

Ambitionen är inte att summera Paulus syn på lagen, utan att lyfta fram andras röster om aposteln. Boken kan i den meningen beskrivas som heuristisk, vilket öppnar för fortsatta studier och förfining av de metoder som används. Författaren noterar själv att de kriterier för spegelläsning som tillämpas, vilka hämtas direkt från John Barclay, kan ifrågasättas och problematiseras (207). Vidare kan vi notera att en av förtjänsterna med *Paul Percieved*, nämligen att Apostlagärningarna ges en betydande roll, hade behövt en mer omfattande diskussion gällande vilka texter som är relevanta och hur skriften relaterar till Paulus. Sammanfattningsvis är *Paul Perceived* en viktig och intressant bok vilken alla som är intresserade av Paulus och lagen bör läsa.

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*A History of Death in the Hebrew Bible*

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The present study is the outcome of long time research by Matthew J. Suriano (University of Maryland). With this book, he emerges as one of the leading experts on the topic of afterlife and death in Ancient Israel. The immensely fascinating study brings together archaeological data as well as study of a number of Hebrew Bible texts.

An introduction (1–38) outlines various problems connected with the study of afterlife in Ancient Israel. One of the keys to understanding the concept of death is that the burial was an act of taking care of the dead, and with this in mind Suriano underlines that we should understand death in Ancient Israel as *relational*. The purpose of the burial and of the care for the dead was to set the dead in relation to both the living and to the ancestors, which the dead would hope to eventually reunite with. The burial also sought to ensure the relation of the dead to YHWH. As such, the burial can be described as a *ritual* with a specific purpose. As an overarching concept, Suriano uses *discourse*, here in the sense of “how the living spoke of the dead,” which can be examined through the “language, social institutions, and cultural practices” (35) of

the Levant, and especially Judah. Death was perceived as a transition and was thus *liminal*. Suriano notes that as opposed to our Western concepts of dying, in Ancient Israel a person died *after* death, whereas in our Western thinking, the process of dying is something that occurs *before* death, and when death has occurred, we are dead. In contrast to this, in Ancient Israel the burial and the tomb emphasized the liminality of death. After *the first burial*, when the body was placed on the bench of the tomb, the corpse decayed, which was viewed as an act of dying. After the person had died, that is, after the corpse had completely decayed, *the second burial* was performed, which consisted of gathering the bones and placing them in a repository.

In the first main part of the study (39–128), Suriano gathers a great amount of archaeological data with emphasis on the Judahite rock-cut bench tomb. This part is divided into three chapters: “Death as Transition in Judahite Mortuary Practices”; “The History of the Judahite Bench Tomb”; and “Writing and the Tomb.” The first chapter seeks to understand the Judahite tomb as a ritual space, through which death was “ritualized and traced through the movement of the body” (50). The second chapter traces the history of the Judahite rock-cut bench tomb from early Iron Age and onwards. Suriano notes that cemeteries were generally *extramural*, that is, placed outside the cities, which distinguishes them from the intramural cemeteries among, for example, Assyrians and Arameans (91). There was also a difference in mortuary practice as compared to other Ancient Near East practices. In the third chapter Suriano examines funerary inscriptions and Hebrew epigraphs on tombs, a fairly unique feature in a Northwest Semitic setting. The inscriptions sought to set the dead in relation to both ancestors and the living, as well as the deity (YHWH). This last feature marks the idea that, as Suriano importantly notes, the dead was not perceived as being “disconnected from their deity” (127).

The second main part of the study (133–258) has the title “Death and the Afterlife in the Hebrew Bible” and is an examination of a number of different Hebrew Bible texts that speak of the dead and the afterlife in various ways. In the first chapter, “Care for the Dead,” Suriano

sets out to understand the Biblical Hebrew word *nepeš* as “defunct soul,” which he relates to two features: “Care for the Defunct Soul” and “Feeding the Dead” (133–176). Suriano refutes the older scholarly perception of *nepeš* as “a monistic entity consisting of a unified soul and body” (136). In his discussion of the “soul concept” of Ancient Israel, he draws on the work of Michel Foucault, Mary Douglas, and, a bit surprisingly, Johannes Pedersen. What connects these three is, according to Suriano, their sensitiveness about specific cultural practices. In line with his idea of *nepeš* as an “embodied soul,” Suriano notes that the work of both Pedersen and Foucault “suggests that cultural concepts of the body can be defined in terms of the soul” (137). In the section on “Feeding the Dead,” to my mind one of the most evocative in the entire study, Suriano discusses a number of texts that show how the living fed the dead both food and drinks. Again, this shows how death was *relational*. Suriano’s interpretation Hos 9:4 (already outlined in a 2014 article) is fascinating, and it is interesting to note that for example the Hosea commentary by Hans Walter Wolff makes a completely different interpretation, in fact the very opposite of Suriano’s. An important piece of information is also the Katumuwa stele, where the inscription mentions the offering of both wine and meat to the *nbš* of Katumuwa. Overall, the chapter “Care for the Dead” makes for a very fascinating read.

Suriano then goes on to discuss a number of other texts under the chapter titles “The Narrative of Bones,” “The Tomb and the Identity of the Dead,” “Death, Dying, and the Liminality of Sheol” (focusing a number of Psalms), and ending with an epilogue suggestively entitled “The Invisible Tomb.”

To conclude, Suriano’s work is very well written and well researched, and is also very pleasant to read. One of the biggest merits of the work is, to my mind, Suriano’s use of the concept *relational*, which nicely brings together different aspects of death and postmortem existence, enabling the reader to see the overarching lines in both archeological data and texts.

Some questions may be asked, though. For example, why is the archeological data discussed first, and then the texts? There may be good

reasons to do this, but the archeological data discussed only stretches to the end of the Iron Age, whereas the second main part also includes fairly late texts (such as Job). This makes for a certain discrepancy between the two parts. Also, in the first part it is specifically the *Judahite* tomb and mortuary practices that are focused, whereas the perspective is much wider in the second part. Lastly, there is some inconsistency in the use of the terms “Hebrew Bible” and “Old Testament,” where the latter is used a number of times, seemingly without any motivation.

However, these are only marginal objections. Overall, Suriano’s study has all the qualities necessary to make it a standard work for anyone who wants to study the ideas of death and afterlife in Ancient Israel.

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*The Holiness Composition in the Book of Exodus*

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The wide consensus among scholars about the origin and development of the Pentateuch based on the classic exposition by Julius Wellhausen—which summarized the discussion during the latter half of the nineteenth century ending in the hypothesis of the four parallel sources J, E, D, and P composed in that chronological order and put together by several successive redactors—started to crumble definitely in the mid-seventies with the publications by John Van Seters, Hans Heinrich Schmid, and, above all, Rolf Rendtorff. Common to these scholars was the abandonment of the hypothesis of parallel sources and a general lowering of the dating of the composition. The basic outline of the Pentateuch, which implies the whole image of Israel’s origins, was seen as the result of the activities of the Deuteronomistic school, thus lowering the date of the composition of the Torah texts in the shape we know them to the sixth century BCE at the earliest.

These scholars, and several of their successors (for example Erhard Blum), saw the so-called Priestly Code, P, the latest of the sources according to the classical hypothesis, as a later supplement to the D-