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GREEK VERSUS JEWISH CONCEPTIONS OF INSPIRATION AND 2 TIMOTHY 3:16

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Abstract: *Second Timothy 3:16 speaks of Scripture as θεόπνευστος, "God-breathed," "inspired." What would ancient audiences who heard such a claim assume that it entailed regarding accuracy? For many Greek hearers, inspiration entailed divine authority, including on basic historical matters, although some Greek thinkers allowed poetic inspiration without such accuracy. Jewish application of inspiration language to Scripture, however, apparently always entailed its authority and accuracy. Although Jewish interpreters applied various approaches to reconcile or even sidestep apparent conflicts in biblical narratives, their understanding of its inspired authority entailed reliance on Scripture's truthfulness on all matters that it addressed.*

Key words: *inspiration, inerrancy, God-breathed, 2 Timothy 3:16, trustworthiness of Scripture*

Christians recognize and submit to Scripture's authority because we recognize that God inspired it. Most of us, not least Calvinists and charismatics, resonate with John Calvin's affirmation that the Spirit attests Scripture's inspiration.[1] As Paul points out in 1 Cor 2:13–14, we understand spiritual matters only by spiritual means. The truth will be veiled to those whose effectively constricted epistemologies reject such testimony. That does not mean that we cannot engage nonbelievers on other epistemic grounds, but such testimony invites Christians to trust that God speaks in Scripture. And if God speaks in Scripture, we have good reason to trust that God ensured that Scripture communicates what he wanted communicated.

In this article I survey some of the range of conceptions of inspiration in antiquity, concluding especially with the most directly relevant (though also more familiar) conceptions, namely Jewish conceptions of Scripture's inspiration.

I. INTRODUCTION

Inductive historical studies are valuable and can invite greater confidence in Scripture;[2] we still, however, need a deductive theological argument in order to proclaim all of Scripture as God's Word. Here I explore some ancient contextual support for recognizing the NT affirmation of the latter approach.

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[1] See, e.g., Michael J. Kruger, *Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 100, citing esp. Calvin, *Inst.* 1.7.4–5; 3.1.1–3; 3.2.15, 33–36.

[2] See, e.g., Darrell L. Bock and Robert L. Webb, *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus: A Collaborative Exploration of Context and Coherence* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

Most of my published work regarding Scripture's reliability has been historical in nature, and as such proceeds inductively from limited historical evidence. By itself, this approach cannot provide universal conclusions about the nature of Scripture. One can argue for the historical reliability of many points, and from these form an overarching impression of general reliability, but these conclusions do not by themselves entail inerrancy.

These observations do, however, invite us to embrace enough of the message that another conclusion logically follows: we should welcome Jesus's widely attested testimony to Scripture's authority.[3] While such authority does not entail a strict, wooden form of inerrancy that contradicts the inspired texts themselves—e.g. the supposition that Matthew could not use "kingdom of heaven" for the same saying of the Lord in which Mark uses "kingdom of God"[4]—it does have implications for trusting that God gave us the Scriptures the way he wanted to, as his Word through divinely led human agents.

Even where the historical process of inspired biblical historians might allow inference, inspiration conceivably could provide them what human knowledge could not.[5] Providing us a graphic example of inspired knowledge, the Aramean king's servants exclaimed that Elisha, a prophet in Israel, warned the king of Israel about whatever the Aramean king spoke in his bedroom (2 Kgs 6:12). In a more general sense, however, some ancient historians believed themselves to be inspired.[6] There is no reason, either in NT texts or their wider cultural setting, to limit NT authors' claims of OT inspiration exclusively to explicit prophetic texts at the expense of historical ones.

What sort of authority did Jesus and his followers attribute to Scripture? Here I consider just the implications of θεόπνευστος, "God-breathed," in 2 Tim 3:16. What would this conception of "God-breathed" entail for Timothy? Certainly it at least includes the explicit message that Scripture is useful for teaching and other pastoral ministry. But what assumptions about the nature of scriptural inspiration could Paul take for granted that Timothy would share?[7]

The answer to the question depends to some extent on whether one envisions Gentile or Jewish conceptions of inspired works. Greeks often viewed inspiration,

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[3] Most influential for me was John W. Wenham, *Christ and the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1977).

[4] The range of ancient Jewish approaches easily accommodates any flexibility found in biblical literature; see discussion below.

[5] Cf. helpfully here the methodologically sound comments on historiography and inspiration in Craig L. Blomberg and Darlene M. Seal, "The Historical Jesus in Recent Evangelical Scholarship," in *Jesus, Skepticism and the Problem of History: Criteria & Context in the Study of Christian Origins* (ed. Darrell L. Bock and J. Ed Komoszewski; Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2019), 58.

[6] Robert G. Hall, "Revealed History: A Jewish and Christian Technique of Interpreting the Past" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1986); idem, *Revealed Histories: Techniques for Ancient Jewish and Christian Historiography* (JSPSup 6; Sheffield: JSOT, 1991).

[7] Even for those who view the letter as pseudepigraphic, 2 Tim 3:16 assumes a standard Jewish conception of the inspiration of Scripture, and, on the pseudepigraphic view, continues to do so at an even later, more likely Hellenized stage in the development of early Christian theology than supposed by those who see this as authentically Pauline thought.

or at least full inspiration, as guaranteeing truth, albeit often not at a literal level and often requiring allegorical ingenuity. But some Greeks were willing to criticize authors whom they considered poetically inspired. Whereas Gentile conceptions varied, the Jewish understanding of the inspiration of Scripture consistently entails correctness, a conception naturally carried on in early Christianity.

II. GREEKS AND THEIR "CANON"

Greeks had "approved" lists of standard texts.[8] Nevertheless, as historian James Rives notes, "Although [Gentile] poets at times claimed divine inspiration, people never regarded their works as 'the word of God' in the way that Jews traditionally regard the Torah and Christians the Bible."[9] Some scholars today describe Homer as a sort of Greek "canon," but they do so in the sense of a literary and cultural canon, not in the sense of God's Word. Or, as Saul Lieberman notes, even while emphasizing parallels with Greeks' treatment of Homer, rabbis handled their texts more respectfully and did not reject or explicitly revise biblical texts as some Greeks did.[10]

Certainly, Greek intellectuals lacked the sort of consensus that prevailed in what we know of ancient Jewish thought. The second-century satirist Lucian, not a believer in traditional Greek religion, mercilessly savaged inconsistencies in popular views of the gods and fate,[11] arguing that the gods cannot reward mortals and are their fellow slaves to Fate.[12] If Zeus responds that the gods have immortal bliss, Lucian's protagonist philosopher reminds him that the gods can be wounded, imprisoned, and tortured in the myths.[13] (Other writers evaded such wounded deities by allegorization.)[14] Poets' myths are fine for literary purposes, Lucian opined, but those who take them seriously act like children or as if they are insane.[15] Elsewhere, he denounces these myths even more harshly as lies.[16] Lucian ridiculed the mythical portrayals of immortals' adultery or affairs with mortals,[17] though others again alle-

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[8] See, e.g., David E. Aune, *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 29–30, for the "Alexandrian canon." For Egyptian sacred texts, see, e.g., Plutarch, *Is. Os.* 6; *Mor.* 353B; 80, *Mor.* 383E; David Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 239–41.

[9] James B. Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire* (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 28.

[10] Saul Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine: Studies in the Literary Transmission, Beliefs, and Manners of Palestine in the I Century B.C.E.–IV Century C.E.* (2nd ed.; TSJTSA 18; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America Press, 1962), 27.

[11] See Lucian, *Z. Cat.* 2–5; cf. *Indictment* 2. I borrow material here from my Acts commentary on Acts 14:15–17.

[12] Lucian, *Z. Cat.* 7–8.

[13] Lucian, *Z. Cat.* 8; also in *Sacrifices* 5–6; cf. *Zeus Rants* 40. For this vulnerability of deities, see, e.g., Homer, *Il.* 5.339–42, 855–59, 870; Apollonius Rhodius, 3.853; Apollodorus, *Epit.* 4.2; Apollodorus, *Bib.* 1.7.1; Libanius, *Encomium* 1.10.

[14] Heraclitus, *Homeric Problems* 30.1, 4; 31.1, 11; 52.5–6; 53.1. Stoics also rejected "divine" mortality (e.g. Seneca, *Ep. Lucil.* 95.49–50).

[15] Lucian, *Lover of Lies* 2–5; cf. Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 5.14.

[16] Lucian, *Amber* 3, 5–6.

[17] E.g. Lucian, *Prometheus* 17; *Parliament of the Gods* 7; *Lover of Lies* 2; *Dialogues of the Gods* 206 (6/2, *Eros and Zeus* 1); 214–19 (9/6, *Hera and Zeus* 1–5); 229 (14/10, *Hermes and Helios* 1); 231 (19/11, *Aphrodite*

gorized such activities as symbols reflecting nobler traits.[18] Some also mocked deities' conflicts with one another,[19] conflicts likewise evaded allegorically by others.[20]

Some thinkers questioned how a mortal woman could escape her divine pursuer when even a man is normally stronger than a woman;[21] taking after his father Zeus, Apollo was known for his predilection toward mortals, but most objects of his affection somehow seem to have spurned him.[22] Others questioned how gods could prove helpless to rescue favorite mortals;[23] how gods such as Hephaistos could remain permanently disabled;[24] or how the immortals could experience night with Helios (the sun god) among them.[25] Many mocked Cretan claims to possess Zeus's tomb.[26] Critics complained about Zeus's weakness.[27]

Although Stoics often salvaged Homer's accuracy by allegorizing, the notable second-century AD Stoic Hierocles criticizes Homer's thinking in the *Iliad*.[28] Commenting on this passage in Hierocles, a classicist observes, "Apparently Hierocles does not consider Homer to be a sage who is invariably infallible."[29] Philosophers rarely accepted the old myths literally,[30] and only allegorizing allowed some to

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and Selene 1); 233–34 (20/12, *Aphrodite and Eros* 1); 243 (17/15, *Hermes and Apollo* 3); 245–46 (21/17, *Apollo and Hermes* 1–2); 269–271 (2/22, *Pan and Hermes* 1–2); 272, 4; *Dialogues of Sea-Gods* 305–6 (11/7, *South Wind and West Wind* 1); 325–27 (15, *West Wind and South Wind* 2–3); cf. also Pliny, *Nat.* 2.5.17; Philostratus the Elder, *Imagines* 1.8.

[18] Heraclitus, *Homeric Problems* 68–69, esp. 68.8–9; 69.8–16. Happily, the God of Scripture did not require such gymnastics, despite Alexandrian Jews' and Christians' recourse to this popular intellectual hermeneutic of the day.

[19] E.g. Pliny, *Nat.* 2.5.17; Lucian, *Dialogues of the Gods* 240 (16/14, *Hermes and Apollo* 2); 278–280 (24/25, *Zeus and Helios* 1–2).

[20] Heraclitus, *Homeric Problems* 52, esp. 52.4; Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.8.10.

[21] Aphthonius, *Progymn.* 5 (On Refutation), 29S, 13R; cf. Lucian, *Dialogues of the Gods* 242 (17/15, *Hermes and Apollo* 2).

[22] E.g. Apollodorus, *Bib.* 3.12.5; Ovid, *Metam.* 2.603–11; Lucian, *Dialogues of the Gods* 242 (17/15, *Hermes and Apollo* 2); 244 (18/16, *Hera and Leto* 1).

[23] Lucian, *Dialogues of the Gods* 239–240 (16/14, *Hermes and Apollo* 1–2); Philostratus the Elder, *Imagines* 1.24; Philostratus the Younger, *Imagines* 14; also Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.245.

[24] Lucian, *Dialogues of the Gods* 241 (17/15, *Hermes and Apollo* 1); 243 (18/16, *Hera and Leto* 1). Heraclitus evades this by allegory (*Homeric Problems* 26.1, 7–8).

[25] Lucian, *Icaromenippus* 28 (mythographers would have probably replied that Helios was moving back eastward beneath the earth; but he would have trouble making the banquets without reliable assistants).

[26] Callimachus, *Hymn* 1 (to Zeus), lines 8–9; Lucian, *Sacrifices* 10; *Parliament of the Gods* 6; *Timon* 4; *Zeus Rants* 45; *Lover of Lies* 3; Ps.-Lucian, *Patriot* 10 (Byzantine).

[27] E.g. Heraclitus, *Homeric Problems* 39.1 (on Homer, *Il.* 14.347–53); Heraclitus goes on to salvage the story by allegorizing it (*Homeric Problems* 39.2–17). Cf. 1 Kgs 18:27; contrast Ps 121:3–4.

[28] Homer, *Il.* 9.497, in Hierocles, *How Should One Behave toward the Gods?* (Stobaeus, *Anth.* 1.3.53).

[29] Ilaria Ramelli, *Hierocles the Stoic: Elements of Ethics, Fragments, and Excerpts* (trans. David Konstan; SBLWGRW 28; Atlanta: SBL, 2009), 98.

[30] Robert M. Grant, *Paul in the Roman World: The Conflict at Corinth* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 4–5.

derive from them acceptable morals.[31] The first-century Stoic philosopher Cornutus can speak of "fictional additions."[32]

Orators could play both sides of, and thus reflect, common debates. Thus some accused of slander those who had presented the gods as immoral,[33] clearly implying that some did so. In the late first century, Dio Chrysostom voices complaints about Homer's tales of the gods[34] and even calls him a liar.[35] Macrobius depicts intellectual discussions that debate whether Virgil made mistakes, sometimes affirming wrong arrangement or grammatical flaws.[36] Later Libanius sometimes dismisses the truth of revered texts when they describe deities acting in manners inconsistent with the philosophic ideals of his own era. "I have never thought it admirable," he complains, "even for one of the other poets to lack a concern for truth, especially when they claim that they say what they are saying under inspiration from the Muses." Homer, above all, "should have avoided this, as he is so noble and magnificent."[37] But Homer "too, is apparently pursuing lies, both in quite a few passages and in the very first part of the *Iliad*."[38] Since the gods cannot err, Homer's depictions of them doing so are instead themselves errant.[39]

III. GREEK INSPIRATION

The extant plethora of ancient Greek texts offers a range of conceptions of inspiration, from full possession by a deity to (less commonly) more fallible forms. Greeks could speak of deities breathing into them in a general sense; thus in the *Odyssey* Penelope says some spirit (δαίμων) breathed (ἐνέπνευσε) into her thoughts a plan.[40] Ovid invokes the gods, who were responsible for the metamorphoses, to

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[31] Cicero, *Nat. d.* 2.28.70; e.g. Cornutus, *Greek Theology* 30, §58.14–16; §62.10–15; cf. Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.255. Some simply rewrote stories (e.g. *Recantation of Stesichorus*; Pindar, *Olympian* 1.52–53).

[32] *Greek Theology* 28, §54.14–15; cf. 17, §27.19—28.1; 17, §31.13–19. Cornutus appreciates the poets but repurposes their language to what he deems better ends (George R. Boys-Stones, "Introduction: Cornutus the Philosopher," in L. Annaeus Cornutus, Greek Theology, *Fragments, and Testimonia* [trans. George R. Boys-Stones; WGRW 42; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018], 27).

[33] The second-century orator Favorinus in [Dio Chrysostom] *Or.* 37.32.

[34] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 11.19.

[35] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 11.23. This is not necessarily or even likely Dio's own opinion. He seems to favor Hesiod in 12.23, and in 18.8 exalts Homer as the greatest poet.

[36] Macrobius, *Sat.* 3.12.3 (defending Virgil); 5.14.1 (versification flaws); 5.15.10 (chronology flaws); 5.17.5 (untruth); 6.7.7–12 (defending Virgil's word choices). Technically, Christians might distinguish literary flaws from flaws of content. Cf. later e.g., Jerome complaining about Paul's syntax (Mark J. Edwards, ed., *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians* [ACCS, NT 8; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999], xvii–xviii) or Luther affirming Paul's message while suggesting lapses in logical argumentation by the standards of Luther's day (Timothy Wengert, "Martin Luther on Galatians 3:6–14: Justification by Curses and Blessings," in *Galatians and Christian Theology: Justification, the Gospel, and Ethics in Paul's Letter* [ed. Mark W. Elliott et al.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014], 97–99).

[37] Libanius, *Refutation* 1.1 (p. 109).

[38] Libanius, *Refutation* 1.2 (p. 109).

[39] Libanius, *Refutation* 1.12; 2.1 (p. 113); *Invective* 7.2 (p. 305).

[40] Homer, *Od.* 19.138.

"breathe" (*adspirate*) on his writing.[41] Likewise, Apollo "breathes" (*inspirat*) into the Sibyl, so she can predict the future.[42]

Authors often depicted inspiration in graphic terms.[43] A deity could employ a mortal as a mouthpiece;[44] *daimones* might speak through human bodies as a piper producing music through a pipe.[45] Lucan poetically depicts divine frenzy overpowering and controlling the Pythian priestess, Apollo supplanting her mind during possession.[46] Plutarch, who had intimate knowledge of this oracle, offers a much more restrained description,[47] but this restraint should not exclude altogether occasions of ecstasy. Various other sources indicate attribute to her possession by a spirit[48] and mad ecstasy,[49] and many parallels in anthropological literature allow for the plausibility of such a depiction.[50] Greeks and Romans also depicted some other prophesying in terms of possession by a deity or *daimon*.[51]

For Greeks, inspiration often but did not always guarantee freedom from all error;[52] there were levels of inspiration, later poets sometimes being less inspired than earlier ones.[53] A reliable character in a post-NT novel praises Homer as the greatest poet,[54] accomplishing everything by a spirit's inspiration;[55] he outperformed even inspired oracles.[56] Nevertheless, the character accuses Homer of bias in his selection of material[57] and critiques him in other ways.[58]

Despite Plato's rejection of poetry in the ideal state,[59] many in the Platonic tradition sought to harmonize inspired Plato with inspired Homer. Both flow from the same source, a Middle Platonist orator opined, but Homer simply presented philosophy in the genre then most popular among Greeks in his era, that is, in

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[41] Ovid, *Metam.* 1.2–3.

[42] Virgil, *Aen.* 6.12. Cf. the Sibyl's inspiration also in Heraclitus, *Ep.* 8. In the Jewish Sibylline Oracles, Israel itself could be God-breathed (*Sib. Or.* 5.406, θεοπνεύστων), as Philo also spoke of God breathing into humanity intellect (frequently, using ἐμπνέω; e.g. *Alleg.* 1.35–40).

[43] I borrow here from my excursus on prophecy in my Acts commentary at Acts 2:17.

[44] E.g. Ovid, *Met.* 6.159–62; cf. discussion in David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 47.

[45] Maximus of Tyre, 9.1.

[46] Lucan, *C.W.* 5.97–101, 148–57, 165–93.

[47] Plutarch, *Oracles at Delphi* 7, *Mor.* 397C.

[48] Valerius Maximus, 1.8.10; Maximus of Tyre, 8.1.

[49] Plutarch, *Dialogue on Love* 16, *Mor.* 759B (regaining tranquility afterward); Aelius Aristides, *Def. Or.* 34–35, §11D.

[50] See, e.g., Craig S. Keener, "Spirit Possession as a Cross-Cultural Experience," *BBR* 20 (2010): 215–36.

[51] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 1.31.1; Virgil, *Aen.* 6.77–102; Ovid, *Metam.* 2.640–41; Livy, 38.18.9; Aulus Gellius, 15.18.2.

[52] E.g., cf. Lucian, *True Story* 2.32. Cf. even *Gen. Rab.* 91:6 (though this is after the departure of the Spirit of prophecy), though the rabbis would have treated canonical revelation differently.

[53] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 36.34–35.

[54] Philostratus, *Heroikos* 25.2–9.

[55] Philostratus, *Heroikos* 25.4.

[56] Philostratus, *Heroikos* 25.8.

[57] Philostratus, *Heroikos* 24.1–2.

[58] Philostratus, *Heroikos* 25.10–17.

[59] Plato, *Rep.* 398A.

verse.[60] Yet while many spoke of the "divine Plato,"[61] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, writing in the first century BC, defends as not disrespectful his own critique of Plato by noting how many of Dionysius's predecessors have criticized Plato, starting with Plato's famous disciple Aristotle.[62] (Dionysius is more restrained in claims of inspiration than some of his contemporaries; elsewhere he complains that some want to credit even the historian Thucydides with divine inspiration.)[63]

Still, the later orator Libanius, though sometimes critiquing Homer's errors, can also play the part of those who defend him: "As for those who admit that they fall short of the poets' divine inspiration but dare to criticize them anyway, I am surprised if they cannot understand that they are slandering the Muses in their charges against the poets; for the content comes from the Muses, and the voice belongs to the poets."[64] "It is fitting to pity those who make accusations against the poets, if it is in fact fitting to pity madmen and the insane"; for those who criticize the poets are crazy. They actually are accusing the Muses![65] Homer was "the common progenitor of Greek wisdom," but some have dared criticize even him![66]

Some maintained absolute truth, albeit at an allegorical level, of what was fully inspired, by distinguishing what was truly inspired from what was not, and by acknowledging different levels of inspiration. Although the later Platonist Proclus emphasizes poetic inspiration, he does not understand all poetry, even all poetry hallowed by tradition, as inspired. Positively, he speaks of "inspired" (ἐνθεάζοντας) accounts from poets,[67] "Homer as an inspired guide" (ἐνθεαστικῶς),[68] "the meaning of Homer [being] inspired [ἔνθεον]," [69] "the inspired Homeric tradition" (ἐνθέου παραδόσεως),[70] and "the poems of Homer … and the other poets who have a share of divine madness" (ἐνθέου ... μανίας).[71] Homer instructs his audience "while raised by the Muses to a state of ecstasy" (ἐνθουσιάζων);[72] he is "possessed by the Muses" (κάτοχος ταῖς Μούσαις). [73] "One speaking in the madness of inspiration [μαινομένω]" must speak in this way.[74]

But this means that, for a Platonist such as Proclus, Plato's apparent critiques of Homer require explanation. "If Socrates, looking only at the literal meaning of

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[60] Maximus of Tyre, *Or.* 17.3; 26.3–4.

[61] E.g. Cicero, *Opt. gen.* 6.17; *Leg.* 3.1.1; *Nat. d.* 2.12.32; Plutarch, *Profit by Enemies* 8, *Mor.* 90C; *Letter of Consolation to Apollonius* 36, *Mor.* 120D; Philostratus, *Love Letters* 73, §13; Porphyry, *Marc.* 10.185–86; Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 15.679A.

[62] *Letter to Gnaeus Pompeius* 1, end.

[63] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Thuc.* 34.

[64] Libanius, *Confirmation* 1.1 (p. 121).

[65] Libanius, *Confirmation* 2.1 (p. 127).

[66] Libanius, *Confirmation* 2.2.

[67] Essay 6, Bk. 1, K89.29 (trans. p. 97).

[68] K102.1–2 (trans. p. 119).

[69] K110.7–8 (p. 137).

[70] K120.23 (p. 155).

[71] K157.25–26 (p. 223).

[72] K159.1 (p. 225).

[73] K198.30—K199.1 (p. 295).

[74] Essay 6, Bk 2, K166.20–21 (p. 237).

these stories, says that Homer made a mistake" (on the literal level),[75] we must recognize "a madness [of inspiration] that is greater than reasonableness" (μανία … σωφροσύνης),[76] that "fills the inspired soul" (ἐνθεάζουσαν).[77] But "below this inspired and primal poetry is another kind."[78] Referring to the greater form of inspiration, Plato "in the *Phaedrus* … calls this inspired [ἔνθεον] poetry 'possession by the Muses' and 'madness' [μανίαν]."[79] "He calls it 'possession' because it takes power over the entirety of what is moved by it and "madness" [μανίαν] because it causes those illuminated to abandon their own activities and enter into its identity."[80] Plato "maintains that the poet who does not have this sort of madness [μανίας] is imperfect himself and that his poetry, which is that of a reasonable man, fades into obscurity in the presence of that of the madman [μαινομένων], because human conceptions are in every way inferior to the gift of the gods."[81]

Thus he recognizes another kind of poetry that acts merely from the intellect and knowledge,[82] thus, for example, the poetry of Theognis.[83] Such poetry came "neither through inspiration [ἐνθουσιασμὸν] nor through correct opinion but rather by systematic knowledge."[84] "Whenever [Homer] acts under inspiration [ἐνθουσιάζων] and possessed [κάτοχος] by the Muses and relates mystical conceptions about the gods themselves, at that point Homer is active according to the first and divinely inspired [ἔνθεον] type of poetry."[85]

But Proclus goes on to note other kinds of inspiration in Homer: "Whenever he tells of the life of the soul, on the other hand, and the distinctions within the natural world and civic obligations, there he is certainly arranging his discourse under the guidance of systematic knowledge."[86] Elsewhere he imitates, or appeals to popular ideas; then he functions as a "poet of the illusionist type."[87]

IV. INSPIRATION OF BOOKS

Gentile narrators and poets often appealed to a Muse, Muses,[88] Apollo,[89] or even the divine emperor,[90] to help them compose their works. The Neoplatonist

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[75] Proclus Essay 6, Bk 2, K176.14–15 (p. 255).
[76] K178.24 (p. 259).
[77] K178.27–28.
[78] K179.3 (p. 259).
[79] K180.11–12 (pp. 261, 263), on *Phaedrus* 245A.
[80] K180.29–30, K181.1–2 (p. 263).
[81] K182.16–20 (p. 265).
[82] K186.21–25.
[83] K186.29–30.
[84] K188.12–14 (pp. 275, 277).
[85] K192.9–12 (p. 283).
[86] K192.12–15 (p. 285).
[87] K192.15–21 (p. 285).
[88] E.g. Pindar, *Nem.* 3.1–5; *fr.* 150 (from Eustathios, *Commentary on Iliad* 1.1); Callimachus, *Aetia* 1.1.1–38; Musaeus, *Hero* 1. For the Muses's help, see also Maximus of Tyre, 38.2; cf. Gareth Schmeling, "The Spectrum of Narrative: Authority of the Author," in *Ancient Fiction and Early Christian Narrative* (ed. Ronald F. Hock, J. Bradley Chance, and Judith Perkins; SBLSymS 6; Atlanta: SBL, 1998), 21.

Iamblichus expected Pythagorean commentaries to be "composed perfectly with heaven-sent knowledge."[91]

The OT already often associates God's Spirit with prophecy (e.g. Num 11:25–29; 1 Sam 19:20, 23; Neh 9:30; Joel 2:28–29; Mic 3:8),[92] and early Jewish sources develop this association further,[93] including both in Judean works such as *Jubilees*, *1 Enoch*,[94] and the Qumran scrolls,[95] but also in works composed in Greek. Josephus, for example, notes that when the divine spirit first came to David, he "began to prophesy," an association not explicit in 1 Samuel.[96] Philo similarly speaks of "the Divine Spirit of prophecy," commenting on Num 11:16.[97] Later, in the Targumim, "Holy Spirit" and "Spirit of Prophecy" are functionally interchangeable, the differences determined merely by style.[98]

Jewish tradition particularly associated this inspiring Spirit with Scripture. This is true both of works from in or near the Second Temple period[99] and for later rabbis.[100] For the rabbis, whenever Scripture speaks, the Spirit speaks.[101]

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[89] E.g. Valerius Flaccus, 1.5–7; Statius, *Ach.* 1.9. Ancients frequently associated Apollo with poetic and musical inspiration (e.g. Pliny, *Nat.* 37.3.5; Fronto, *Eloq.* 1.13; Marcus Aurelius, 11.11).

[90] Valerius Maximus, 1.pref.; see Wardle, *Valerius Maximus*, 68.

[91] Iamblichus, *Vit. pyth.* 29.157 (trans. p. 173).

[92] Cf., e.g., Max-Alain Chevallier, *Souffle de Dieu: Le Saint-Esprit dans le Nouveau Testament* (Point théologique 26; Paris: Beauchesne, 1978), 1:27–29; Christopher J. H. Wright, *Knowing the Holy Spirit through the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 63–86; Wonsuk Ma, *Until the Spirit Comes: The Spirit of God in the Book of Isaiah* (JSOTSup 271; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 30–32, 202–3, 206–7; more briefly, Craig S. Keener, "Spirit, Holy Spirit, Advocate, Breath, Wind," in *The Westminster Theological Wordbook of the Bible* (ed. Donald E. Gowan; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 486–87.

[93] See, e.g., Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 49–101; Robert P. Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts* (JSNTSup 54; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991), 53–112; Max Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 86–104 (including inspired wisdom and praise); briefly, Craig S. Keener, *The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts: Divine Purity and Power* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 10–13, 31–33.

[94] *Jub.* 25:14; 31:12; *1 En.* 91:1; probably also Sir 48:24. Later, see *Sifre Deut.* 22.1.2; *t. Pes.* 2:15; 4:14.

[95] 1QS 8.16; 1Q34bis f3.ii.7; 4Q381 f69.4; cf. CD 2.12; 4Q266 f2.ii.12; 4Q270 f2.ii.14; F. F. Bruce, "Holy Spirit in the Qumran Texts," *ALUOS* 6 (1966): 51, although he cites only CD 2.12; and George Johnston, "'Spirit' and 'Holy Spirit' in the Qumran Literature," 27–42 in *New Testament Sidelights: Essays in Honor of Alexander Converse Purdy* (ed. Harvey K. McArthur; Hartford, CT: Hartford Seminary Foundation Press, 1960), 36–37, in greater detail.

[96] *Ant.* 6.166 (LCL 5:248–49); cf. *Ant.* 6.56, 222–23; 8.408. Marie E. Isaacs, *The Concept of Spirit: A Study of Pneuma in Hellenistic Judaism and Its Bearing on the New Testament* (Heythrop Monographs 1; London: Heythrop College Press, 1976), 47–48, provides a number of other examples that illustrate Josephus's association of πνεῦμα in the LXX with prophecy, and prophecy in the LXX with πνεῦμα; see esp. Ernest Best, "The Use and Non-use of Pneuma by Josephus," *NovT* 3 (1959): 218–25; for more recent discussion, see John R. Levison, "Josephus' Interpretation of the Divine Spirit," *JJS* 47 (1996): 234–55.

[97] *Flight* 186. See also *Heir* 265; *Moses* 1.175, 277; 2.265; *Decal.* 175; *Laws* 4.49; further, Isaacs, *Spirit*, 47. See also *L.A.B.* 28:6; *4 Ezra* 14:22; *T. Job* 48:3.

[98] See the data in Peter Schäfer, "Die Termini 'Heiliger Geist' und 'Geist der Prophetie' im den Targumim und das Verhältnis der Targumim zueinander," *VT* 20 (1970): 306–7.

[99] 1QS 8:16: "what the prophets revealed by his Holy Spirit"; Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.37; *4 Ezra* 14:22. In the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in general, see D. Friedrich Büchsel, *Der Geist Gottes im Neuen Testament* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1926), 57–58.

Already in 1 Macc 12:9, Israelites have sacred books, a title that persisted in various permutations in the first century in Philo, Josephus, and in 2 Tim 3:16's immediate context.[102] For Josephus and others, the "canon" closed with Persian period,[103] as did the succession of full-fledged prophets[104] (although he allowed for the continuance of prophecy[105] and even claims to have the gift himself).[106] Josephus accepts twenty-two[107] books as authoritative, insisting that they stem from divine inspiration (ἐπίπνοια) and unlike Greeks' works do not disagree with one another (*Ag. Ap.* 1.37–40). Some argue that Second Temple Judaism lacked a universally accepted "canon" in the later Christian sense but acknowledge that Jewish people in this period recognized core inspired texts very much like a canon.[108]

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[100] E.g. *Sipra VDDen.* par. 1.1.3.3; 5.10.1.1; *Shemini Mekhilta deMiluim* 94.5.12; *Behuq.* pq. 6.267.2.1; *Sipre Deut.* 355.17.1–3; 356.4.1 (repeating 355.17.2). See further, e.g., Isaacs, *Spirit*, 51; Werner Foerster, "Der heilige Geist im Spätjudentum," *NTS* 8 (1962): 117.

[101] E.g., *m. Sot.* 9:6.

[102] See, e.g., Philo, *Creation* 77; *Heir* 106; *Abr.* 4, 61, 121; *Preliminary Studies* 175; *Dreams* 2.265; *Mos.* 2.45, 188, 290–92; *Decal.* 2.8; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.13, 26, 82, 139; 2.347; 3.81; 4.326; 10.210; 13.167; 16.164; *Life* 418; *War* 2.159; 6.312; *Ag. Ap.* 1.127; 2 Tim 3:15. Philo's focus is the Pentateuch (cf. *Let. Aris.* 5, 31, 45, 313; inspiration in 240; though cf. the emphasis on reason in Ian W. Scott, "Revelation and Human Artefact: The Inspiration of the Pentateuch in the Book of Aristeas," *JSJ* 41 [2010]: 1–28), but Josephus's discussions clearly include Daniel.

[103] Some regard canonical interest as a late-first-century development (P. Höffken, "Zum Kanonsbewusstsein des Josephus Flavius in *Contra Apionem* und in den *Antiquitates*," *JSJ* 32 [2001]: 159–177). The cutoff in the Persian period, however, probably suggests earlier tradition, at least among the elite, as opposed to, say, Qumran, which may employ even *Jubilees* as canonical (Charles C. Torrey, "A Hebrew Fragment of Jubilees," *JBL* 71 [1952]: 41; Charles T. Fritsch, *The Qumran Community: Its History and Scrolls* [New York: Macmillan, 1956], 48; Bent Noack, "Qumran and the Book of Jubilees," *SEÅ* 22–23 [1957–1958]: 207).

[104] See Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.41; Sid Z. Leiman, "Josephus and the Canon of the Bible," in *Josephus, the Bible, and History* (ed. Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata; Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 50–58; Bernard J. Bamberger, "The Changing Image of the Prophet in Jewish Thought," in *Interpreting the Prophetic Tradition: The Goldman Lectures, 1955–1966* (ed. Harry M. Orlinski; Cincinnatti: Hebrew Union College Press; New York: KTAV, 1969), 305. Cf. 1 Macc 9:27; *4 Ezra* 12:42; *2 Bar.* 85:3; *t. Sot.* 12:5; 13:3. He does not ascribe contemporary true prophecy to the Spirit (Best, "Pneuma," 222–25; Isaacs, *Spirit*, 49–51) and does not use the title "prophet" for it (David E. Aune, "The Use of προφήτης in Josephus," *JBL* 101 (1982): 419–21; cf. David Hill, *New Testament Prophecy* [Atlanta: John Knox, 1979], 26, 28).

[105] *War* 1.78–80; 2.159; 6.300–9; cf. *War* 1.68–69; *Ant.* 15.374–79; 17.346 in Isaacs, *Spirit*, 49; Aune, *Prophecy*, 145; more extensively, Rebecca Gray, *Prophetic Figures in Late Second Temple Jewish Palestine: The Evidence from Josephus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 80–111. More broadly, see Howard Clark Kee, *Miracle in the Early Christian World: A Study in Sociohistorical Method* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 178–79; Wayne A. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1982), 24–33; Gray, *Figures*, 7–34.

[106] Gray, *Figures*, 35–79; Isaacs, *Spirit*, 48; Hill, *Prophecy*, 26–27, on *War* 3.351–54.

[107] Cf. the twenty-four-book canon in *4 Ezra* 14:45; *Exod. Rab.* 41:5; *Num. Rab.* 13:15–16; 14:4; *Eccl. Rab.* 12:11, §1. Either Josephus omits some (Leonhard Rost, *Judaism outside the Hebrew Canon: An Introduction to the Documents* [trans. David E. Green; Nashville: Abingdon, 1976], 23) or, more likely, he divides them differently than do some others; see Duane L. Christensen, "Josephus and the Twenty-Two-Book Canon of Sacred Scripture," *JETS* 29 (1986): 37–46.

[108] Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (LEC 7; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 176, 182–90.

Later rabbis are likewise emphatic about the authority of all of Scripture. Sometimes they recounted stories to underline the point that nothing could pass away from Scripture. Thus, for example, when God changed Sarai's name to Sarah, the *yod* removed from her name cried out from one generation to another, protesting its removal from Scripture, until finally, when Moses changed Hoshea's name to Joshua, the *yod* returned to Scripture.[109] Similarly, God would rather uproot a thousand King Solomons rather than a single word of his law.[110] Not a single word may be deleted.[111]

Likewise, noting that God rewarded with life both what they deemed the "greatest" commandment, about honoring parents (Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16), and the "least" commandment, about the bird's nest (Deut 22:6–7), later rabbis insisted that God would reward equally for any commandment. One who kept the law regulating the bird's nest merited eternal life, whereas one who broke it merited damnation.[112]

Given the expansiveness of the rabbinic corpus, one might expect some exceptions, but at most they appear in occasional hyperbole. Thus one might suggest a partial exception to such biblical authority in a later passage in *Genesis Rabbah*. Citing a third century rabbi, it declares, "Great is peace, for even Scripture made a mis-statement in order to preserve peace between Abraham and Sarah. [113] "WHEREFORE DID SARAH LAUGH, SAYING: SHALL I OF A SURETY BEAR A CHILD? It does not say, '*Since* my lord is *old*,' but SEEING THAT *I* AM OLD." This hardly seems like a significant exception, however, since Sarah was indeed old, and the rabbis, who were sticklers for detail, knew that very well. This was simply the rabbi's way to underline the importance of marital harmony.

A brief glance at Philo may be instructive here, since he exemplifies a first-century Diaspora Jewish context relevant for how Timothy might construe Paul's message in 2 Tim 3:16. For Philo, the divine spirit possesses the prophet so that, inspired, he utters only what God wants said.[114] Yet Philo, developing some language in Plato,[115] highlighted ecstatic inspiration even more than typical Greeks.

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[109] See *b. Sanh.* 107ab; *y. Sanh.* 2:6, §2; *Gen. Rab.* 47:1; *Lev. Rab.* 19:2; *Num. Rab.* 18:21; *Song Rab.* 5:11, §4.

[110] See *y. Sanh.* 2:6, §2; *Song Rab.* 5:11, §3; cf. *Exod. Rab.* 6:1.

[111] *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* Sup. 1:8. Cf. Josh 8:35, where Joshua did not omit a single word in reading the Torah.

[112] E.g. Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs* (trans. Israel Abrahams; 2 vols.; 2nd ed.; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1979), 1:350; see esp. Robert Morris Johnston, "'The Least of the Commandments': Deuteronomy 22:6–7 in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity," *AUSS* 20 (1982): 205–15.

[113] *Gen. Rab.* 48:18 (MR 1:417), citing third-century Palestinian rabbi Bar Kappara.

[114] *Spec.* 4.49. Philo may have allowed for two forms of prophecy: ecstatic and noetic (the latter, through reason; David Winston, "Two Types of Mosaic Prophecy according to Philo," *JSP* 4 [1989]: 49–67), and viewing Moses's ecstasy as milder than Balaam's (John R. Levison, "Two Types of Ecstatic Prophecy according to Philo," *SPhilA* 6 [1994]: 83–89). *L.A.B.* may also envision the Spirit displacing the prophet's mind during inspiration (Antonio Piñero, "A Mediterranean View of Prophetic Inspiration: On the Concept of Inspiration in the *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* by Pseudo-Philo," *MHR* 6 [1991]: 5–34).

[115] Isaacs, *Spirit*, 49 (citing Plato, *Tim.* 71D; *Ion* 533D, 543C, and Philo, *Heir* 264; *Spec. Laws* 4.49; *Qu. Gen.* 3.9).

For him, a prophet was "totally possessed by God and His helpless instrument,"[116] his mind "snatched up in holy frenzy by a Divine possession,"[117] "higher than our reasoning, and in very deed divine, arising by no human will or purpose but by a God-inspired ecstasy."[118]

Philo insists that, for "a prophet possessed by God [θεοφόρητος] … *nothing of what he says will be his own, for he that is truly under the control of divine inspiration* [ἐνθουσιῶν] has no power of apprehension … but serves as the channel for the insistent words of another's prompting," God using them as instruments.[119] The prophets are often seized with ecstasy, so that the person is full of God and his understanding departs until the divine Spirit departs again.[120] Philo attributes such experiences to Abraham,[121] Moses,[122] and even himself.[123] As one scholar observes, Philo's inspiration language is "almost entirely derived from non-biblical Greek."[124] Since Philo believed that he himself sometimes shared such experiences of divine ecstasy,[125] he does not limit the experience to Scripture but certainly treats Scripture as inspired and uniquely authoritative for God's people.

Such descriptions do not even sound like they allow for the stylistic differences among biblical prophets that most of us recognize today (e.g. God addresses only Ezekiel as "son of man"). (Some other ancients did, however, allow for human stylistic traits even during oracular inspiration.)[126]

For Philo, Moses was so inspired by God that he prophesied even his burial in Deuteronomy 34.[127] As F. F. Bruce notes, such extremes lent themselves to Alexandrian allegorization, against the more nuanced understanding of inspiration entertained by later Antiochian Church Fathers such as Theodore of Mopsuestia and John Chrysostom.[128]

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[116] Isaacs, *Spirit*, 49–50, citing *Heir* 69, 249, 266.

[117] Philo, *Planter* 39 (LCL 3:232–33).

[118] *Flight* 168; cf. 2 Pet. 1:21.

[119] *Spec. Laws* 1.65 (LCL 7:136–37).

[120] *QG* 9; *Heir* 264–65.

[121] *Her.* 249, 258–59.

[122] *Mos.* 2.258; cf. 1.201. This is especially effective when he is about to leave his body (2.288).

[123] *Migr.* 35. On Philo's own experience, see Aune, *Prophecy*, 147; for a lengthy treatment of prophets moved by the Divine spirit in Philo, see Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (2 vols.; 4th rev. ed.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 2:11–59.

[124] Hill, *Prophecy*, 32–33. One may contrast the NT literature, for whatever reason: see Arthur Darby Nock, "The Vocabulary of the New Testament," *JBL* 52.2–3 (1933): 134. The Jewish *Sibylline Oracles* also claim compulsion (e.g. *Sib. Or.* 2.1–5; 3.1–7, 16–18, 295–99, 489–91; 11.315–24; 12.295–96); cf. *L.A.B.* 28:6, 10; *4 Bar.* 5:8.

[125] *Migr.* 35. Middle Platonists and Neoplatonists valued the mind being caught up in the divine (see discussion in Keener, *Mind of the Spirit*, 207–9).

[126] E.g. Plutarch, *Oracles at Delphi* 7, *Mor.* 397C (LCL 5:275): "the voice is not that of a god, nor the utterance of it, nor the diction, nor the metre, but all these are the woman's; he puts into her mind only the visions."

[127] *Mos.* 2.291. Josephus speaks of Moses writing the laws that God suggested to him (*Ant.* 3.213).

[128] F. F. Bruce, "The History of New Testament Study," in *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods* (ed. I. Howard Marshall; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 26.

V. NUANCING GREEK-SPEAKING JEWISH EXPECTATIONS

Still, we should not exaggerate expectations concerning what all Jewish interpreters meant by Scripture's authority. Philo felt free to rearrange biblical chronology when necessary[129] (even rearranging the plagues)[130] and to introduce speeches into the Pentateuch,[131] making it more suitable for his own audience. Although he cuts sections from the biblical account, he also elaborates,[132] often through inferences[133] and sometimes from Jewish tradition.[134] In keeping with his partly Stoicized, Middle Platonic orientation, he also allegorizes frequently and uses such means to remove what he views as problems in the biblical text.[135]

Josephus may deem his adjustments in the biblical narrative too minimal to merit comment, but he certainly makes some. He adds speeches,[136] omits elements that might undermine his agendas, and provides his own apologetic slant.[137] Sometimes he seems to adjust particular biblical accounts based on other biblical passages.[138] Although he promises to add nothing to Moses's laws,[139] he creates among them the requirement of seven judges per city and prohibitions against women's

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[129] Brian McGing, "Philo's adaptation of the Bible in his *Life of Moses*," in *The Limits of Ancient Biography* (ed. Brian McGing and Judith Mossman; Swansea, Wales: The Classical Press of Wales, 2006), 125–26, noting esp. Philo, *Mos.* 1.33, 40–47.

[130] McGing, "Adaptation," 128, noting esp. *Mos.* 1.96–97.

[131] Esteban Hidalgo, "A Redaction-Critical Study on Philo's *On the Life of Moses*, Book One," in *Biographies and Jesus: What Does It Mean for the Gospels to be Biographies?* (ed. Craig S. Keener and Edward T. Wright; Lexington, KY: Emeth, 2016), 294–300.

[132] McGing, "Adaptation," 125–30, 33; for elaboration, see also, e.g., Christopher T. Begg, "Moses' First Moves (Exod 2:11–22) as Retold by Josephus and Philo," *Polish Journal of Biblical Research* 9.1–2 (2010): 67–93; Christopher T. Begg, "The Rephidim Episode according to Josephus and Philo," *ETL* 83 (2007): 367–83.

[133] See Hidalgo, "Study," esp. 278–86, frequently following Louis H. Feldman, *Philo's Portrayal of Moses in the Context of Ancient Judaism* (Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity 15; Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2007), e.g., 62.

[134] Cf. Pierluigi Lanfranchi, "Reminiscences of Ezekiel's *Exagoge* in Philo's *De Vita Mosis*," in *Moses in Biblical and Extra-Biblical Traditions* (ed. Axel Graupner and Michael Wolter; BZAW 372; Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 2007), 144–50; Christopher T. Begg, "The Marah Incident according to Josephus and Philo," *Laurentianum* 49.2–3 (2008): 321–33; Christopher T. Begg, "Josephus' and Philo's Retelling of Numbers 31 Compared," *ETL* 83.1 (2007): 81–106.

[135] See, e.g., Philo, *Cain* 7; *Planter* 36; Wolfson, *Philo*, 1:87–163; James L. Kugel and Rowan A. Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation* (LEC 3; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 82–85; Katell Berthelot, "Philo of Alexandria and the Conquest of Canaan," *JSJ* 38.1 (2007): 39–56.

[136] E.g. *Ant.* 1.46; 4.25–34, 134–38; cf. Josephus's adaptation of speeches in 1 Maccabees (Isaiah M. Gafni, "Josephus and 1 Maccabees," in *Josephus, the Bible, and History*, 116–31, esp. 126–27).

[137] See, e.g., F. Gerald Downing, "Redaction Criticism: Josephus' *Antiquities* and the Synoptic Gospels (I)," *JSNT* 8 (1980): 50–51. See further R. A. Derrenbacker, Jr., *Ancient Compositional Practices and the Synoptic Problem* (BETS 186; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 92–116.

[138] See Peter Höffken, "Eine Reichsteilung bei Josephus Flavius: Beobachtungen zu seiner Auffassung von Daniel 5," *JSJ* 36 (2005): 197–205.

[139] *Ant.* 4.196; cf. *Ant.* 1.17; 14.1; 20.261; *Ag. Ap.* 1.42. Louis H. Feldman, "Hellenizations in Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*: The Portrait of Abraham," in *Josephus, Judaism and Christianity* (ed. Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata; Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 133, regards this promise as conventional, citing Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Thuc.* 5, 8; Lucian, *Hist.* 47.

testimony and against stealing from pagan temples.[140] He even adds extrabiblical events to Scripture, though he often bases these on earlier extrabiblical traditions that he may deem correct.[141] Josephus apparently understood his work of "translation" as requiring interpreting and adapting material for his audience; his Gentile contemporaries often envisioned the work of "translation" similarly.[142]

What we can say for certain is that Jewish intellectuals writing in Greek, such as Philo and Josephus, like other Jewish authors, regarded Scripture itself as wholly true. They might make adaptations or inferences for their audiences, similar to what we might call the "movie" version today, but Scripture remained authoritative.

That the earliest Christian writers also allowed some flexibility in wording is evident from minor differences in parallel passages in the NT, from their pervasive use of contemporary Greek versions rather than quoting the OT in Hebrew, and from their common paraphrase of the OT (e.g. in Acts 2:17–18). Such features suggest an emphasis on communicating the message more than precise wording. (Today we think similarly when we speak of translations functioning for us as God's Word rather than insisting that all readers learn Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic before they can study Scripture as God's Word.) We need not suppose that they took all the liberties afforded them by some of their Diaspora Jewish contemporaries;[143] my point is that none of the cases of flexibility we may identify in the NT detracts from the confidence they express in the inspiration and truthfulness of Scripture.

Such changes were well within ancient expectations and in no way minimized respect for their sources. Even deliberate paraphrase was a standard and basic exercise in antiquity.[144] Josephus freely rephrases his OT, without deliberately contradicting its substance;[145] later rabbis, though more conservative than Josephus, revocalized words and mixed and matched versions as needed to make their points.[146] All this is to say that even the most emphatic views of inspiration did not always entail wooden approaches to inerrancy sometimes assumed on a popular level (one

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[140] *Ant.* 4.207, 214, 219.

[141] E.g. Josephus, *Ant.* 2.238–57, esp. 252–53; Artapanus frg. 3 (Eusebius, *Prep. Ev.* 9.27.10); cf. James M. Petitfils, "A Tale of Two Moseses: Philo's *On the Life of Moses* and Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities* 2–4 in Light of the Roman Discourse of Exemplarity," in *Reading and Teaching Ancient Fiction: Jewish, Christian, and Greco-Roman Narratives* (ed. Sara R. Johnson, Rubén R. Dupertuis, and Christine Shea; Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series 11; Atlanta: SBL, 2018), 160–62. The narrative follows conventions for Hellenistic historiography; see Tessa Rajak, "Moses in Ethiopia: Legend and Literature," *JJS* 29 (1978): 111–22.

[142] Sabrina Inowlocki, "'Neither Adding nor Omitting Anything': Josephus' Promise Not to Modify the Scriptures in Greek and Latin Context," *JJS* 56 (2005): 48–65.

[143] Matthew and Luke paraphrase Jesus's sacred words in their sources more conservatively than Josephus paraphrases Scripture (John S. Kloppenborg, "Variation in the Reproduction of the Double Tradition and an Oral Q?," *ETL* 83 [2007]: 63, 67–70, 77).

[144] See, e.g., Theon, *Progymn.* 1.93–171 (Butts); Hermogenes, *Method in Forceful Speaking* 24.440; *Inv.* 2.7.120–21; Libanius, *Anecdote* 1.4; 2.3; *Maxim* 1.2–5; 2.3; 3.2; in historiography, Derrenbacker, *Practices*, 44–46, 94–95, 116.

[145] Cf. Downing, "Redaction Criticism," 49.

[146] Some argue that Qumran sectarians, unlike later rabbis, even altered texts (so Paul Heger, "Qumran Exegesis: 'Rewritten Torah' or Interpretation?," *RevQum* 22.85 [2005]: 61–87).

that differs from the valuable qualifications found, for example, in the Chicago Statement), whether among supporters or detractors. They did, however, regard inspired Scripture as wholly God's Word and fully true (indeed, sometimes both in the original form *and* in translation).[147] Despite some variation in how various Jewish circles delimited the periphery of the canon, virtually all of them regarded that canon as inspired, true, and in our society's language, inerrant.

VI. CONCLUSION

Greek conceptions of inspiration often entailed inerrancy, but did not always do so. Jewish conceptions of inspiration in a generic sense could vary, but entailed inerrancy with regard to Jewish appropriation of the OT Scriptures, which were *fully* inspired. Since it is the Scriptures of which 2 Timothy clearly speaks in 3:14–17, and these were learned in a Jewish context of which Paul approves (2 Tim 1:5), we may be confident that θεόπνευστος in 2 Tim 3:16 presumes the full inspiration and consequent full truthfulness of Scripture. While such an observation does not by itself settle all debates about the nature of inspiration or the precise ways we should articulate inerrancy, it does invite the recognition that 2 Tim 3:16 regards the OT as God's wholly true Word. It therefore invites those of us who affirm Scripture's inspiration to follow suit.

[147] Cf. Josephus regarding the letter of Aristeas and the accuracy of the LXX.