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Name: James Kelhoffer
bishops have abandoned Catholic identity by downplaying fasting. Snatching a phrase from S. Weil, Burke proclaims that the Baptist can provide "for us" the "model of sanctity that has genius." An appendix containing devotions to the Baptist concludes a work that primarily uses him as a figurehead to promote a peculiar brand of conservative Catholic piety.

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According to Kelhoffer, in the redactional work of the Synoptic tradition, John the Baptist's diet of locusts and wild honey in Mark 1:6 is omitted by Luke because it is Jesus, not the Baptist (as in Mark), who is the desert-dwelling Elijah who is to come. Mark modifies John's reference and unifies his story with the figure of Elijah from the desert. In historical reality, a locust diet was common in the ancient Near East and Greco-Roman world; hence the Baptist's regimen was not as extraordinary as later ages may have imagined. Furthermore, in antiquity, "honey" designated not only the product of bees but also various types of tree sap; hence "wild honey" may specifically exclude the honey of cultivated bees. Later interpreters, of course, used the Baptist's manner of life to inculcate a renunciation of worldliness and an embrace of the ascetical ideal. In sum, Kelhoffer's treatise provides interesting information about the Baptist and the NT environment that go beyond its apparently restrictive subject matter.

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Eighteen essays written between 1971 and 2003 that "are pieces of solid exegesis which document my [Luz's] exegetical journey with Matthew." All but two of the essays have been previously published, but Luz is correct when he says that all of them are not well known in Britain and the United States. Since the essays are unreviewed, they provide an overview of Luz's development in his work on Matthew. The essays are divided under eight headings: "Matthew's Story" (the Evangelist and his Gospel's narrative); "Matthew and His Tradition" (Matthew and Q, and Matthew's fidelity to his traditions); "Christology" (an outline of Matthew's Christology; and the Son of Man in Matthew); "Ecclesiology" (the disciples in Matthew; discipleship and ecclesiology; and Matt 16:17-19 and "effective history"); "Ethics" (Matt 5:17-20 and the Law); "Miracles" (Matthew 8-9); "Matthew and Israel" (Anti-Judaism in Matthew); and the largest section, with six essays, "Hermeneutics with Matthew in Mind" ("Appropriate Interpretation of NT Texts"; the Church Fathers and biblical interpretation; the task of exegesis in light of religious pluralism; canonical exegesis and hermeneutics; and previously unpublished, "Hermeneutics of 'Effective History' and the Church", and "The Significance of Matthew's Jesus Story for Today"). A very helpful volume.

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Blickenstaff's monograph is an exploration of bridal-groom/nuptial imagery in the parables of Matthew. She pays particular attention to the way these parables participate in the overall themes and ideology of Matthew and to bridal/bridegroom motifs in the literature of the early Roman Empire (particularly Greek novels and mythology). Marriage in the literature of antiquity (particularly the motif of the separated lovers) was often a moment of risk and intrigue. Blickenstaff further assumes Jesus' parables may often be coded speech, carrying a clear (subversive) subtext for the "in group" behind their creation. These meanings became masked or lost in transmission. She reads against the normal grain of biblical scholarship, noting how these parables often present dominating views of God, harsh encounters with the "bridegroom," and numerous motifs that play into an endemic denigration of women. Blickenstaff's readings often completely invert traditional readings of these parables. Her interpretations, however, still remain relentlessly keyed to the actual wording of the text of Matthew. The result is a compelling and brilliantly crafted reexamination of a long neglected motif. "While the Bridegroom is with Them" will be of most interest to scholars of Matthew, ancient Greco-Roman gender roles, the analysis of Christian parables, and feminist scholarship in general.

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A revised dissertation (Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, 2003) that explores four issues in Matthean scholarship: the location of Matthew's community, its "economic status, scribal nature, and level of literacy." Gale argues that Matthew's community was of Jewish Christian derivation and that it continued to adhere to most of the laws in the Torah. The main thing that separated Matthew's group from others was their "self-identity as members of a distinctive scribal community of Jewish Christians." Scribes, Gale argues, were responsible for the "hermeneutic and curricular strategies which shape the gospel's content and form." Gale argues that Matthew's literary frame can be identified with the "compositional unity" of Matthew and "the literary functions of the gospel." Gale concludes that Matthew is not the work of a "single biblical writer." The gospel was composed by several authors, mostly, but not exclusively Jewish Christians, who wrote and redacted the document in the context of their communities' beliefs, histories, and traditions.