

Greco-Roman Culture and the New Testament: Studies Commemorating the Centennial of the Pontifical Biblical Institute. Edited by David E. Aune and Frederick E. Brenk. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 143. Boston: Brill, 2012. Pp. xiv + 218. \$144.

This is the last of four volumes published to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Pontifical Biblical Institute (1909–2009). Given the Institute’s location in Rome, it is fully appropriate that one of these volumes was devoted entirely to the interpretation of early Christian and Hellenistic Jewish texts in light of their Greco-Roman contexts. The book opens with a brief preface that narrates highlights from the Institute’s history, and with Brenk’s short introduction to the nine essays that comprise the volume. The contributors are among the most important scholars working in the field of biblical and classical studies, and some of their essays contain a number of penetrating insights on NT texts, making it an important resource for the topics treated.

One of the best discussions is by the late Dieter Zeller, who had a long-standing interest in the Sayings of the Seven Sages of Greek tradition. He compares these examples of gnomic wisdom with Paul’s parenesis in Romans 12, pointing out crucial differences between Paul and the Sages. Brenk’s discussion of marriage (focusing on Plutarch and Paul) and Gretchen J. Reydams-Schils’s chapter on Clement of Alexandria complement each other nicely and help locate various Christian views of marriage within their Greco-Roman philosophical contexts. Some essays pose challenges to widely held views. Justin Taylor, for example, seeks to refute Vernon Robbins’s claim that the Passion Narrative was the product of the rhetorical amplification of the *chreiai* predicting Jesus’ death and resurrection. And Troels Engberg-Pedersen challenges almost all current readings of the Fourth Gospel by arguing that its use of *logos* and *pneuma* are best understood in light of Stoic philosophy. The remaining essays by Bruce W. Winter (the imperial cult at Corinth), Adela Yarbro Collins (journeys to the upper and outer regions of the world), David E. Aune (Rev 3:20 and Greco-Egyptian divination texts), and John J. Collins (the Sibyl and apocalypses) add to the richness of the volume, making it a fitting tribute to the Institute’s continuing importance in fostering biblical scholarship.

John T. Fitzgerald
University of Notre Dame

True and Holy: Christian Scripture and Other Religions. By Leo D. Lefebure. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2014. Pp. ix + 274. \$30.

Lefebure’s survey of Christian attitudes toward religious others is a welcome addition to the plurality of books on Christian theologies of religions. L. documents the shift in Christian engagement with Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism by examining how Scripture has been used to justify a range of theological interpretations of non-Christians. He successfully demonstrates that both a “hermeneutics of hostility” and a

“hermeneutics of generosity and hospitality” have been present throughout the history of Christian encounter with religious others.

After the two overview chapters on “engaging religious difference” and “hermeneutics,” in the next four chapters L. turns to the complex history of Christian attitudes toward, and interpretations of, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, revealing that both hostile and generous hermeneutics are at work in each case.

In L.’s historical narratives, the negative understandings of Jews and Muslims are seen to result from how Christians interpreted them through particular ecclesial contexts—and not necessarily through biblical contexts. For example, traditionally Jews were viewed through a Christian supersessionist lens that regarded Muslims as successors of the Arian heretics. Modern biblical interpretation helps correct past distortions and biases and allows for Christians to approach their Abrahamic brothers and sisters with respect and fairness.

In the cases of Hindus and Buddhists, the Christian views of them have been informed largely by the biblical condemnations of idolatry. Earlier Christian missionaries often interpreted these religious traditions as a form of idolatry or devil worship without any deep engagement with their sacred texts and philosophical traditions. Still, modern appreciation for Hindu and Buddhist worldviews and religious commitments has fostered a more positive evaluation by Christians.

In the final chapter, drawing from the works of Bernard Lonergan and René Girard, L. invites the reader to a conversion of heart in viewing, understanding, and judging the religious other. The love of God and goodwill toward others should be the principal guidelines for all religious people—Christians and others—to walk as fellow pilgrims on the journey seeking the holy, the true, the good, and the beautiful (225–26).

L. persuasively demonstrates that Christian self-understanding is intrinsically linked to Christian interpretation of the Bible. This understanding can in turn alter Christians’ view of religious others. While the book is informative as far as it goes, an additional chapter on Christian interpretations of Chinese religious traditions would have enhanced the volume.

Anh Q. Tran, S.J.

Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University

Christ Child: Cultural Memories of a Young Jesus. By Stephen J. Davis. New Haven: Yale University, 2014. Pp. x + 417. \$45.

Some of our Christian forebears were not content to leave the early life of Jesus as blank as do the Gospels. Authors of the Apocrypha, for example, filled in the years of his youth with tales that leave one astonished about the purported wonders he performed. The Apocrypha appealed to the credulous and to those ignorant of the authority of the scriptural canon.

Davis’s volume examines one of these spurious texts, the *Paidika*. While Greek in origin, it has a murky history beginning with oral transmissions as early as the second