

Second Temple period. I can imagine that this work will be used for many years to come. Both students and scholars will benefit greatly from reading this contribution.

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KAROL PIOTR KULPA, *Tyconius' Theological Reception of 2 Thessalonians 2:3–12* (History of Biblical Exegesis 4; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022). Pp. xix + 319. Paperback. €99.00.

An early volume in the new Mohr Siebeck series “History of Biblical Exegesis” (HBE), replacing the *Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese* (BGBE), this study is the published version of Karol Piotr Kulpa’s 2021 doctorate, completed at Regensburg under the direction of Tobias Nicklas. The author is currently an Adjunct Professor of New Testament at the Salesian Pontifical University, Rome.

The work is articulated in four major chapters, and a conclusion. The first chapter introduces the dynamic potential of reception history: the transformative experience of the interpretation of the text itself, the performative process of receiving the text in another cultural and historical context, and the ongoing productive process of the enduring impact of the text across history. The second chapter is a succinct and enlightening presentation of the North African situation in the fourth century, dominated by the hostile relationship between the Caecilianist and Donatist Churches. The third chapter illustrates the influence of Tyconius’ use of major concepts that he finds in 2 Thess 2:3–12, across his *Liber Regularum* (382 CE) and his *Expositio Apocalypseos* (385 CE?). The fourth chapter continues reflection upon the reception of Tyconius’ contribution in modern and contemporary Theology. The work’s conclusion states Kulpa’s deep admiration for the ongoing relevance of Tyconius’ originality.

The core of Kulpa’s thesis emerges in the lengthy third chapter. Following hard on the heels of the warning on false end-time teaching in 2:1–3a, 2 Thess 2:3b–12 states the author’s understanding of eschatological events. Tyconius mines this text for the elements that substantiate his speculations:

That day will not come unless the rebellion (*discessio*) comes first and the lawless one (*homo peccati/Antichristus*), is revealed, the son of destruction (*filius extermini*). He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called God or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God declaring himself to be God (*ostende se quod ipse est Deus*). Do you not remember that I told you these things when I was still with you? And you know now what is retraining him (*detineat*,

*detinet*), so that he may be revealed when his time comes. For the mystery of lawlessness (*mysterium facinoris*) is already at work but only until the one that restrains him is removed (ἐκ μέσου: *de medio*). And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth, annihilating him by the strength of his coming (*Adventus Domini*). The coming of the lawless one is apparent in the working of Satan (*secundum operationis Satanae*), who uses all power, signs, lying wonders and every kind of wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason, God sends them a powerful delusion, leading them to believe what is false, so that all who have not believed the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness will be condemned (*in sua incredulitate morienter*). (2 Thess 2:3b–12)

Kulpa gathers Tyconius' scattered motifs into groups, indicating that three major motifs, *homo peccati*, *mysterium facinoris* and *discessio* guide his evaluation of fourth-century North African Christianity. The other motifs (italicized in the above presentation of the text of 2 Thess 2:3–12) support and further explain the major motifs. Widely understood as a text focused upon eschatology, in Tyconius' hands 2 Thess 2:3–12 addresses the Church's anthropology (the division that exists in the human being) and ecclesiology (the division that exists in the Church), and an eschatology that is bipartite: already invading the present, but to come definitively. For Tyconius, the Christian Church is not only an institution, but a reality formed by the human beings who belong to it. Reflecting the situation that he lived, he recognized the essentially bipartite nature of the Church. "The spiritual relationships between Christians themselves, is mirrored in the bipartition of human nature" (268). By focusing on a study of Sacred Scripture and seeking spiritual and theological responses to the Christian division that he experienced, he was able to separate himself from the rivalries, and seek to address all Christians. "He addresses all Christians, without distinguishing between Donatists and Caecilianists, recognizing that in each party there are true brothers and sisters who need encouragement and false brothers and sisters who need conversion" (267). Christians are to challenge their ambiguity, seeking union through love and virtue, as they await a final coming, when all division will be overcome.

The final chapter locates this view among contemporary theologians. Themes central to contemporary theological anthropology, ecclesiology, ethics, and spirituality, well represented in Tyconius, are traced in contemporary theological discussion: bipartition of the Church's reality, charity as a response to hatred, the process of conversion toward the good, bipartition in the nature of the human being, faith and reason as a response to God's word, the process of conversion toward the truth, bipartition of the eschatological temporality, hope as the response to desperateness, and the process of conversion toward beauty. The

ongoing importance of these themes among contemporary theologians indicates that Tyconius' dynamic "reception" of 2 Thess 2:3–12 continues in the productive process of the enduring impact of the sacred text across history.

This fine study demonstrates a rich appreciation and application of reception criticism on a grand scale. Kulpa's identification of Tyconius' central and supporting themes in 2 Thess 2:3–12, and their further articulation across what remains of his work, especially the *Liber Regularum* and the *Expositio Apocalypseos*, demonstrates skill and insight. The chapter on the reception of the bipartite nature of much associated with a Christian response to God in contemporary Theology turns regularly to theologians who can be roughly regarded as Augustinian in their world view (e.g., Hans Urs von Balthasar and Joseph Ratzinger). There is little recourse to the Heideggerian/Rahnerian tradition, but that is logical and understandable. Regarded as a Donatist, yet censured by a Donatist council about 380 CE, Tyconius lived in his flesh what he expounded in his writings. Anyone interested in the melting pot of fourth century North Africa and its impact upon subsequent Christian thought and practice should have access to this fine study.

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JOHNSON THOMASKUTTY, *The Gospel of John: Contemporary Readings*. (Bangalore: Omega Book World, 2023). Pp. xviii + 284. Hardback. INR ₹800.00.

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Indian Christianity is much older than most Australians realise. There is even a stream of Christians that trace their origins back as far as the apostle Thomas; I was taken to one of several claimant sites for his death near Chennai in south India on a visit twenty years ago. This gives Indian theology a depth of history and contextualization that compares well with Western scholarship. The author of this collection of essays, Johnson Thomaskutty, is an emerging Indian theological voice that demands our attention. He certainly brings a different perspective (or should that be "perspectives?") in which an Indian and contemporary context provides provocative lines of thought in response to the Fourth Gospel. Thomaskutty shows strong awareness of recent scholarship on John, the Johannine community, and biblical hermeneutics in a postmodern world (most specifically in Chapter 8 on polyvalent interpretation), but refuses to limit analysis to the "there and then" without due attention to the issues of the "here and now." So the Fourth Gospel is considered in relation to the experience of the Dalit community in India (especially Chapter 9), the challenges of disability (especially Chapter 10), globalization, the recent COVID-19 pandemic (especially