

The Late-Antique Bible and Its Impact

Third Annual Symposium on the Transmission of the Bible

The Bible served as a major text in the Late-Antique period, with profound impact upon many realms, both East and West. Significant developments for the Bible include the canonization of its Books; the adoption of the codex form; the promulgation of Christianity as the religion of the Roman empire; the production of translations into divers languages, including Jerome's influential Latin Vulgate version; the invention of varied apparatus for study of the text; extensive scriptural exegesis; numerous theological controversies; new imagery for scenes and episodes; and the intensive production of copies of the Bible or parts of the Bible, some of them elaborately illustrated, as with the Quedlinburg Itala and the Ashburnham Pentateuch. Such achievements profoundly affected the transmission of the Bible.

We plan to hold a symposium on the subject on **Monday, 24 March 1997**. Organized by Mildred Budny, it is sponsored jointly by the Program in Medieval Studies at Rutgers University, by Late Antique Studies at Princeton University, and by the Research Group on Manuscript Evidence, based at Princeton and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. This multidisciplinary symposium will examine aspects of the transmission of the Bible to and through the Late-Antique period, variously as text, artifact, and work of art, from the creation of Late-Antique approaches to the Bible, to their impact on other regions and periods, ranging from the Anglo-Saxon and Carolingian to the Romanesque and beyond.

Our speakers and respondents represent a variety of disciplines and centers. They will present new and cumulative work on divers media, from manuscripts to mosaics, which illuminates how the study, interpretation, (re)production, and promulgation of the Bible profoundly shaped ideas about salvation, art, and conduct. This work also reveals the circumstances under which Late-Antique approaches to the Bible emerged, the influences to which they responded, and the forms, functions, imagery, and legacy which they engendered. Such detailed analysis opens the way for fresh re-assessment and refines questions for further, deeper exploration.

The symposium will meet in Traves Hall in the Douglass College Center of Rutgers University at New Brunswick. The Center stands at the corner of George Street and Nichol Avenue. Parking is available in the parking deck behind the Center. Coffee and refreshments will be available from 9 a.m. We will begin at 9:30 a.m., adjourn for lunchtime from about 12:30 to 2 p.m., and continue until about 5 p.m., with morning and afternoon coffee breaks. The symposium will be followed by a reception from 5:30 p.m. at the Dean's House at Douglass College. The Program in Medieval Studies gratefully acknowledges the generous support of Bridget Gellert Lyons, Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts and Sciences of Rutgers University, and the gracious hospitality of Dean Barbara A. Shailor, Douglass College.

No registration fee is charged for the symposium; participants are expected to cover their own lunches, which can be found at the cafeteria at Douglass College. So that we might know how many to expect for seating and refreshments, please let us know in advance if you plan to attend. You can reply by e-mail to epmcl@rci.rutgers.edu or to the Department of Art History at Rutgers either by FAX at (908) 932-1261 or by telephone, between 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on weekdays, at (908) 932-7041.

We aim to run the symposium on informal lines, including a round-table discussion. This will give much opportunity to respond to the speakers and ask questions. We hope that all will participate and contribute to the discussion from their areas of interest and expertise.



Mildred Budny
Director
Research Group on Manuscript Evidence

Program

Elizabeth Parker McLachlan (Rutgers University), Barbara Shailor (Douglass College), and Mildred Budny: "Welcome."

James Marrow (*Princeton University*): "Introductory Remarks." These remarks set the stage for the symposium.

James J. John (*Cornell University, Ithaca*): "A Brief Survey of Extant Late-Antique Latin Biblical Texts." The surviving texts in this genre are here classified, on the basis of E.A. Lowe's *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, by their present location, contents, version (*Vetus Latina* or Vulgate), script, writing material, format, and place and date of origin. The survey reveals varied patterns of production, transmission, and preservation for this formative period in the transmission of the Bible.

David H. Wright (*University of California, Berkeley*): "The Bible of Innocent I (?)" The Quedlinburg Itala fragments attest to a luxurious Old Latin manuscript of the four Books of Kings, made in Rome around 400. Originally it extended to about 190 folios of text and 75 pages of illustrations, mostly with four scenes to a page. Some mosaics at S. Maria Maggiore (432-440) have this same kind of very detailed episodic narrative, particularly for the life of Jacob, and might come from a similarly illustrated manuscript of Genesis. Who commissioned such books and why? Innocent I (401-417), the first Bishop of Rome to establish papal primacy in matters of doctrine and discipline, took a special interest in establishing the canon of the Bible. Would he not have wanted a series of luxurious, fully illustrated Biblical manuscripts?

Dorothy Hoogland Verkerk (*University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill*): "Chaotic Narrative Structure in the Ashburnham Pentateuch." The illuminations in this controversial late-sixth-century manuscript comprise one full-page scene, multiple scenes on one folio, and numerous folios with both text and illustrations. The apparently chaotic ordering of the narrative scenes within the book has not yet been satisfactorily addressed. This paper explores their sequences and suggests a solution in oral rather than written narrative structure.

— Lunch Break —

Barbara Apelian Beall (*Brown University, Providence*): "Resolving the Conundrum of the *Codex Amiatinus*." Widely noted as the earliest extant complete Vulgate Bible, this large-format manuscript, made in Northumbria at Wearmouth-Jarrow before 716, has not yet been studied as a whole. Although its date and place of origin are securely established, many of its aspects remain highly controversial, notably its illuminated pages displaying Late-Antique characteristics. A new study of the manuscript, within the context of both its type of book and Northumbrian religious life of its time, casts fresh light on those pages and on its form, function, and production.

Mildred Budny (*Research Group on Manuscript Evidence and Princeton University*): "The Import and Impact of the Eusebian Canon Tables." Devised in the fourth century by Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, using the Ammonian system of Gospel-section numeration, these tables list the concordances between the four Gospels, in ten Canons, and thus offer a powerful tool for study and comprehension of the texts. They aim to show the essential harmony between the different Gospels, however varied the individual accounts might seem. Widely adopted in manuscripts up to the thirteenth century in the West and even later in the East, the canon tables offered scope for elaborate presentation in frameworks or arcades, which emphasize their significance as structures or portals giving access to the meaning of the Gospels as a whole.

Carl P.E. Springer (*Illinois State University, Normal*): "In the Beauty of the Lilies: Prophecy, Exegesis, and the Nativity in Late Antiquity." This paper examines the Late-Antique application of prophetic passages from the Old Testament (and Virgil) to the Gospel accounts of the birth of Christ. It focuses upon examples from poetry and art which may afford a glimpse into more popular forms of scriptural exegesis than the texts usually considered in such typological studies, for example patristic sermons and commentaries. Artists of the period as well as patristic poets (notably Proba, Prudentius, and Sedulius) helped to give prophetic "figures" applied to the Nativity a visual and literal reality, with important implications for the subsequent iconographical tradition.

Leonid A. Beliaev (*Institute of Archaeology, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, and Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton*): "Between Paganism and Christianity: Burial Rites in Medieval Rus' from the Ninth to Thirteenth Centuries." Recent archaeological excavations provide much new evidence for the process of Christian conversion and baptism of the tribes of the Old Russian state, the interaction with orthodox canon law, and the influences of the first Biblical translations upon new burial rites. By surveying both the material and current debate by Russian scholars, the paper will bring to Western attention new discoveries on the impact of early Christianity on, and in, Russian soil.

— Reception —