la SBL t'en donneront une idée. Si tu viens en Israël l'an prochain, ce sera une joie de te revoir.

amitiés

Our meeting (the group on poverty and the Hebrew Bible? Is that its name?) went very well. We met at le Bar Boulud, a paradoxical choice, chosen for its convenience. The price was actually the same as at the convention center, I realized. My fellow members were Matthew Coomber, Diana Swancutt, and Crystal Hall.

New marxist view of early christianity by BOER and PETERSON.⁴ The language of *régulation* and *régime* replaces that of mode of production. Two initial reactions after skimming the book. The first one is about the role of debt in tenure regime (?). Three structural features would explain its universal existence and nature. a) it forces people to work (I would add:

3. PAKKALA, "The date of the oldest edition of Deuteronomy."

4. BOER and PETERSON, *Time of troubles. A new economic framework for early Christianity*.

very hard and with little supervision, hence low transactional costs, because their own share, usually, is at stake); 2) it guarantees the direction of the flow of goods toward the center (city, central elites, top administration); 3) it creates hierarchies (in other words, it is the main reason for the establishment of social order and status). I realize that the setting of rates and size of holdings in tenancy is guided first of all by military power (conquest mostly), and status (attached to the first and developed as justification).

At the animal in the Bible session. First paper by Haskell (?) on fauna distribution: exploitation of animals started early, of course. Gadot (?) spoke about correspondence analysis and how it enables identification and relations between taxa. Then histograms (density graphs of taxa).⁵ Take away: southern Levant subsistence pattern is quite different from Mesopotamia's in the MB and EB. In passing I note sacrifice of an ass, donkey: evolution of this?

Next paper by Ken Stone, excellent. Torah canonization correlates with use of parchment instead of paper. Summarizes Donna Haraway's view of companion species. Without goats and sheep, no Judaism or Christianity of the kind we know... He also shows that animals are objectified in the same way as women, children, foreigners.

From this session on animals, I go back to the convention center to listen to a paper by J. Middlemas on the images of Yahweh and other gods.⁶ Exod 20, Deut 4–5, Hosea, Ezekiel, show a change in thinking about the images of Yahweh. Exod 20 is not yet radically against images of Yahweh as the other texts are.

I then run to the final paper of a session on class, given by Diana Swancutt whom I met this morning. It is about Paul's rhetoric of adoption. Paul framed the new dispensation as God offering to non-Judeans and Israelites alike the possibility of becoming children by adoption and therefore heirs. Even slaves could become sons in that new covenant. Paul envisages a new *koinonia* through the adoption of conquered peoples and slaves. The God of Israel could become *abba* to everyone. Paradoxically, the fact that Jesus was son and heir did not preclude this universal possibility of adoption. It was a continuation of the promise to Abraham. I note the continuity here, at least in terms of spirit, with Exodus and the liberation and opening to the

5. Note to myself: wonderful presentation of animal taxa, but it seems to assume that we are talking about a patriarchal period that presumably is the one associated with Genesis.

6. See already MIDDLEMAS, "Exclusively Yahweh: aniconism and anthropomorphism in Ezekiel."

broader kinship it entailed for Judaeans and Israelites in the exilic period.⁷ As for class, it is difficult to fit slaves and free people in that category. Phil Esler insisted on the need to use modern sociological models and advocated the macroview. He thinks “class” speaks to something fundamental in an ancient society such as Rome and is not to be abandoned. Regarding Diana’s paper, he dithers on the adoption “within Israel” as a category (he is more inclined to see its limits).

MONDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2017

Two papers this morning before flying to Detroit via Baltimore. The first, by Paula Fredriksen, is an insistent look at Paul and *Romans* 9:3–5 as calling non-Jews (and non-Judaeans) to become part of a new community that remains defined as ethnically Jewish. She notes that the markers of ethnic identity in the ancient world were biological descent, i.e. “blood” or more broadly kinship (but I note: what of the clear exceptions to this principle in the Hebrew Bible? Exceptions confirming the rule?), land (and I note again: Jews were dispersed in all lands of antiquity), with gods bound to a territory (note: Jerusalem and Israel-Judah for Yahweh, but what of the decentering and problematization of this in Exodus and Ezekiel?), language (note: what of the use of Greek and numerous other languages?), and ethnic customs (which I would suppose include customs in production and consumption, clothing, housing, education, etc.).⁸ Paul, she says, requires only two things from pagans: belief in the single god of Israel (who perforce is “Jewish”, says Fredriksen, though ancient Israelites and Judaeans would never say it that way, since it would be cutting the divinity down to size: compare the ethnicization of gods of Graeco-Roman antiquity), and complete rejection of idol worship. She interprets the call to become adopted children of God and the brotherhood it entails more narrowly than Diana Swancutt yesterday. Where the latter saw a radical move that was not conceptually necessary, since Christ was son and heir and no other sonship was needed, Fredriksen seems to see an expansion of Israel and Judaism on a new basis. In this old pulling of Paul between his Jewish accreditation and his going to the Gentiles, why is there need to further the arguments of Sanders and push back against Taubes, Badiou, etc., at least at this point? Her remark at the begin-

7. After reading Assmann and others.

8. She refers inter alia to Herodotus and his definition of *ethnè* as characterized by blood, language, sanctuaries, and customs.

ning on being on the Jewish side of the Judaeo-Jewish debate made clear that she is concerned about the dilution or erasure of ancient Judaism that has been going on in recent scholarship and that is part of a broader political reassessment of modern Judaism and its avatars.⁹ Though I agree entirely on the expansive view of Judaism that Fredriksen projects, I remain convinced that Paul is creating something new out of the old in *Romans*. He is reaching beyond the *nomoi* of the gentiles, as well as beyond the *torah* he inherited, while maintaining the latter as divine revealed truth. He had to use what was available to him to make his case, which meant that he had to modulate and reshape the milieu's Greek-speaking Judaism, including even the Aramaic Abba of chapter 15.

Thoughts on Paul: his call to Gentiles implies and develops a call or invitation to displace (deterritorialize?) their own belief in what still were territorial gods, a broadening of kinship now based on brotherly trust or membership in Christ's blood gift, a new look at languages and their power to mark belonging and power (I think of the fast process by which languages lacking in mundane glory became capable of sacrality: not just Greek and Latin but Aramaic-Syriac as before, Coptic, Armenian, etc.), as well as a relativization or demotion of ethnic customs. In other words, a new thinking that enabled the potential for trust on a much larger scale though still anchored in a seeming paradox, that of an ethnic god about whom unicity and universality were claimed at the same time.

The second paper, by René Bloch, looked at Philo's considerations on myth and uses of it. Wolfson, who clearly separated reality from myth—along with many scholars of his generation—, thought that Philo could only dismiss myth as incapable of leading to philosophical truths.¹⁰ Bloch shows that Philo actually took pagan myths seriously and found them worthy of sustained allegorical interpretation. He also considered some Biblical stories as myths that needed to be similarly interpreted, even though he placed the Torah stories on a higher level than the Greek myths.¹¹

9. I'm thinking of Mason, who is a subtle commentator on this question, but especially of the context people, like Malina and even Esler in a very different way, and a host of others who are simply following ethnic studies' pronouncements in thinking that it is a category mistake to confuse Judaeans and Jews, because Jews and Judaism, in their opinion, would be modern constructs (which they are not. The reality is that they have evolved).

10. WOLFSON, *Philo: Foundations of religious philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, 1:86,133.

11. BLOCH, *Moses und der Mythos*.

TUESDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2017

We are awake at around 5am. We hear Callum talk. He comes out, sees us, and says, “Finally!” We switch beds, he with Babish, me in his. At 7h30am, Lucie comes to touch my face and wake me up. She is the quiet riser.

About Paul: Fredriksen’s insistence on the Jewishness of every aspect of his call to the gentiles (God, core customs, land, language, sonship) avoids seeing how much Judaism itself was transformed by Paul. In opening up this moving target, Judaism, he is continuing a long, controversial tradition. The non-negotiable is the unicity, exclusiveness, and universalism of God, and the belonging to it via Christ (hence the brotherhood). Everything else is negotiable: the links of God to land, the language that conveys glory and sacrality (not only Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek and Latin?), the customs one is to adopt.

WEDNESDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 2017

Is democracy in deep trouble and moving in a direction opposite to the secular movement elaborately described and defended by Marcel Gauchet? Brexit, the rise of substantial right wing populist movements, the conundrum posed by Catalonians’ demand for independence, and now the political difficulties of Germany don’t seem to be just growing pains. They are unsettling, as is the seeming impossibility for our large parties, defined by each other’s presence, to present a substantial agenda of reforms, after pretending for so long to differ from each other in nearly costless cultural issues.

Scholars are debating the value of new vs older tools in learning, meaning the use of electronic input, memory, and screens, vs the use of printed books and hand-written notes. I put it that way as “digital learning” for me means that any kind of “learning,” be it ergological, sociological, axiological, or logological,—I’m following my understanding of the theory of mediation by Jean Gagnepain—involves the neurological dialectical basis of our approach to the phenomenal.¹²

The book in which Wierzbicka had applied her theory of universals to the gospels and parables is mentioned by Jean-Yves. It had escaped my attention.¹³ I found a review of it by Eric Ganz (UCLA?) in his blog *Chronicles of love and resentment*. Not surprisingly, Ganz mentions the *parable* as be-

12. URIEN, *Une lecture de Jean Gagnepain – Du signe*.

13. WIERZBICKA, *What did Jesus mean?*

ing that of the *Good Samaritan*, a qualifier set in motion by the story itself and the attached belief in its radical bond with Jesus' thought and life. The text focusses on the question of the neighbor, not on the goodness of the Samaritan. It doesn't explain his action in the story by an essential goodness he would possess, though this is what is assumed by the long line of commentaries since.

I didn't know that California is requiring all textbooks for college to be available in digital form by 2020. See [The Conversation](#). However, digital reading is not necessarily a good support for learning in comparison with books. Scrolling appears to be a problem. I would add length of lines, which many people don't seem to realize, affects the speed and comfort of reading. Plus, the different levels of comprehension have been little tested. The results of tests conducting by authors of the article report that students preferred reading online, read screen faster than printed page, rated their understanding higher for digital, though it was tested to be inferior for specific questions. In other words, the general idea is acquired faster online... Better understanding (engaged reading) is better if one uses print. Slow, dedicated readers of digital content, however, showed better understanding (retention?).

Aparté: I don't understand the NRSV translation of Judges 5:7, Judges 5:7 which has:

The peasantry prospered in Israel,
they grew fat on plunder,
because you arose, Deborah,
arose as a mother in Israel.

According to Gottwald in his review of Chaney's life of scholarship, this translation is directly influenced by Chaney's work on Judges (his Harvard dissertation). The context doesn't fit, nor does the plain sense of the sentence, even if one grants the rarity of the word translated by "peasants" or "villagers," open-country dwellers (פרזון). The preceding verse keeps the usual meaning of חודל, stop or cease, which also fits verse 7, and the conjunction "until" (rather than because). The whole thing seems forced and dependent on two notions: an early dating of the book or at least of the song, and the assumption of a social reversal against strong men, or the revolt of peasants in early Iron Age I.

The other NRSV verse translated under Chaney's influence, still according to Gottwald, is 1 Sam 2:5, the song of Hannah. The translation fits right into the context:

Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,
 but those who were hungry are fat with spoil.
 The barren has borne seven,
 but she who has many children is forlorn.

“Fat with spoil” for לֶחֶם here fits the context of sharp reversal and has been applied to Deborah’s canticle, it seems. I need to check Chaney’s book on Judges.

Stephen Russell, who is preparing a book on land tenure under a sensible model of interlocking rights to land developed by the anthropologist Max Gluckman wrote to me that he’ll send me his SBL 2017 paper in January or February. How is one to explain Yahweh’s ownership of all of Israel (Lev 25:2, 23), David’s purchase (2 Sam 24), or the limited land access of cultic personnel (Joshua 21)? Land rights could be multiple, “nested in a hierarchy” (with administrative estates’ rights as well as productive rights), and presupposing responsibilities.

In the same 2017 SBL session on land tenure, Knauth examines Lev 25:23 in the context of divinely or royally assigned land rights. Ownership would never be transferred, only use rights. She notes also that land cannot be returned automatically by divine decree on the Jubilee. The right of redemption must involve present landholder and representative of the original right-holder. And it had little meaning without cancellation of debts and resumption of “clean slate.” She studies Lev 25:14–17 (land) and 25:50–52 (slaves). Leviticus 25:14–17 The creditor’s interests seem safeguarded, as the approach of the Jubilee year is integrated in the calculations of indebtedness, and labor vouched by the household farming family can continue on the plot of land. To me, it looks little different from how debt functioned in the wide Near East or in Graeco-Roman antiquity.

Same session: Matthew Coomber focuses on the prohibition regarding sale of arable lands (permanent alienation). What happened after the eighth and seventh centuries? Coomber argues that Jubilee land regulations of Lev 25:23–28 could be used as ethnic markers and protections. The Jubilee ethos proceeded from a larger spirit and offered some stability as well as an ethnic contrast with their patrons/invaders as well as neighbors. [My note: I think that in this approach one can glimpse the remains of a previous royal regime of debt and forgiveness similar to the one found in all ancient Near Eastern kingdoms and its transformation into a “regime” of fidelity and trust guaranteed by an amplified divinity. The Exodus and Deuteronomy books bear important traces of this rethinking (show). It was not only the intellectual

leadership—priests mostly—but also a whole people who managed to remain faithful to old ways by switching to an interpersonal trust resting on temple and divinely revealed law. Even if the priests and elites under Persian authorities were caught between their religious or social compacts and their service to the foreign court, it remains that they developed a way to create a remarkable identity (new) and to keep to some form of extra-clanic solidarity.]

The difficult text of Lev 25:23–28: ²³וְהָאָרֶץ לֹא תִמְכַּר לְצַמְתָּת בִּיְלֵי הָאָרֶץ: ²⁴כִּי־גֵרִים וְתוֹשְׁבִים אַתֶּם עַמִּדִּי: ²⁵וּבְכֹל אֶרֶץ אֲחֻזְתְּכֶם גְּאֻלָּה תִתְּנוּ לְאָרֶץ: ²⁶ס כִּי־יָמוּד אֲחִיד וּמְכַר מֵאֲחֻזְתּוֹ וּבֹא גְאֻלּוֹ הַקָּרֵב אֵלָיו וּגְאֹל אֶת מִמְכָּר אָחִיו: ²⁷וְאִישׁ כִּי לֹא יִהְיֶה־לּוֹ גְּאֹל וְהִשְׁיִגָה יָדוֹ וּמָצָא כְּדִי גְאֻלְתּוֹ: ²⁸וְחָשַׁב אֶת־שְׁנֵי מִמְכָּרָיו וְהִשִּׁיב אֶת־הָעֶדְף לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר מְכָרְלוֹ וְשָׁב לְאֲחֻזְתּוֹ: ²⁸וְאִם לֹא־מָצָא יָדוֹ דֵּי הַשִּׁיב לּוֹ וְהָיָה מִמְכָּרוֹ בְּיַד הַקֹּנֵה אֹתוֹ עַד שְׁנַת הַיּוֹבֵל וַיֵּצֵא בַּיּוֹבֵל וְשָׁב לְאֲחֻזְתּוֹ:

Jared Saltz's paper was on the famous phrase of Hecataeus regarding the ostensible impossibility for Jewish private citizens to alienate their land. His remark would be rather directed at his own society in which demographic and land pressure exacerbated inequities in land distribution, and could be in the spirit of having the land in common à la Plato.

THURSDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2017

We were lucky to find a children's book on the times of Jesus that is well made: much on the society, its agrarian nature, the divisions between people, including status and economic divisions, the Roman army (mistake however: no Roman soldiers yet in the time of Jesus), and much about the natural milieu. Almost nothing about the dialectics of the situation and the causes of Jesus' death. Another book we got, a book on dragons, while well illustrated, was awful. It seems to be the brainchild of misguided psychologists who assume that all children eventually see dragons everywhere, that it's okay, they mean no harm, etc. Great way to scare children by telling them there is no reason to be scared!

We had Thanksgiving dinner at Grandpa's and Gigi's, but without Rémi or Lindsay and John. Rémi is *de garde* today from 3pm to the early morning, and Lindsay and John could not come from Chicago. *Le torchon brûle?*

Phrases of Callum this afternoon as we were in the "Rumble Dome", at work and at play: "I was hoping you could help me by holding this cable over the train..." He was talking about a dozen markers stuck end to end

and forming a line (a “cable”), to be held above boxes made of magnetic plastic pieces and representing a TGV train, with pantograph on top.

FRIDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2017

Balade le long de la belle rivière Clinton au nord de Troy. De la route qui y mène, je vois d’énormes banlieues aux maisons presque identiques, entourées de verdure et d’arbres. Deux niveaux de salaire, ce me semble, à la grandeur des maisons et au nombre de portes de garage, ainsi qu’à la surface du lotissement. Ici et là, j’ai un aperçu du régime au-dessus, par exemple de vastes demeures au bord de lacs, ou du régime au-dessous, généralement des parcs de maisons tractées (comment le dire en français : *mobilhomes* ?) ou des maisons très modestes qui ont précédé ces nouvelles banlieues construites depuis les années soixante-dix et quatre-vingt. Difficile de m’imaginer y vivre : où aller à pied y rencontrer d’autres, ou se faire des amis sinon dans les malls ou peut-être les lieux à thèmes religieux ponctuant cet espace énorme depuis le dixième mille au moins jusqu’au quinzième ou seizième. Aller au travail, à l’école, aux magasins, tout est devenu transport au dehors de soi. Plus de “home” où on a le sens de demeurer, de transformer ce qu’on a en ce qu’on peut être, de s’approprier paysage et construction comme étant de soi, au moins partiellement. On est de plus en plus intensément projeté en deça et au-delà d’un soi introuvable par les outils de communication qui aux services de recherche (Google) ou de “rapprochement” (Facebook) ajoutent raffinement sur raffinement de désirs de présence qu’ils vendent aux plus offrants. La valeur en bourse de ces trafiquants, transporteurs et fomenteurs de désirs, d’après ce que j’ai lu récemment, était d’environ deux mille milliards de dollars, soit un peu plus de la moitié du budget annuel des États-Unis, ou environ 10% de l’économie du pays (il s’agit de trois grandes compagnies de messagerie et deux d’électronique : Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Alphabet-Google, Facebook). fomentier

SATURDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2017

Lecture du commentaire de Jean-Yves sur le premier tome de JG. Je commence à mieux comprendre les trois éléments de base de l’analyse que JG détecte sur la base de la clinique : les deux axes de la segmentation (et... et) et la différenciation (choix), les deux faces du signe, et la paire grammaire / rhétorique. Par curiosité, je regarde les définitions du couple de concepts

“différenciation / segmentation” dans un moteur de recherche. Il donne des définitions qui sont inutiles telles que la segmentation du marché et la différenciation des produits.

A first for Lucie: in the hot tub at the grand-parents, she makes it known that she wants to do poopoo and waits until she is taken to a potty right near....

SUNDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2017

We drove to Ann Arbor and went to the Argo park on the banks of the Huron river, where Pat, Mike, and Liz eventually caught up with us. We walked on the right bank of the river, continued up to Zingerman's where we had planned to have lunch but hesitated as there was a long line and a wait of twenty minutes before ordering. Some of us walked up to the co-op near the market, Pat and Amy stayed in line. It was a short and wonderful 3-4 hours together, with many on-going, parallel conversations. Liz told me that Blaise had been playing the cello again: what joy to hear that!

Later on in the evening, Callum had a little fever and wanted to rest early. It's almost 10pm and he has migrated to the sofa where I'm writing. I offered to tell him a story about a little sea otter but he told me that he “preferred to think about things.”

Political news: Roy Moore, the right-wing judge running for the US Senate's Republican seat in northern Alabama has been accused of actively chasing after teenage girls forty years ago when he was a thirty-something assistant attorney general for the state. In the US, this is tantamount to child abuse even though the scenes may have been bars and shady spots rather than churches. The old-guard Republican party is afraid of the consequences. If Moore is elected, they fear that in the midterm campaign of 2018 they will be associated with supporters of child abusers and lose their advantage in the Senate (after being unable to accomplish anything so far, while dominating the three branches of government). If Moore loses to Jones, a democrat, the senate Republicans will retain a marginal advantage of one. They find Trump infuriating because he hasn't been helping them for his own reasons, the main being that his “base” wouldn't be kind to him if he abandoned the vulgar, sexist, and paradoxically anti-establishment approach they think he represents. So, we may get an awful, irrational tax bill that favors billionaires and large companies, while the whole political world is being dragged in the mud. Or rather, mud has invaded all areas

of decision-making and makes it impossible even to plan for more efficient forms of capitalism, let alone for a better and just society.

Through it all, democrats have been all too quiet. I mean by this that they don't dare and don't seem able to propose a social and economic vision that would make it not only impossible for a Trump to appear and survive, but would take us in a clear, progressive direction. They don't agree on anything either, or rather they go for the smallest common denominator and even if they dominate the next cycle of elections, it is likely that the fundamental decisions will remain as askew as those of Republicans: no real reform in economic policy, taxation, banking reform, education, military functions, health system. Confirmation tonight: Pelosi, the minority leader of the house, goes to Trump's level where it's not obvious that points can be made without serious losses elsewhere. She asserted today that it was not the revelations about Weinstein (a big supporter of "liberal causes") that prompted the flood of claims about sexual harassment but those about Trump.

MONDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2017

David Shulman has a critical review of Shimon Peres' short autobiography, *No room for small dreams* in the latest NYRB. He finds it all too self-glorifying. The truth is that Peres had both great accomplishments (atomic power seems "passée sous silence", however, as usual, whereas the Entebbe raid occupies the main chapter) and failures. Shulman thinks that the main source for misjudgments was the long-acquired and understandable emotion of feeling on the edge. Peres, says Shulman in passing when discussing Entebbe, portrays Rabin "as hesitant and supine" in contrast with his own glorious role. At the heart of things: it was one thing for early Zionists to think a state was the solution for their misery, dispersion, and threatening situation in Europe.

It is another thing to claim, as voices both inside and outside the Israeli government do frequently, that the Zionist enterprise necessarily involved the subjugation, disenfranchisement, and potential expulsion of that other people still living on the lands to the West of the Jordan River.

Peres, fortunately, didn't share the latter view. Yet he lived inside that bubble of crisis mode. Shulman gives figures that are new to me. In Area C (about 60% of the West Bank), over half of the land has been or is being settled, "for all eternity" (Netanyahu). Israel is going to become an apartheid

regime, as Carter ominously warned a few years ago and was vilified for it, or “a single state with a Palestinian majority.” In either case, it will be the end of an independent, democratic, Jewish state. Some of the first Israeli settlements were created by Rabin and Peres, in 1975. Peres did negotiate with the original Gush Emunim at Sebastia, against Rabin’s will. We now have hundreds of settlements, all illegal under international law. Peres even planted a tree at Ofra! He was a hawk, the new settlements were, he said, “the roots and the eyes of Israel.” Yet, in 1982, he joined the Shalom Achshav movement, after the Sabra and Shatila massacre and became in 1992 one of the architects of the Oslo agreement. He tried and failed to negotiate a promising settlement with King Hussein in London in 1987.

In 1996, he lost by 30,000 votes to Netanyahu. Shulman doesn’t see, once more like so many Israelis, that no image of the politically successful killing of Rabin was used in the campaign. Why? Out of spite between the Rabins and Pereses? Shulman more generally thinks that Peres lacked vision because of his superficial optimism and hyperkinetic nature. Nice take: the *raison d’être* of Israel is to have “normal” relationships with its subjugated part... Shulman is more sanguine about Israel’s military and technological success than Peres (the usual rhetoric), and more hopeful because of the idealism and talents of young generations. I learn that about five hundred people are on constant call to drive Gaza inhabitants to hospitals when they get permits... Yet, Israel is also one of the last colonial regimes of the world, its people are often racist, the leaders are selfish, unjust, and corrupt, the army doing police work... We are moving towards an anti-apartheid and civil rights movement in one bi-national state.

TUESDAY, 28 NOVEMBER 2017

Callum became himself again in the early afternoon, playing and talking as usual. Rémi is working at 11pm at the hospital.

WEDNESDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2017

Article by Matt Taibbi on US students’ catastrophic debt in Nov. 16, 2017 issue of *Rolling Stone*. First the numbers: a) 1.3 trillion dollars of student debt has accumulated. b) The cost of education is skyrocketing, even at public institutions. I just looked up the advertised cost at UCSC: in-state students pay \$14,028 in tuition and fees, non-state \$28,014. With other expenses, most students must find \$35K/yr. The cost of an average room is

reported by the UCSC housing office to be \$923, that of a studio \$1202. Rent is going up by approximately 5% per year. c) Federal student lending is on a shoe-string, forever threatened.

In many situations (how many?), many defaults on loans lead to “rehabilitation” programs in which the debtors find themselves consolidating a debt on which they then pay interest for ever and no principal. This is getting worse as the predators are everywhere in government (I think they were there before but in sheep’s clothing, i.e. they included trusted, *bona fide*, democrats willing to support predatory debt structures by banks). The most striking things regarding education debt for me are: the high interests (federal loans for undergrad 4.5%, 6 for grads), the absence of federal guarantees and controls (the state or federal programs are serviced by private companies, Navient et al), the predatory practices of for-profit schools, the runaway costs of non profit university education shouldered by undergrads, the participation of public universities in raising costs and amassing huge cash reserves, and the low quality of education in the vast majority of programs (but this continues a broader problem which is the abysmal quality of public secondary education).

Taibbi argues that the education industry is a con. There are two separate issues here, I feel. One is that the financing of education is a racket or has become a byzantine labyrinth that allows scamming, but the other one is the vision of what constitutes education and the quality of the product. I do agree that education has now become part of a redistribution scheme in the capitalist system, very much like health care, the military, real estate, publicity (“communication”), and banking on top of it.

Is the pitch regarding the economic benefits of a university education believable? What is the basis for the numbers given by Georgetown university and the Census Bureau? What good jobs are or will there be for the millions of students with diplomas? Going to university is now a defense against the worse fate awaiting those who will be condemned to the worse jobs. One hopes it prevents erosion of earning power. An anguished avoidance of a gloomy fate. This means a glut of students that colleges can tax as greater levels of administration and a non-stop need for scientific infrastructure drive costs.

There was a corrective: the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, set up under Bush 2. It didn’t reach many and is on the block.

The discussions of Ezra-Nehemia miss the dialectics that was necessarily part of the situation. The focus on the divergences that became instituted (the “ethnic demands”) ought not to be separated from the process of

convergence that transcends them without cease. I think that the story of Ruth is part of a larger cultural dynamics in precisely the same measure as the ethnically narrow genealogical decisions reflected by EN. And not only Ruth but even more importantly the broadening of the concept of people and brotherhood in Exodus and Deuteronomy. In that sense, Assmann's reconstruction of the agenda of Exodus doesn't have to be separated from what we perceive to be the narrowness of EN according to our modern conceptions of global tolerance.

THURSDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 2017

The silence that writing allows is a form of the leisure principle associated with all technological transformations of the world (ergology in JG's theory).¹⁴ This passage where JYU explains more fully the four planes of JG's epistemological refounding of the humanities leads me to think with Derrida of the notion of archives and their connection to power as well as their capacity to invoke "beginnings."¹⁵ Writing can carry the "voice" further and longer, a technology that was desirable for kings and elites in specific situations (in short: accompanying the projection of power in space and time). This dialectics of silence and < increased voice? loudness? > was applied by the heirs of the monarchy to the divinity of Exodus and other texts.

14. URIEN, *Une lecture de Jean Gagnepain – Du signe*, 50.

15. See page 228.

12 December

FRIDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2017

Lucie and I used only French this morning. Very quickly, as we are looking at street-cleaning equipment from the living room window, she is saying, “un autre camion, tadkozh...”, or “C’est un tigre!” when we are reading books. She doesn’t use verbs fluidly as she does in English (to see, eat, get, etc.), but is beginning to (“manger”).

Message just sent to McCain regarding his declared support for the tax bill:

Please reverse your decision to support the tax bill. It will increase the deficit without obvious economic benefits for the nation. Many corporations have accumulated enormous capital that they are not willing to invest. They should not be rewarded for removing it from the reach of taxation. Furthermore, adding more capital to this capacity by lowering their tax rate will increase dangerous speculation. The economy is working without it, in part because social net protections have been dangerously eroded and provide much cheaper labor. PLEASE, do not provide your party with the excuse of a budget that this tax bill will soon put even more deeply in the red, an excuse that will likely be used to try and erode even further the social protections needed for a free, productive society.

See Espak on Enki in Sumerian mythology and comparisons with Genesis 1–11 in chapter 8.¹ The review by Michael Moore for *RBL* suggests that priesthood struggles might have happened, pace Espak (after Kramer). He also suggests engagement with more social analysis, such as Weber, Liverani, Cross, etc.

My view on traditional theological interpretation of the book of Exodus is that a critical examination of the real Sitz im Leben of the author(s)

1. ESPAK, *The god Enki in Sumerian royal ideology and mythology*.

provides insight in their hopes, choices, and failures. One of the potential benefits of a “colder” kind of history is a more realistic view of our own environment and a more clear-sighted social and economic policy. As Garrett says in his recent conservative commentary on Exodus, this book is the heart of the Bible. This realization (or faith), however, can be understood as completely undercutting the theological grand scheme of conservative interpreters.

Tonight, Rémi calls from the hospital where he is working one of those horrendously long shifts (about thirty hours). He is exhausted and cries a bit while talking to Leslie, Amy, and the children, before being paged again.

SATURDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2017

The Senate voted for the tax bill, 51 to 49. Trump or not Trump, this was a top priority. It weakens government and leads to greater worries, frustrations, and social tensions.

A few reactions to the paper Matthew Coomber presented at the SBL this past November. He starts with a large, worthwhile question: why do “some people attack the idea of the common good?” My immediate reaction is that this question is entangled with that of private property and more generally with the notion of the dialectics any individual finds himself or herself in the midst of in his/her efforts to surmount (negatively) the gregarious instinct and accede to the status of person, including “property,” a status that is part performance, part “instance” (in JG’s theory).

Is the desire for wealth and power the fundamental cause for poverty, “with little or no concern for their neighbor?” I think that defense of interests rose at the level of the group—clanic group, I mean—rather than the individual or family. In other words, the conception of the neighbor was very narrow when looked at from the vantage of much broader systems of distributed trust and power.² These interests included a perceived need to maximize access to land and labor through marital alliances, force, and other means. The perceived need rested partly on the insecurity built in ancient agrarian conditions, which included the impossibility to predict outcomes. That the accumulation of wealth led to the hardening of feelings, willful

2. This is why Exodus and Deuteronomy, as well as the prophets, are such important marks of a sea change in the way to conceive of society in ancient Israel. The attempt to define person in relation to a transcendental savior brings about something potentially much broader.

ignorance, or even hostility toward the poor is an interesting psychological aspect of the question.

About Lev 25 and the Jubilee: why defend land access and promote the common good? What might have scribes thought about the matter under Persian rule? Rather than a “cause” or “intention” hidden within the ancient scribes’ hearts, Coomber presents what he calls a “heuristic experiment.” They may have followed their own interests (more complicated question than this short paper intimates), while defending a certain fidelity to the past, fidelity to a presently humiliated, dispersed people they wished to gather in a renewed people, and taking advantage of the Achaemenids’ acceptance or use of local “constitutions.”

SUNDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2017

Hayden sent us a long, descriptive email regarding the schmoozers’ recent difficulties to make it and meet on Saturdays:

Dear Marc and Schmoozers: Of course, you are quite right, Marc: I should have at least written to explain my absences. But the truth is that every week since I last got out of hospital, I have thought that I would be able to make the next meeting. But some condition always comes up that precludes my attending. Either I don't have the energy, cannot imagine sitting for the entire session, or am so hoarse (from the meds, I think) that I could not participate. In a word, since I contracted pneumonia last April, I have had a series of heart failures, interlarded with infections (bacterial), each of which was treated with anti-biotics—which must have hit my immune system because every time I come out of hospital, I get a new infection. One of which was treated with prednisone, way too much, which left me bereft of will and energy. During the last seven weeks, since the end of my 4th visit to the hospital, I lost 20 pounds. I simply could not eat anything without extreme nausea. I sank into a kind of depression, became morose and anti-social, unable to go out to even movies; Part of this was a consequence of my spinal stenosis, which was exacerbated by loss of weight, energy, etc.), and so this meant that gradually I lost the capacity to walk 50 yards without extreme pain. I have continued to try to exercise with my trainer and go on walks, to try to get back to where I was before the onset of the pneumonia. In short, I have been trying to regain enough strength and energy to spend more than a half-hour talking, which is as debilitating as the exercises. During all this, I have had a constant change of meds and it appears that in addition to a failed kidney, heart failure, and so on, the infection

has spread to my lungs, which means another set of meds that are as debilitating as the previous set. And these bacteria are tough little critters, treatment of which is 18 months of antibiotics—a recommendation that I rejected.

I am really working on these problems, but remember, I am 89, and most if not all of the organs in my body are throttling down. You will recall that I have volunteered a few times during the last seven weeks to bring something to the meeting and once even to have the meeting at my house. But when the time came, I just could not do it. No one thinks that I am close to dying, but at one point, my doctors were overheard by my wife talking about whether or not they should contact Hospice. This was when they thought I had a heart-lung problem, rather than a series of bacterial infections that they treated by laying on larger and longer doses of anti-biotics. Now they think that I have a heart-kidney problem with complications in the lungs.

I realize that I have not invited visitors or even phone calls, but this was because I did not have the energy even for a short conversation; for was too hoarse to communicate, and really was given to a lassitude that is quite uncharacteristic of me. I keep thinking that if I concentrate on exercise, regaining some weight, and eating from time to time that I will be alright within a couple of weeks. So far this has not been the case. Every so often I have a flair up of my heart condition, and this sets me back, even though with my pacemaker, my heart has returned to normal every time this happens. But not without paying a price: turns out that the body needs blood circulating easily in the system.

I apologize for my neglect of my friends. You guys are very precious to me, and it pains me to see what I have seen in the last seven weeks: no quora, cancelled meetings, and searches for a suitable restaurant for a meeting. Meeting another day of the week is OK with me. But I would be against cutting the times of the meeting lower than 12.30. It is possible that our institution has simply grown too old. People have obligations these days that they did not have in earlier times. Jerry and Gildas have been great in providing venues for the meetings, but I think that all the members should take their turns regularly. We have discussed this before.

About new members, we do need at least a couple. Jon Beecher might be a good candidate, but I feel quite certain that James Clifford is not interested. Does anyone here know Bernard Hilberman, a doctor, Temple member, and an amiable guy. I dont know him very well, but the few times I have run into him were pleasant.

That's about it. I hope to make the next meeting. I will do my best. And of course-, anyone who wants to call me should do so. I am not such a carmudgeon as to cut myself off from you guys.

hayden

MONDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2017

Cal au jardin d'enfants ce matin (pré-primaire ?) et Lucie à sa classe de foot. Je vais à la bibliothèque municipale. Hier soir, j'ai la petite surprise d'entendre Lucie me dire "en français" alors que je lui demandais quel livre elle voulait lire avec moi. Autre pensée alors que j'utilise la bibliothèque municipale de Ferndale : les impôts de cette petite ville de la banlieue de Detroit sont élevés. L'impôt foncier pour Leslie et Rémi s'élève à 7,000\$ au moins, je crois. Il n'est pas de l'intérêt des capitalistes en bout de parcours de continuer le partage social limité des ressources et des capacités. Le plaisir du partage ne fait pas partie du programme. Livres et films ? que chacun les achète pour soi, ou plutôt les loue individuellement de façon à ce que les revenus soient maximisés.

A negative reaction to the tax bill project came from UCSC chief officers: Hughey, Miller, Lee, Padgett. Jody Greene also spoke up against the bill in an article for the SF Chronicle. All good profs in an institution that is part of a top-down structure (UCOP) where a central administration and the board of regents supporting it (naming it!) have proceeded to privatize the university (with in the news recently, the negative Moreno report about a state audit that was manipulated by UCOP). The tax bill has not yet become law, i.e. "reconciled" in the two houses, and signed by the president. The UCSC officers draw on the worries and anger of students and families to signal that more state help is needed in education. They recommend that students make their opposition known to house representatives, since the house bill version is extremely unfavorable to graduate students. It plans to tax the tuition that is "waived", for instance 19K in the UC system. But why is this tuition so large? And if this tuition money is practically never seen by students, what is it for? They argue that "universities are already graduating too few students to keep our economy healthy," and that costs are a major cause of this. First of all: whose economy is this, "ours?" What of automation in the future? What kind of social mobility is achievable in a society that universities themselves tend to rend into classes and statuses? The real problem is what kind of university, what for, and at what cost? Here, cost seems to determine everything, it would only be a matter of finding

the money. No questions need to be asked regarding quality, justifications for salaries and ballooning management.... The House tax bill is a catastrophe, granted, but the way tuition has been increased by public universities is another.

En lisant URIEN:³ “L’écrit est « silencieux » alors même qu’il permet un accès au langage.” Silence et loisir sont des propriétés de la graphie qui approfondissent la notion de transcendance divine. La répétition du texte sacré, parlé (clamé) ou pas, interprété ou pas, exige et renforce cette transcendance.

TUESDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2017

I need to remind myself of the notion that Gagnepain had of the divinity: “Loin de se nier, l’homme s’achève dans une conversion *transcendantale* qui fait à Dieu l’hommage de ses propres dons.” His own capacities to form the Word, create, become a person, and shape laws.

THURSDAY, 7 DECEMBER 2017

Que dire sur la décision de la Maison Blanche (difficile de l’appeler gouvernement) de reconnaître officiellement Jérusalem comme capitale de l’état d’Israël ? JYU a répondu à mon message sur les Nephilim (voir la page que j’ai écrite là-dessus) :

P.S. Trump est un pyromane. Que dis-je ? Un des Nephilim ! Il est prêt à mettre le feu au Moyen-Orient pour sa réélection avec l’appui des évangélistes blancs. Et une partie de la communauté juive ? Je note quand même que la reconnaissance par les USA de l’occupation et de l’annexion de la totalité de Jérusalem a été votée par le Congrès il y a plusieurs années. Cela pose un problème de fond sur la démocratie américaine et sur son attitude vis à vis de la colonisation, où qu’elle soit. L’esclavage n’est plus normal, la colonialisme le reste. (Vu de France).

40% de la population de Jérusalem n’est pas juive, (95% dans la vieille ville). Cette part est tenue pour nulle.

En plus caricatural : Les USA sont-ils devenus une colonie israélienne ? Ou bien Israël est-il devenu un nouvel état américain ? Fais la part de la caricature. Mais je trouve qu’il y a là une instrumen-

3. URIEN, *Une lecture de Jean Gagnepain – Du signe*, 50.

talisation réciproque qui est criminelle, car il y a des morts et de la misère au bout.

On another note: while re-reading a short commentary I made on the story of David and Bathsheba, I'm surprised to realize that the invocation and begging of God in Psalm 51 is one answer to the complexification of society such as described in the story in 2 Samuel. In this tale, many people are involved by David's moral failure (which starts as exacerbated desire), both at the time of the crime and afterwards, in long chains of elements summarized by the dozen "sendings" noted by 2 Sam 11. There cannot be any direct repair because the events have a logic all their own. That is, other desires and moral failures come to compose themselves and stiffen or jell in the wake of David's. As in Leviticus' idea of purification of the divine house (see Milgrom on this), the aura of David's crime spreads without any hope of repair. The only possible reparation is both the historical payback (sacrifice of many), and the self-giving of one's own capacities in a gesture that props up a transcendental divinity in which everything can be reconciled. All of this reflection, it must be added, was certainly not contemporary with the king or even any member of the Judaeen monarchy. It is a reflection in both senses of the word of the post-monarchic period.

FRIDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2017

Many pieces of writing to commit... First, a message from an old student, Nathan Walker:

Hi! I took your introductory Latin courses 15 years ago (2002-2003). I have fond memories of the classes, and recently I took out my old Wheelock book, and started studying it again. I'm about 3/4 of the way through it now, and am really enjoying it! It's a fun challenge, and the book is full of interesting tidbits. I just wanted to write to thank you again for a great course, and wish you all the best!

Reading JY's paper on peace and war: the *pax hominibus bonae voluntatis* has been separated from its transcendental anchor. We live in a form of easy-going irenic morality. By "we," I mean those of us who live in economic and cultural comforts. Trump advertises himself as a pure, ideal negotiator. *Negotium*, i.e. the business of exchanging territories marked by pegs, or even negotiating these pegs and *pagi* themselves, forever. There is no justice in this or even attempt to be just, simply otiose movement and quantification. No *pax* or peace can come out of those movable pegs. All

is an affair of forced arbitration, relation of power. How not to pay and yet get peace (*pax* > *pacare*). If *pax* is the respite and trust one may put in the goal-posts and pegs or markers of previous engagements with each other (playouts), war is the way to shift them.

Jerusalem, the zones ABC of the Oslo accords, the markers on the grounds that settlements, roads to them, telecommunications, power lines, and especially the wall and the check-points, the attacks on civilians, all of this is a long list of uncertain accords and war acts. Palestine and Israel: how to learn to renounce (self-rationing), and expiate (price to pay)?

Other item of reflection: salute, salvation, salve. Versus war which is (etymological invocation) a disorder, principally. Chaos. No Ithaca in this semantic, sociological, and axiological drifting.

On forgiveness: I am following Mauss and even more Hénaff, in seeing that giving and counter-giving are acts of recognition of the other.

SATURDAY, 9 DECEMBER 2017

Rémi went to the hospital at 6am. He'll be back tomorrow around noon...

The White House and Republican Congress continue to make catastrophic decisions. Not that the December 6 recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel was unexpected, but it came with absolutely no semblance of counterpart for the Palestinians or at least some Israeli gesture. I'm not sure there'll be hell to pay for all of this, except by Palestinians today. But the world is beginning to organize itself in the recognition that the US, even with the strongest armed forces and military budget in the world by far, is somehow weakening and other forces are appearing.

Iran and Turkey have common interests that have been made even clearer since the recognition by the US of Jerusalem as capital of modern Israel. Iran is going definitely to be favored as a sort of real defender of Islam and modernity, in comparison with a kowtowing Saudi Arabia. China and especially Russia may gain much more power in the region, following the egregious choices made by the US. All of this has long been in the making. The US recognition of Jerusalem as capital was expressed by a law passed near-unanimously by Congress in October 1995 (a month before Rabin's murder: 93 to 5 in the Senate, 374 to 37 in the House) and ratified by Trump this past week to satisfy what is expected of him by his core base, the "bad boys" in the yard. Not surprisingly, however, the decision to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem will have to wait another six months, though still without any counterpart for the

Palestinians. Where will it be built: Talpiot? And a kind of silver lining that may take some time to unfold: thanks to their success, the Israeli colons whose politico-religious fever had replaced a dying zionism that was defined by its distance from its religious basis may themselves lose their ideals.

SUNDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2017

In a very short article for *BAR*, Faust uses archaeological data and Biblical texts to show that the east was the cosmologically favored direction, as for many other peoples in antiquity, while north and south were effectively rarely used.⁴ West was associated with “behind” (*ahorah*), with the sea (*yamah*), or unmentioned. Building openings are not found on the west façades. He could have used Genesis’ story about Benjamin, the son of the south (right side) or southerner, based on a main eastern direction, for another textual argument. As for the eastern wind of Exodus, I’m less convinced its appearance follows this pattern and is invoked by the author because of its divine character. The most striking aspect of this article is that it confirms the absence of the western direction because of its probable negative connotations as being “behind,” or “seaward” as in Abraham’s story. I’ve long been puzzled by the absence of mention of the western direction in Genesis 12, except as that of the sea. *Yam* is the force of chaos in the local Canaanite myths and could be imagined to be in the background here, if one trusts the relationship of Canaan’s mythic imagination to Ugaritic texts. Yet, is east all positive and does its cosmic significance override the tragic and punitive aspects of the direction of exile? It seems to be the direction of the expulsion in the story of Genesis. The text mentions the east or “front” as being marked by the Keruvim: וַיִּגְרַשׁ אֶת־הָאָדָם וַיִּשְׁכֵּן מִקְדָּם לְגִן־עֵדֶן אֶת־הַכַּרְבִּים וְאֵת לֶהֱטֵ הַחֹרֵב הַמְתַּהַפֶּכֶת לְשֹׁמֵר אֶת־דָּרְךָ עַץ הַחַיִּים: The word מקדם means both “east of” and “in front of, facing,” here, as the LXX has it also (*ἀπέναντι*)? It makes sense for a writer thinking of the structure of the temple as well as any habitation. The start of the day and work, as well as larger historical happenings, were done facing the east, sunrise. In Gen 4:16, “Cain went away from the presence of the LORD, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden,” (different Hebrew here, קדמת־עֵדֶן, and Greek *κατέναντι* Εδεμ). The ambivalent meaning of this eastward direction (with movement or not?) is confirmed by its use in

4. FAUST, “Archaeology, Israelite cosmology and the Bible.”

the story of the tower of Babel in Gen 11:2: “And as they migrated from the east,” or “migrated eastward,” as the NRSV has it in note: Hebrew וַיִּהְיֶיּוּ מִקְדָּם בְּנִסְעֵם מִקְדָּם and Greek ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν. The Greek version of Hebrew מקדם is quite unstable.

Note that these directions are fully reprised in Gen 12:8, where Abram goes into the mountain, then to the east (or facing) Bethel (which is “seawards”) and invokes Yahweh: וַיִּעָתֶק מִשָּׁם הַהָרָה מִקְדָּם לְבֵית־אֵל וַיֵּט אֶהְלֵהָ וַיֵּט אֶהְלֵהָ: וַיִּעָתֶק מִשָּׁם הַהָרָה מִקְדָּם לְבֵית־אֵל וַיֵּט אֶהְלֵהָ וַיֵּט אֶהְלֵהָ: וַיִּעָתֶק מִשָּׁם הַהָרָה מִקְדָּם לְבֵית־אֵל וַיֵּט אֶהְלֵהָ וַיֵּט אֶהְלֵהָ: Are we to understand then that the direction associated with Bethel is to be read as a negative comment, and the choice made by Abraham, under the guidance of Yahweh, the geographical sensible and honorable one? Or rather is something new being suggested by the author, something a-directional? The Septuagint translates מקדם לביית־אל as κατ’ἀνατολὰς Βαιθηλ. The Vulgate has *contra orientem Bethel* and translates “seaward” and “east” as *ab occidente* and *ab oriente*. Ezekiel might have the answer as to the meaning given to those directions. His visions imply that the divinity doesn’t follow territorial confines. No direction is given in 2 Kings 25:21: וַיִּד אֶתֶם מִלְדָּ בְּבֵל וַיְמִיתֵם בְּרַבְלָה: בְּאַרְצָן חֲמַת וַיִּגְלֵ יהוּדָה מֵעַל אֲדָמָתוֹ: “Judah was exiled from its land.”

The territorial aspect of gods needs to be examined more closely. Does it arise from the material need for propitious weather, order, trust between neighbors, need to consolidate a sense of belonging (but to what? It may have changed quite a bit, even when fidelity to this or that power was claimed).⁵ On the territoriality of divinities, there are several passages whose irony depends on the fact that it was a broadly shared concept. See for instance 1 Kings 20:23 where the “servants of the king of Aram [drunken Ben-hadad] said to him, ‘Their gods are gods of the hills, and so they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain...’” That theory is immediately put to the test the following spring and found wanting, naturally. The most fascinating story in this regard is that of Naaman, the commander of the army of the king of Aram, who, when cured of his leprosy (by reluctantly bathing in the liminal Jordan river), wishes to worship only the LORD but thinks that he needs “two mule-loads of earth,” a very large synecdoche, to make his burnt-offerings and sacrifices to this new god Yahweh efficient, as he assumed, with all of the cultures of the Levant, that all gods cared above all and perhaps exclusively about their

5. Regarding Israel and the broad sense of its ethnic composition, see FAUST, “An all-Israelite identity: historical reality or Biblical myth?”

home territory (2 Kings 5:15–19).⁶ See also the all-important chapter 17 of 2 Kings, which among other things presents the new people transferred by the conveniently unnamed Assyrian king as not knowing “the law of the god of the land.”

MONDAY, 11 DECEMBER 2017

Sundry reflections by Callum and Lucie: about twelve days ago, Lucie salutes Cal with, “Bonjour Callum.” She switches to the little French she has when addressing me. Last night, while looking at a video on farm machinery, and specifically at an old fixed thresher (a Marshall?), Callum remembers something I told him about old machines and tells me, “When you were little, this is what you had...”

Snow today, perhaps two inches. Last night, a wonderful moment after dinner, with much music. Rémi is silly and sings schmaltzy yiddish tunes (מיינע ידישע מאמא). Callum is on drums, Lucie switches from guitar to recorder, Leslie and Amy are singing. Rémi has had several weeks of more than 80 hours of work recently, hopefully the last ones for a while.

On the weaknesses of capitalism: it looked impregnable for a few years in the nineties and early third millenium. Badiou confessed it had won and resistance had to take new forms. Even after the 2008 crisis, given the choices made by China and India after Japan and South Korea, it seemed to roll with the punches. The government of the US used to be perceived as a fairly intelligent defender of capitalist interests, especially since the lines of contact didn’t seem too crudely direct. And now, all of sudden (but is there such a thing in history?), money managers and thieves are in charge, not economists (though such a claim can be made for Gary Cohn) or experienced advisers (experienced in drawing the complexities of state and private interests)... lawyers and mercenaries, or people who have made fortunes on morally questionable schemes (de Vos, Pruitt, Mnuchin, the Trumps...). So, the truth of GE, GM, Apple, et al suddenly revealed, or a strange wart on the healthy capitalist body?

Does the quiet power of writing, resting in its silence as well as its replicability across space and time increase royal political power and help project divine unity of will further. The logic of this technical structure also explains

6. Mr. l’abbé le Parc, *recteur* of Pommerit-Jaudy in the late sixties and seventies, only requested a handful from me when I went to the “holy land” in 1971. He planned to use some of it for his ninety-plus mother’s burial and the rest for his own.

the spread of writing as well as the sacralization of part of it, rather than the reverse logic, of writing somehow explaining the gestation of a more complex administration, viz. kingdoms.

Snow has fallen heavily tonight and provided the sort of quiet balm I need, given the political events and shakiness of institutions. Alabama is voting tomorrow to replace a right-wing senator, Jeff Sessions, who is the US Attorney General. The person more likely to win, by a small margin, is Roy Moore, an extreme right-winger who was twice removed from the state supreme court because of his attempts to circumvent the constitutional separation of state and religion. The accusations of sexual abuse recently hurled at the character did some damage to his reputation at the beginning (a month ago) but are taken to be outside interference even by those who don't care too much for his brand of politics. The heads of the Republican party once threatened to evict him from the senate if he got elected, but even this has died down and shows how weak the institutions are.

TUESDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2017

When Callum and Lucie woke up a bit after 7am this morning, they started singing a homemade Hanukkah song. Callum seemed to be making up the words. This went on for about fifteen minutes, before their coming to our bed, and getting ready for school (Callum). Lunch at Cafe Muse in Royal Oak with Gigi, Grandpa, and Lucie who has a cold and is not quite at her best. Tonight, playing with dreidels, talking about Hanukkah (with some critical distance), small presents...

WEDNESDAY, 13 DECEMBER 2017

In the plane to San Jose via Dallas. Callum and even Lucie slept in. She still has her cold and Callum is probably coming down with one in turn, because he complained about an ear this morning. He came to Amy and me in the kitchen and asked for a hug. He now can talk about his sadness to see us go, while thinking ahead about his or our next trip. And of course, Bunny doesn't get to travel!

Thoughts about ancient Judaism, from the exilic period on: it becomes a sort of political regime within other, older, authoritarian structures. *La République est d'abord une forme de régime. Elle ne désigne pas un an-*

crage culturel ou historique. La nation, elle, est l'adhésion à un ensemble de valeurs et rien d'autre. Ce n'est pas le sang, pas le sol, pas la race.

Conversation in the plane about Jesus and religion. Amy's neighbor is willing to grant some historical reality to Jesus, but sees no reason why he would have been the origin of a movement if not for his transformation by followers (arguably deceived or deceivers) into a messiah and god. She sees Jesus as a charitable person, but not out of the ordinary on this account. Left unsaid is that the kind of "charity" done by Jesus is not a philanthropy. Luke and others are still clear on this, even fifty years later. They require a real redistribution of earning capacities. Charity, for many moderns who are not so different in that from Greco-Roman societies, is a painless, ethically obvious behavior. Modern media made much of Mother Theresa. However, pointed criticisms of injustice, now like then, would not be accepted even by "liberal" political systems.

Two other aspects are left out also: one, the political and cosmic dimensions of the temple on which Jesus clearly had important things to say. How different was his attitude from that of other groups or individuals who were also critical of the authorities? Two, the very early testimonies about Jesus, left by those who reflected on Jesus' life and death very soon afterwards. We don't have J's *ipsisima verba*, of course, not those of those early followers. We do have early testimonies in the shape of Paul's letters, however, which were produced after a lengthy stay in early "Christian" communities, and we have Q or stages of it. These texts indicate a willingness to be faithful to something that they already saw in his life but didn't quite understand, as the later gospels still say, but with another goal in mind, namely to justify the messiahship and divinity of Jesus.

FRIDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2017

We biked up to the university and visited the Science library to see if there has been any change. The place looks empty of books except on the ground floor where about half (a little less) of the shelves are still full of books (mostly Lick collection and other important journals?). The first floor has tables and chairs. A poster at the entrance features a poor excuse for the transformation project: "leveraging new technologies to meet evolving needs." I thought that the opposite direction was more to the point: leveraging narrowly perceived needs to meet capitalist demands. The university projects the cost of the transformation of the library to be circa 40 million dollars. Who will be the donors? Tech companies? Will

acquisition of knowledge be tacked on to students' bills as a rental fee, in one fashion or another? Will the head librarian be rewarded for her aggressive move with a position in one of these companies?

Apollinaire:

Te souviens-tu du long orphelinat des gares
 Nous traversâmes des villes qui tout le jour tournaient
 Et vomissaient la nuit le soleil des journées

The tide of books on Paul doesn't let up since antiquity. In reading a review of a book on Galatians, I realize now, after listening to Swancutt and Fredriksen, that there actually has been quite a discussion in the recent literature on Paul's use of the language of adoption and sonship.⁷ The fundamental Pauline text at issue is Gal 4:1–7, which says:

¹ Λέγω δέ, ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον ὁ κληρονόμος νήπιός ἐστιν, οὐδὲν διαφέρει δούλου κύριος πάντων ὢν, ² ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ ἐπιτρόπου ἐστὶ καὶ οἰκονόμους ἄχρι τῆς προθεσμίας τοῦ πατρὸς. ³ οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς, ὅτε ἤμεν νήπιοι, ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου ἤμεθα δεδουλωμένοι. ⁴ ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός, γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον, ⁵ ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ, ἵνα τὴν υἰοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν. ⁶ ὅτι δὲ ἐστε υἱοί, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν κραῖζον· Αββα ὁ πατήρ. ⁷ ὥστε οὐκέτι εἶ δοῦλος ἀλλὰ υἱός· εἰ δὲ υἱός, καὶ κληρονόμος διὰ θεοῦ.

This text reminds me of the parables scattered in the later literature that use sonship, guardian, and absent father's authority to spell out an ideology of patience and fulfilment in time. These remaining parables are but scraps from a much larger store of them that explored the issues of authority, delayed empowerment, nature of sonship (as in Paul). The language of guardianship and fatherhood is the same as in Paul:

Parable. [The thing is similar to] a king who had many possessions, who had a little son [minor], and who had to go out to a coastal city-state. He said [to himself]: "If I place my possessions into my son's hand [under my son's authority], he stands to waste them [he is likely to waste them]. But here I'll appoint a guardian [Heb. from Greek ἐπίτροπος] until he grows up." From the time that this son grew up

7. See DAS, *Paul and the stories of Israel*. The Dec. 2017 RBL review refers to SCOTT, *Adoption as sons of God* and KEESMAAT, *Paul and his story:(re) interpreting the Exodus tradition*.

[legal majoritas?], he told him, to the guardian: “Give me the silver and the gold that Father [abba] placed for me into your hand.” He stood and gave him from his own in sufficiency for his upkeep. Then the son began to feel upset. He told him: “Is this all the silver and gold that Father placed in your hand?” He told him: “All that I gave you, I gave you exclusively from my own, but what your father placed[in trust] for you, behold, it is set up for you.” So did Moses speak to Israel: *The Lord your God will add unto you.*⁸

I note in the book by Jean L’Hour on Genesis that the ancient Mesopotamian myth Enuma Elish posits a return to origins as shaped by Marduk, vs a return to chaos (also at the origin, even older). L’Hour shows how radical Genesis 1–2 was, but skips the political dimensions of this view. He prefers to stay with theological and cosmological aspects that would have guided the authors, after the history of religions school.

SUNDAY, 17 DECEMBER 2017

Very interesting piece in *Salon* on Jerusalem and the failure of Netanyahu to understand the European states’ position, as well as the common front of opposition from Palestinians, Turkey, Iran, and others (but not Saudi Arabia). The most useful part for me is to see the changes that are just occurring, week by week if not day by day: 1) moves made by Turkey and Iran (who have much in common regarding Kurdistan especially, but also Syria and Irak), both countries needed by US though treated as enemy (Iran) and rogue (Turkey). 2) the role of Russia in Syria, and as getting much more chummy with Iran and Turkey. 3) the unanimous rejection by European states of the US position, and in parallel the move by many Arabs to go with the idea of East Jerusalem as capital of Palestine. 4) Not discussed in the article is the role of China. I suspect it is only economic in the whole area, so far, but very important (especially regarding Iran). I have the sense that the US is in retreat in the Indian Ocean—a good thing—by sheer incompetence. Obama tried to initiate a kind of orderly, partial, withdrawal, though he accepted to deliver a huge military package to Israel over ten years. Under Trump, the withdrawal is accelerating though with no order one can perceive. One would expect the military budget to decrease, yet no chance of that.

8. *Sifrei Dt*, pisqa 11, end (Finkelstein, p. 19, lines 4–11. See p. 16, pisqa 8, for a parable similar to that of the talents)

TUESDAY, 19 DECEMBER 2017

On the phone yesterday, Callum asks Amy, “How is your shoulder feeling, Babish?”

Il advint donc que le peuple de la Bible se trouva pris dans la noosphère hellénistique et romaine, puis se détacha de lui le rameau chrétien — et c’est ainsi que la pensée grecque, arrachée à la prudence séculaire de la raison, se vit entraînée à parler d’un dieu qui n’était pas le sien.⁹

A little reading on empire.¹⁰ New evaluations of empires started afresh in the nineties, with Hardt-Negri (*Empire*, 2000). Empires have not always been structures (or figures?) of tyranny and exploitation as a whole generation agreed to think, after Gramsci and others. See also Kumar’s new book on world empires, which purports to show that empires have taken many different shapes. This was certainly true of Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, etc. According to Burbank and Cooper, “empire” has been the most influential political form of the past two thousand years. The time would have come, they argue, to reexamine imperial political structures and influences without straight-jacketing them as a series of steps culminating with colonizing European nation-states. B and C propose that while conflict and war were a major aspect of imperial political development, there was also a locally produced (!) “transcendent” aspect to this historical form. The focus on war and exploitation shouldn’t mask the “networking” aspects of empires. I wonder if this is or was a good thing: Seneca would be a great exemplar. The main preoccupation of these large syntheses is to avoid a teleological view of the development. The latter is bound to bounce back with some force, given the map of modern empires since the eighteenth or even the sixteenth centuries. Still, it is good to be reminded that nation-states owe more to cross-fertilization by empires than they care to admit, especially now, with immigration.

WEDNESDAY, 20 DECEMBER 2017

I sent a number of letters and cards today. Writing by hand helped me to imagine the presence of those I was writing to and think with more inten-

9. Jerphagnon, *Des dieux et des mots : histoire de la pensée antique et médiévale*, 286–87.

10. A review by Leonard for “Net Online” of BURBANK and COOPER, *Empires in world history: power and the politics of difference*.

sity about what I would say if I were near them. In the afternoon, work in the garden, cleaning irises, gathering the wood left from the trimming, and weeding. I replaced the valve in our toilet (“Toto”). No intellectual work unless all of this passes for it.

THURSDAY, 21 DECEMBER 2017

Preparing for the family’s arrival: blue skies after a little frost last night. We are far from the White House reincarnation of Herod the Great. Françoise-Thérèse sent me a few pictures of Ifig from which I chose the one of Ifig with beaming Alana (fig. 12.1).



Figure 12.1 – *Alana et Ifig, 13 décembre*

Today, most of the UN nations, including Germany, surprisingly, repudiated the unnegotiated US decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of the state of Israel without any consideration of the Palestinian perceptions

and desires to see East Jerusalem as their capital. Part of that decision has been to make noises about transferring the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem but it is unlikely to occur soon. The US, via its ambassador Haley, had threatened to take retaliatory measures against the countries that would vote No. The need to announce retaliation seemed principally to be cessation of the US payments to the UN, which has happened before.

FRIDAY, 22 DECEMBER 2017

The article in the *New Yorker* on the profoundly human character of violence and abuse rather than on its “animalness” reminds me of old Catholic beliefs regarding souls and the dialectics that mark our capacity for good and evil. It would not be so much dehumanization as the capacity to exert terrifying power over others. And further: it is punishing another person for lacking the humanity that has left us in the selfsame situation and deprived us. No surprise then that one could imagine a transcendental devil.

I occasionally find interesting questions in conservative histories of ancient Israel, even if it is only after setting their arguments on their head.¹¹ Sicker dismisses source or historical criticism and elects to follow the theology of the Biblical authors as history.

Nowhere else in world literature, [...], can we find a basis for constructing a continuous and plausible narrative history of the origins of a nation, its early stages, and the progressive development of its political institutions [...] success [...] decline [...]¹²

It is indeed a history of sorts, but the story of its origins, initial success (Moses and Joshua?), and decline (kings), is a late theological explanation, as well as a story of resistance,

MONDAY, 25 DECEMBER 2017

Lucie covers Louarn the fox with a “blankie.” We all are looking for missing Russian dolls...

TUESDAY, 26 DECEMBER 2017

Callum and Lucie have kept us busy. Lucie has quite a personality and is developing language at an astonishing speed. She attaches French to me even

11. SICKER, *The rise and fall of the ancient Israelite states*.

12. *Ibid.*, 3.

though I'm not systematic at all and mix both languages. Both play with the French and US accents. Here are a few examples of language switches by Lucie. At the breakfast table, she suddenly says, "le soleil, tadkoz" looking at the bright copper sun image on the ceiling. "Un petit soleil, Lucie?" "Oui," says Callum, "petit." "Non, un grand soleil," says Lucie. They get into a verbal match about it. Yesterday, I take a long walk with Lucie and use French at all times. At one point, near the ocean, which I alternately call "la mer" and "l'océan," she says, "en anglais ocean..." Their French vocabulary is quite developed but only small sentences appear, for instance, "c'est quoi ça?" At the corner of Delaware and Almar, she points out the "palmier" and follows with "an owl" which I can't see. I repeat the word in English and she insists, "une chouette!"

We made cards yesterday and again this morning. Callum likes to make books and to write secret messages in both capitals and what he calls cursive or "fancy writing." I had thick bond paper (Arches 90?) which I cut in $4\frac{1}{4}$ by 6 cards. Lucie likes to press the brush onto the paper and exclaims every time, "un chapeau!" Callum writes his name in capitals (fig. 12.2), other (secret?) letters, and uses the full array of colors, tending to fill the whole space in splashes. I use these cards when writing to friends...



Figure 12.2 – *Last page of five-page booklet by Callum*

Our president seems completely absent from the pages of the *NYT*, thanked be the lord. I haven't told the story of the birth narrative to the children yet. When they are a little older, I can remind them of Herod the Great's side of history. I've begun to talk about history and chronology to Callum who became interested because of Lior, our eleven-year old neighbor. He and his sister Aolani often come to visit and play. He likes to read

my Tintin or Astérix albums, either in English, French, or Latin: the language doesn't matter. So, Callum asked me to read Astérix to him or, to my surprise, any of the nine *Histoire de Bretagne illustrée* albums by Secher and Honzec. I realized immediately that there was a problem with both the imaginary (“funny”) and purportedly historical approaches. Much of it is based on violence, conquest, resistance to conquest, in other words, “grabbing” and “being pushed back.” It is not simply a matter of explaining fights and war as grabbing and pushing, however, since tools and refined social and technical capacities are brought to bear in a way that fascinates minds. The gender aspect, especially for Astérix, is also awful. I bypass it for the moment to avoid getting drawn in explaining away the sexualization of young women. All the possible jokes in *Astérix* are based on high school pat phrases and their repetition in what is supposed to constitute the basic education of French boys. Tintin is another problem, more complicated, except for the racist *Tintin en Amérique* or *Tintin au Congo*, and even chunks of *Le lotus bleu*. In this latter case, the pig-like face of the Japanese evil character cannot be excused by knowing about the horrible “Nankin rape.” Both animals and humans get skewed in the readers’ imagination. Nor can one tell the story of the Chinese resistance without explaining the slanted feeling of white or European superiority that super-smart Tintin and his little Milou necessarily evoke, even though there are a few evil (American!) characters. As for the albums by Secher, history is a long story of wars fought to consolidate or weaken kings’ thrones. There are occasional vignettes on agriculture, food production, art, and even social exploitation, but usually not at any length and not giving any clue about the radically different, quiet side of history that aims at life and is made of trust, friendship, generosity, even self-sacrifice (pace the post-moderns) and stubbornness (long-suffering?).

WEDNESDAY, 27 DECEMBER 2017

L’Hour’s summary of his conclusions on 1:26–27 in chapter 11 is a profound prologue to thinking about the torah as a whole.¹³ I realize more than ever that the final P writer of Gen 1–2:4a, and the redactor of Gen 1–11 have much if not all of at least the books of Exodus and Leviticus in mind (or before them) as parts of a theological, radical view of the history of Israel. In line with so-called functional interpretations of Gen 1:26–27, rather than the ontological and relational ones, which are either rejected or not followed,

13. L’HOUR, *Genèse 1–2,4a. Commentaire*, 178–80.

he makes the following points:

1. The *adam* is not divine, he (generic) is a creature and an image of the divinity.
2. The adam is image of God, not an image of an image (or statue).
3. One cannot see a difference of quality between image and resemblance; the second word is not a correction or an addition. I am not so sure, as **צלם**, used polemically, could perhaps still be confusing in the world of images and kings of the NE even if here it is applied in a radical way to the cult of idols.
4. There is no need to seek what would be more particularly acceptable in human beings as an image of God. Their whole being is meant by the author as part of this image.
5. No polarity of sexes in the creating divinity. The *adam*'s male and female aspects are an integral part of the divine image. My own impression, upon reading this precise commentary it that this first chapter insists on gathering and integration.
6. The whole humanity is proclaimed as image of God, and this fundamental choice doesn't change even after the flood and more appropriately throughout the vicissitudes that Israel and Judah underwent before P wrote. No story of fault in spite of Gen 6:11–13 (evil present in the world for P).
7. Image and likeness do not define the ontological status of humanity but the representation and revelation of God. Humanity, not the kings alone, reveals God on earth.¹⁴ I would say, it reveals the dialectics of good and evil while stretching the divinity both as radically invisible and astonishingly close since the “functional image” carries in each and everyone something of the grand aspirations of all.
8. (speculative) the *adam* created after the temple for divine glorification? Think of the priestly dynamics in the sanctuary.
9. The divine word dominates (and recomposes the *tatbericht*). His image too? but it remains silent in this prologue.

THURSDAY, 28 DECEMBER 2017

Last night and again tonight, Lucie comes to see me in the study when she is ready for bed. She sits on my lap and we look at a video of Marie-Claire Alain

14. SCHMIDT, *Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift: zur Überlieferungsgeschichte von Genesis 1, 1-2, 4a und 2, 4b-3, 24*, 144.

playing her brother Jehan's *Litanies*. When the title rolls, Lucie exclaims,



Figure 12.3 – *Callum et Lucie à leurs pinceaux, mardi 26 décembre 2017*

“M!” and points to the beginning of Marie-Claire Alain’s name. She likes to see Alain’s feet working on the *pédalier*, “avec les pieds.” When I draw her attention to the keyboards and speak of piano, she volunteers, “Dada au piano.” All through the film, about twelve minutes, she doesn’t wiggle at all and looks intently at the movements of the fingers.

FRIDAY, 29 DECEMBER 2017

Quiet tiptoeing of minuscule feet this morning at the usual time, 7:15.

Amy raises the issue of training in Title IX that the university administrators think should be required from all mentors, no matter how voluntary and tenuous the nature of their relationship to the university. The putatively ethical demand can hardly mask the failure of years of digital courses to change behavior. It seems that the methods should be re-examined and the automaticity expected from faceless education should be replaced by something more human, more courageous and relational. Are statistics kept since 1972 (Title IX) on cases of misuse of power in work and gender relationships?

When were the twin stories of creation written and why is this important (idea to be pursued of negative, open theology)? Warner's recent discussion of this topic, in regard to the background of Gen 2:24, is not helpful.¹⁵ He doesn't discuss Otto, Blenkinsopp, Schüle, and others who are mentioned by L'Hour and who argue that the second story is more recent than the P and presumed P^R story of Gen 1-2:4a.¹⁶ Warner is far less explicit than L'Hour about the differences between the two stories, differences that are important in figuring out the original thoughts of the ancient writers and audiences. L'Hour shows that the first story of creation presents a self-contained, integrated result of the divine word and activity, a wholesome world without need for relationship—the human being is silent—while the second story is one of relationship with things apparently missing or in need of being completed. Still, Warner may be right to show through the vocabulary that the text of 2:24 takes its distances from standard family and social relationships or at least questions them, in continuation with the anti-idolatrous and anti-monarchic broadening in 1:16–17 of the *adam* in the image of the divinity.

SATURDAY, 30 DECEMBER 2017

Blaise and Liz arrived today as Judith was leaving to catch the plane to go back to Portland. Tonight, we have an adult dinner while Cal and Lucie are in the bath and selling coffee or other drinks to passers-by. We talked about old movies by Godard, Tati, Bergman, and others. Once out of the bath, Lucie doesn't feel hungry. Only too late do we realize that she is sick: it all gushes out, forcing a thorough clean-up of the kitchen...

SUNDAY, 31 DECEMBER 2017

At the neighboring park this morning with Callum, Lucie, Lior and Aolani (our neighbors). The last day of the year is grey and not very cold. I read about Stephen Greenblatt's latest book on Adam and Eve in the *TLS*. He notes the importance of the story for Judaism, Christianity and Islam but sees in it a negative frame of mind until the modern revolution prepared

15. WARNER, "Marriage and intermarriage in Genesis 2:24," 273. He starts from TOSATO, "On Genesis 2:24," who dates this verse to the post-exilic period.

16. L' HOUR, *Genèse 1-2,4a. Commentaire*, 186, n87; OTTO, "Die Paradieserzählung Genesis 2-3"; BLENKINSOPP, *Creation, un-creation, re-creation*; SCHÜLE, *Der Prolog der hebräischen Bibel*. Rendtorff? Clines?



Figure 12.4 – *Callum snuggling with Blaise and Liz*

by Milton and others. No reflection on the anti-mythological thrust of the story or realization of its political impact already in antiquity, apparently.

Tonight, we went to see the local SC–Felton train depart from the Boardwalk. It was festooned with lights, many children were aboard, the blows of the horn made Lucie cover her ears, we waved at the engineer and the passengers. We walked along the wharf and admired the sea lions sleeping on the lower docks. Back at home at about 18H30, a meal of mutton cutlets, potatoes diced and mixed with ham and parmesan, salad, and beans had been prepared by Uncle Blaise, the table was set. Callum helped me make a fire. Now Liz and Blaise have been elected by the children to read to them and are doing so (fig. 12.5)...

Story written under Callum's dictation:

CAL IS IN THE TRAIN CABIN. THE SIGNALS ARE ALL CLEAR.
THERE IS FOG IN PARIS. THAT MEANS IT'S A CRASH. THE TGV
DOES NOT DERAIL. IT IS VERY STABLE. EVERYBODY IS SAFE AND
HAPPY. CAL

How to incorporate Genesis 2:5 in a reflection on work and the tension between transcendence and immanence? וְאָדָם אִין לְעֵבֶד אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה The first chapter of Genesis gives the overall impression of a world of fullness, teem-



Figure 12.5 – *Blaise, Callum, Liz, and Lucie*

ing matter, fecundity of life, with everything in place. There is of course the work of creation and doing, yet it appears to be effortless and the magic fruit of the divine, authoritative word that wraps and radicalizes an older story of real making (Schmidt's *Tatbericht*). The *shabbat* of 2:1–4a is not a rest earned by an exhausted or task-oriented divinity, but the suspension in which not only the direct blessing but the consecration and glorification of all humanity made in the divine image can completely unfold itself, without the abusive, illusory mediation by kings and other authorities.¹⁷ The

17. I'm reacting to L'Hour.

vision of the priestly author of Gen 1–2:4a is part of a larger structure that incorporates the book of Exodus and especially its reshaping of the foundation of the temple model at the end. The only work in this vision is cultic and an image of the divine making or doing: festivals, sacral year, sacrificial rites, hymns, consecrated times and spaces are a transfiguration of daily work and necessities. This vision is radically different from that of Near Eastern political ideology in which kings were prominent and could be the only claimants to be *imagines aut simulacra deorum*. But it doesn't eliminate the possibility of abuse by priestly elites of claims to divine power by proximity and by specialized knowledge, in the absence of kings or even if future kings are thought of as mythic messiahs to come. Or at least it is possible to read Gen 1 more negatively than L'Hour, that is, more in line with the interests of the priesthood after the fall of the kingdom of Judah, and not let oneself be subjugated by what looks like a universal reframing of the meaning and goal of humanity.

The second story of creation returns to this question of politics. In a story of lack, absence, misconstruals, disparate and subtly transformed intentions, hierarchy is reintroduced, especially in regard to the work necessary for survival and continuity of the group. Did this text as we have it precede the redaction of the first chapter or follow it as a sort of necessary, realistic correction of an Isaiah-like utopia? By what group, what authorial and authorized hand?

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