

Genesis creation narrative (Genesis 2:4b–3:24) and the parallel with Wisdom and the Tree of life in Proverbs 3:18 demonstrating “the creative activity of Wisdom/Sophia is present at Golgotha” (475). Thus, Golgotha is transformed from misery to majesty, highlighting even more the glorification of the event.

Her correction of the textual addition to John 19:27 (*eis ta idia*, translated as “into his own ~~home~~”) is considered and balanced and her conclusion that the addition of “home” obscures the textual allusion to John 1:11 is correct. From the cross, Jesus’s words create a “new relationship between himself and the disciple (and all disciples ... They become ‘children of God’ as the Prologue promised). The divine filiation brought about in this scene brings Jesus’s work and mission to completion” (490).

As a part two, I feared it would not live up to part one. I am glad to say I was wrong. Not only does her second volume live up to the first, I believe it surpasses it. It deepens and expands the horizons of encounter between Jesus and Sophia and the books of Sirach and Wisdom to the benefit of scholars and preachers alike.

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JAMES CROSSLEY and ROBERT J. MYLES, *Jesus: A Life in Class Conflict* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2023). Pp. xii + 281. Paperback. £19.99.

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*Jesus: A Life in Class Conflict* seeks to offer a corrective to modern studies of Jesus which it views as avoiding considerations of class and the various social and material factors underlying it. In doing so it eschews the “great man of history” trope and offers instead an interpretation of the evidence for the Jesus movement based on “historical materialism,” a history from below and a history of class conflict. The evidence is drawn principally from the earliest sources for the movement (i.e., from Mark, Q and to a lesser extent from Paul, who after all tells us little of the pre-Easter Jesus) as well as Josephus. The authors fully recognise the problems in ascertaining particulars of the life of Jesus (especially his self-understanding) and the problematic nature of the chronology implied in the gospel narratives. They employ the various criteria of authenticity (an intra-Jewish focus, multiple attestations, embarrassment, tendency of tradition—see, for example, the treatment of Mark 14:22–25 and the institution of the Lord’s Supper) to determine whether a “theme or issue has proximity to the historical Jesus” (17). It is not always clear whether the historical Jesus or the Jesus movement (i.e., “the nebulous collective gathered around Jesus during his adulthood and in the wake of his death”) is the object of discussion here.

In essence the movement is the product of its times and conditions, where exploitation by the Roman imperium and urban elites led to a millenarian movement of peasant resistance seeking a new world order. This was linguistically

conceived in terms of kings and their kingdoms but now with an inverted structure, i.e., “a dictatorship of the peasantry” where the first will be last and the last first. Josephus is drawn on to argue in a very general fashion for the gentrification of Galilee; an urban elite living in luxury and an agrarian peasantry living at near subsistence level. Much is made here of a supposed social dislocation caused in the rebuilding/founding of Sepphoris and Tiberias (*Ant.* 18.36–39). The process of gentrification is assumed to be exploitative by the elite with the result that little room remains for distinctions in the classes of persons in-between. Farmers, agricultural labourers, fishermen, artisans, building and transport workers, slaves etc. form a rather amorphous class. On the one hand, Ben Sira is drawn on to portray the elites’ attitude to manual workers as a whole; however, this undifferentiated attitude is then tacitly assumed to typify a socioeconomic reality across a broad range of occupations. In other words, agrarian workers are considered *en masse* as having little more than just enough to survive. However, a brief look at other provinces and territories under Roman imperium shows that such an assumption cannot be supported. In particular, the reader’s attention is drawn to the recent work on the subject of associations in antiquity. On the other hand, some forms of differentiation are assumed, e.g., the scribal, priestly and retainer classes, and the “relatively elite” or “semi-elite” or “elite” women who offer financial support to the Jesus movement. However, it is unclear whether these persons can be covered by what Crossley and Myles call “internal hierarchies in the peasantry.” Perhaps these latter groups are better seen as “the rich” to whom Jesus’s mission with its message of repentance and surrender of wealth was directed. But that mission was very much limited in its urban scope. In either case, the reader is left with three ill-defined classes, the elite, the rich and the peasantry.

In their analysis, Jesus, who was possibly illiterate, emerged from the peasantry and was influenced by the Baptist and his teaching of an imminent “end-time comeuppance” of the elite. Like John, Jesus was seen to derive his status as a “religious organizer.” Neither questioned the role of the Temple’s effectiveness in divine forgiveness and there was no idea of a mission beyond that to the Jewish nation. Jesus’s status as religious organizer was based on his perceived healing ministry. His authority presented a challenge to the scribes’ authority and was questioned by them. Such disputes are displayed in early teachings of the Jesus movement, e.g., on the place of the sabbath, on divorce, on food purity. However, it was the “pivotal role” that Jesus played in the Temple disturbance that led to his trial (Mark 15:1 rather than Mark 14:53–65) and death. However, there is no evidence for such a disturbance though the authors allege its likelihood in view of the Passover crowds and Jesus’s crucifixion between two bandits. Be that as it may, Crossley and Myles entertain as plausible the proposition that Jesus was a “deranged insurrectionist” and a “fool,” who was “willing to die for his cause” and who Pilate “sent to his cross.” *In fine*, the Jesus movement’s millenarian manifesto “culminated in a failed revolution.”

As a millenarian revolutionary Jesus probably foresaw his own death. And in this regard Crossley and Myles understand Mark 10:45 as an early tradition that interpreted Jesus's death as the price of freedom (λύτρον) from hegemonic exploitation paid on behalf of the righteous insiders ("the many"). As the authors observe, "That the movement conceived of their sacrifice for the national interest in economic terms is another important link, whether intentional or not, to the perceived wrongs of the social and economic changes in Galilee that had first sparked the revolutionary millenarianism of the Jesus movement." Accordingly, the crucifixion was at an early stage in the tradition conceived under a "theology of martyrdom" that sought to "turn Roman hegemonic masculinity on its head" and to counter the otherwise shameful of his death. A possibly contemporary Jewish text (4 Macc. 17:20–22) is cited in support of such a theology. Though Jesus was possibly buried in an unknown tomb (the women's not telling the disciples about an empty tomb masking this fact), post-Easter followers soon believed in Jesus's appearances to various members (1 Cor 15:3–8) and these appearances in time took on the status of a bodily resurrection.

As with any theory that is used to analyse literary records, certain features are highlighted whilst others are backgrounded, based on whether they support the theory. Four instances may be cited:

- a. The crowd (the peasantry which give "expression to disenchantment with the material changes affecting Galilee and Judea") that follows Jesus is seen as a historical quantum and not a literary creation. But little else is alleged in support of this contention. Crossley and Myles see themselves as "writing a history from below," and seek to stress the agency and importance of the crowd. But a crowd can be "contradictory or irrational" and can turn in an instant from a "feast crowd" at his entry to Jerusalem (though this particular crowd is also seen as a literary creation) to a "baiting crowd" at his trial and crucifixion;
- b. The itinerancy of the Jesus movement is viewed not as a "lifestyle choice" but as a symptom of the disruption to traditional familial values and to the livelihood of the peasantry;
- c. The potential for disturbance among the Passover crowds, Jesus's overturning of the money tables and his crucifixion between two bandits are read as indications that Jesus had instigated a political disturbance which led to his arrest, trial and death; and
- d. The contention that the movement's mission to non-Jews arose as it moved to an urban context where one's neighbour, whom one was enjoined to love as oneself, was just as likely to be a gentile.

Crossley and Myles rightly criticise as anachronistic the use of such terms as "middle-class" and "entrepreneurial," and question the use of the concept of "trickle down" in the distribution of wealth in the ancient world. Such criticism

is reasonable but one wonders why they then describe the twelve disciples as a “politburo” or “central committee,” some members of the crowd as “card-carrying members of the Jesus party,” the aim of millenarianism as the “dictatorship of the peasantry,” Gehenna as “gulag,” the peasantry as “freedom fighters” and their struggle as “class warfare,” and the teaching of the Jesus movement as a “manifesto.”

Perhaps the most contentious element is the description of John’s gospel as “proto-fascist.” The gospel is further compared to Nazism in its use of totalitarian language (John 14:6), the exclusivity of which is based on a form of spiritual (born from above) racism. The expression “the Jews” to designate the gospel’s opponents is also highlighted. But the argument fails to take note of recent debate over this title and its loaded nature in modern usage. “The Judeans,” it is suggested, is a better translation of the title. Furthermore, the criticism of John’s gospel avoids any consideration of its context of composition; here one thinks especially of the apparent dispute over admission to the synagogue (cf. John’s use of ἀποσυνάγωγος) and the problem that this might pose to a religious community that was novel in Roman eyes. John’s gospel appears to be judged by the use to which it was later put.

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EMANUEL TOV, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 4th ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2022). Pp. xlv + 524. Hardcover. US\$90.

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Having “grown up” with the first edition (1992) of Emanuel Tov’s *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, and reviewed both the second (2001) and third (2012) editions, it is a joy to have the opportunity of reviewing Tov’s latest edition. Tov is a model scholar in that he is always re-evaluating his previous views, searching for better ways to understand the evidence.

It is difficult in a review of whatever length to do justice to a work of this scope and importance. Tov has produced quite a different book to previous editions. He spends five pages in the Preface just outlining some of the major changes in the structure in the book and in his understanding of the subject matter (xxi–xxv). One of the most significant differences that he flags is the lessening of focus on the technical details of the various sub-fields of textual criticism, and adding more focus on practical engagement with the texts themselves. This is related to a complete reorganisation of the book, with his Part I: “Hebrew and Translated Scripture: The Texts” presenting the description of the evidence of the main textual witnesses, while his Part II: “Practicing Textual Criticism” introduces the theoretical bases and practicalities of textual criticism. It should be noted that the change of focus does not mean that this edition of the book lacks a detailed introduction to the textual witnesses discussed. In fact, for example,