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**GARY N. KNOPPERS, (ED.),
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INTRODUCTION

GARY N. KNOPPERS,
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It is a great delight, as a guest editor of the *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*, to introduce the following series of reviews of Melody D. Knowles' *Centrality Practiced: Jerusalem in the Religious Practices of Yehud and the Diaspora in the Persian Period* (Archaeology and Biblical Studies 16; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006; pp. 192; U.S. \$24.95; ISBN: 1-58983-175-6). Dr. Knowles is a professor of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. A special session of the Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah section was held at the national meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in November 2006 (Washington, DC) to honor, discuss, and evaluate her recently published book (a revised and updated version of her dissertation at Princeton Theological Seminary written under Professor C. L. Seow). The same special session at the 2006 Society of Biblical Literature meeting also featured a series of collegial reviews of Jacob L. Wright's recently published book, *Rebuilding Identity: The Nehemiah Memoir and its Earliest Readers* (BZAW 348; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004). It is my sincere hope that the reviews (and Professor Wright's response) will be published in a future issue of the *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*.

I wish to extend my thanks both to Professor Tamara Eskenazi of the Hebrew Union College (Los Angeles) for suggesting this special session and to the chair of the Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah section of the Society of Biblical Literature, Professor Christine Mitchell of St. Andrew's College (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan) for all of her diligent work in helping to organize this special symposium. Special thanks also go to each of the reviewers: Ms. Deirdre N. Fulton a graduate student in ancient history at Penn State University (University Park, PA); Professor David Janzen of North Central College (Naperville, IL); and Professor Ralph W. Klein of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago for their willingness to revise and publish their reviews in the *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*. Finally, I would like to thank Professor Melody Knowles for her thoughtful and creative response to the reviewers' comments.

Readers should be aware that the following reviews and authorial response were originally given in an oral setting. As a guest editor, I asked the reviewers to revise their works for publication, but I did not ask them to convert their works into formal articles with extensive documentation, footnotes, and so forth. This means that the responses still retain some of the stylistic characteristics of reviews delivered in an

originally oral setting. To be sure, reviewers were allowed to add any footnotes that they deemed helpful for readers to understand the context, force, and setting of their evaluations, but the decision whether to do so was left to the discretion of the individual participants.

I wish to thank the editor of the *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*, Professor Ehud Ben Zvi of the University of Alberta (Edmonton) for his generosity in publishing this collection of reviews, as well as the response to those reviews by Professor Knowles. Ehud's unstinting work in providing a timely and suitable forum for scholarly discussions is in itself a most appreciated contribution to the larger field. In concluding, I think that I can speak for all of the reviewers and for the author as well in saying that we hope that our discussion will be conducive to further study of the Persian period in general and of the books of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah in particular.

A RESPONSE

DEIRDRE N. FULTON

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Second Temple period studies have flourished over the past few decades with the rise in interest of this pivotal period of history. Melody Knowles and Jacob Wright continue this trend with their recent works, which synthesize textual, literary, historical, and archaeological arguments, and together represent a capsule of contemporary biblical research in America. In her book, *Centrality Practiced*, Melody Knowles adeptly balances text with material culture in order to evaluate better the importance of centralization of the Yahweh cult during the Persian Period. Jacob Wright's work skillfully balances text, source, and literary critical models in order to explain the composition of Nehemiah. I have been asked to examine the issues and methodologies these works take into consideration, and will specifically focus on Melody Knowles' work in this review, with the goal of adding to the ongoing dialogue in Second Temple Period studies.¹

Melody Knowles's book *Centrality Practiced* is a thorough examination of the textual references to Yahwistic practices during the Persian Period, both in Yehud and in the Diaspora. This study ultimately examines the "construction of sacred space centrality" and its "change throughout time" (p. 7). Concentrating on the concept of geography and its role in the centralization of the cult, she presents several issues, particularly animal sacrifice, tithing, pilgrimage, incense, and figurines and then proceeds to discuss the references to such practices found in various Persian Period biblical and extra-biblical texts. Knowles sets up a clear model for her approach to this study: First, an examination of the textual material and then the archaeological material. Thus, with the biblical text framing her study, she examines the material culture.

By means of her exegetical studies, Knowles tackles several issues concerning centrality during the Persian Period. She discusses the Persian Period biblical sources that mention these issues, such as Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Trito-Isaiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles, and Psalms 120-34. All reflect a concern for religious devotion to Yahweh, but some point to a deeper concern relating to the centralization of specific cultic practices. Beginning with an examination of Yahwistic mani-

¹ I would like to thank Gary Knoppers and Tamara Eskenazi for inviting me to participate in the Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah panel at the 2006 Society of Biblical Literature. I would also like to thank Melody Knowles and Jacob Wright for their significant contributions with their respective works. The original review included an analysis of Jacob Wright's book. The review of Wright's work will appear in *JHS* at a later date.

festations of animal sacrifice, she tracks biblical references to this practice chronologically, examining Haggai and Zechariah first, and ending with Chronicles. She concludes that the biblical texts indicate that the “circumscription of animal sacrifice outside Jerusalem became increasingly important within the texts that now comprise the Hebrew Bible” (p. 38).

Turning then to the archaeological evidence for animal sacrifice, she examines the most important known sites for addressing the issue of sacrifice both inside and outside of Yehud in order to ascertain whether the material culture agrees with the biblical texts. She examines Bethel, Tell en-Nasbeh, and Jerusalem as possible places for animal sacrifice within Yehud. Bethel and Tell en-Nasbeh do not reveal clear signs of animal sacrifice and Jerusalem is problematic, because of its continued occupation. She deduces that not all evidence points to Yahwistic centralization concerning animal sacrifice and thus, the “centralizing tendency was only partially realized” (p. 53). This conclusion does clarify her earlier literary analysis of the Persian Period textual references to animal sacrifice. But this evolving landscape, which Knowles argues appears to emerge in the biblical texts, is more obscure in the archaeological record. As Knowles affirms, animal sacrifice to Yahweh is difficult to spot both within Yehud and also outside of Yehud. She uses three main sites outside of Yehud in her study, namely, Elephantine, Lachish, and Mount Gerizim. In the case of Elephantine, Knowles uses the extant textual evidence to point to animal sacrifice. In the Elephantine papyri, the Yahwistic community indicates that they were offering burnt sacrifices prior to the destruction of their temple, dated to 410 BCE. Scholars also point to these letters to argue for the cessation of this practice. Unfortunately, the material remains from Elephantine do not make it possible to identify whether animal sacrifice actually continued or discontinued after 407 BCE, and hence we must rely on the written record for this information.

Further, regarding the issue of Lachish as a cult center to Yahweh and the local practice of animal sacrifice, Knowles argues that the archaeological evidence is not conclusive enough to provide a compelling argument. This conclusion concerning the issue of animal sacrifice is prudent, considering the lack of evidence pointing to sacrifice. In particular, the question of two drains in the floor of the Persian Period solar shrine allows for all sorts of possible interpretations, including animal sacrifice. Whether these drains have any connection to animal sacrifice is debatable, and Knowles wisely does not use this evidence to address her primary question, which is whether behavior, particularly the possible centralization of animal sacrifice, marks a shift in the overall centrality of certain cultic practices to Jerusalem.

Pointing to Mount Gerizim as an example of a community that offered animal sacrifices to Yahweh, Knowles asserts that animal sacrifice to Yahweh was never fully centralized in Jerusalem during the Persian Period. Thus, the archaeological evidence and biblical evidence seem to diverge from each other. Although most of the archaeological evidence cannot clearly point to a shift in cult centralization, Jerusalem had a direct connection to these other communities outside of Yehud during the Persian Period. This is most evidently reflected in the Elephantine

papyri, which ties Jerusalem, Samaria, and Elephantine together. She notes that the issue of a centralizing tendency in the biblical texts may be due to the “rising prominence of Jerusalem in texts such as Chronicles: the author’s portrayal of the city is a ‘promotion’ of Jerusalem in a context of rival shrines” (p. 53). This conclusion provides a reasonable solution to the discrepancies between the textual and archaeological material.

Knowles examines “The Geographical Protocols of Non-Sacrificial Worship” in chapter 3. Promoting a connection between the Jerusalem community and other Yahwistic communities, she turns to other pieces of evidence mentioned in texts and discovered in archaeological digs. This part of her study considers the use of incense and figurines, and follows the same pattern as her study of animal sacrifice. First, she explores the textual references to these practices and then turns to the archaeological evidence, both inside and outside of Yehud. Knowles points out that it is often difficult to connect the use of incense and figurines to the worshipers of Yahweh. She does point to the Elephantine papyri, as well as remains from Lachish, as evidence for the use of incense in Yahwistic worship. But the case of figurines is less compelling, since there is only one possible case in which they could be connected to Yahweh worship.² She concludes that the use of incense had no geographical limitations, whereas Yahwists seem not to have used figurines at any location, with the possible exception of Lachish (p. 75).

Rounding out her study of how different communities manifested their religious beliefs, she examines pilgrimage to Jerusalem and tithing. The biblical texts offer insight into both of these issues, but different authors reflect different concerns about how these practices could or should be carried out. Concerning pilgrimage, prophetic references view this as something that involves the community, as well as the nations at some point in the future, whereas historical narratives present pilgrimage as a contemporary practice of the community. Finally, in the book of Ezra, one finds this as a significant event that directly “shapes the accounts of the returns” (p. 103). Regarding tithing and ultimately the economics of centrality, Knowles examines paying taxes and tithes to Jerusalem in order to discover how ritual practices can be “registered on an economic plane” (p. 119). She concludes that the examination of the archaeological and biblical evidence points to devotees providing money to the Jerusalem temple. In fact, the temple could have also functioned as a tax depot for the larger population of Yehud. She does doubt, however, the validity of Ezra’s claim that the temple benefited from imperial support.

In *Centrality Practiced*, Knowles concludes her study of the textual references and material evidence with an examination of Jerusalem as a landscape. She ties the idea of Jerusalem as a landscape to the idea of Jerusalem as a palimpsest, or a changeable landscape. Knowles states, “understanding this landscape of Jerusalem as a palimpsest captures the inherited and evolving nature of Jerusalem’s centrality vis-à-vis its many constructions and reconstructions” (p. 124). This conclusion, which ex-

² Knowles points to several figurines present in the archaeological remains at Lachish as the only possible case for their use in Yahweh worship (p. 73).

amines the reality of Jerusalem in the Persian Period, argues for the changing nature of Jerusalem's centrality.

In the end, Knowles focuses on more of a literary critical reading of the Persian Period sources. She does briefly address some text-critical issues in her discussion of "rewriting centrality" in Nehemiah 10, where Knowles argues new material is inserted into the text so as to initiate new rules for paying tithes to Jerusalem. Thus the text of Neh 10:38b-40 is inserted after Neh 10:36-38a in order to "ensure the offerings would be brought to the temple" (p. 125). Her literary critical reading of the text makes the connection to the archaeological material clearer, because it is concerned with change over time. She brings new awareness to centrality in the Persian Period, both through her literary approach to the material as well as through a discussion of the archaeological material. She also helps illuminate the thesis that behavior does become a more important marker for identity in the Persian Period—or that the identity of Persian Period worship clearly evolves over time—which she argues is evident in both the text and the tell. But in the end, she concludes that the "practice of centrality was neither entirely univocal or consistent," which is an important observation in light of certain archaeological oddities (p. 128). In fact, the reader is struck by the number of regional cults present in the Persian Period, and thus that centrality was not necessarily the norm for Yahwistic worship. Knowles' study of Persian Period texts and archaeological material highlights the evolution of centralization, which becomes increasingly significant for the worship of Yahweh in later periods.

A RESPONSE

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I would like to begin by thanking Melody Knowles for this book. I have had an interest in the social world and the texts of the Persian period since my days in graduate school, and this was a work I was excited to read. I understand that the book has only recently come out in print, and since I do not imagine that most people have had a chance to read *Centrality Practiced* yet, I am going to begin with some summary of the work.

The title is clear enough in expressing what Knowles wants to examine in this work: did the Yahwists of the Persian period understand Jerusalem to be central; and if so, how was this expressed in actual practices enacted by those Yahwists of that period? To ask how this centrality was practiced is to ask specifically after the way people expressed their worldview in which Jerusalem was central through physical expressions, which have left a record either in the Persian period texts or in the archaeological record. Human activity, as Knowles puts it, is a way of describing or enacting belief (p. 4).

Having set out this agenda in the opening chapter, Knowles also notes, though, that the interpretation and construction of sacred space changes over time. What people believe, and the ways in which they practice this belief, is not static. This is "evident" for Jerusalem in the Persian period, says Knowles, because understandings of Jerusalem's centrality were reinterpreted by different communities during this time (p. 7). To say that Jerusalem was central for Yahwists in the Persian period is not to say that it was central for all of them in the same way. The religious practices of Yahwists at this time were not all identical, but varied from group to group. (I should add, by the way, that Knowles defines people who lived within the province of Yehud as Yahwists, unless there is evidence that seems to contradict this. She sees the opposite as holding for people who lived outside of the province: she does not consider them to be Yahwists unless there is evidence that suggests they are [p. 9].)

I should probably add as well that not all scholars believe that Jerusalem was central for Yahwists of the Persian period. Rainer Albertz, for example, sees the law and not the cult in Jerusalem as providing Yahwists with their center in this period. Robert Carroll believes that the centrality of the temple in the biblical texts reflects the ideological interests of those who wrote them.³ Knowles acknowledges such

³ Where I refer to other scholars besides Knowles in this response, I have not, unless otherwise noted, included bibliographic information. Readers may

views, although she does not explicitly confront these arguments (for a “quick sketch of current scholarship” on the issue, see pp. 10-12), but her work as a whole provides her cumulative answer in regard to Jerusalem’s centrality. One of the benefits of her approach, in my opinion, is the fact that she uses the biblical texts only as part of her evidence. She correlates such texts with the archaeological record, and I largely find her judgments in weighing the evidence to be judicious.

To move first to the biblical texts that Knowles considers, she relies only on texts that scholarly consensus dates to the Persian period: Haggai, Zechariah 1-8, Third Isaiah, Malachi, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles, and Psalms 120-134, the latter in its edited final form. She acknowledges that these texts are not the extent of Persian period composition in the Hebrew Bible, and that they are mixed with earlier sources and later additions, but sees them as “a reliable picture of the textual traditions of this time period” (pp. 12-13). Her method in the book is to examine different practices that point to Jerusalem’s centrality: animal sacrifice; the use of incense and figurines; pilgrimage; and the paying of taxes and tithes. In each case, she examines what each of these texts has to say about the particular issue, and in each case, she examines each text separately. That way, should a particular reader believe that Chronicles, say, was composed following the Persian period, then he or she would be free to discount the evidence that Knowles presents from the work on all of the practices that she discusses. She also discusses Ezra and Nehemiah as separate works.

I want to say a bit about Knowles’ specific conclusions regarding the practices that she examines. It will help, though, to begin by noting that she concludes that it is better to speak of “centralities” in the plural, rather than to conclude that that all Yahwists of the Persian period understood Jerusalem to be central in the same way. Nonetheless, she does see “a discernable trend” of “a general reorientation of religious practice toward Jerusalem” (p. 15). Specifically in this regard she points to a movement toward centralizing sacrifice in the city.

To move quickly through her conclusions regarding particular issues that she examines, we may begin with sacrifice. Among the prophetic works, Knowles sees brief and allusive condemnations of sacrifice outside of Jerusalem in Haggai 2:13; Zechariah 5:5-11 (not all agree that this is what this passage is about, though); and in Third Isaiah. Malachi seems to assume that sacrifice takes place only in Jerusalem. Ezra appears to be the first work for which sacrifice is central, and it is done there only at the temple. Chronicles has more references to sacrifice at the temple than the Deuteronomistic History does, and fewer references to sacrifice outside of the city. Her conclusion as regards the biblical evidence on this point, then, is that animal sacrifice within the Jerusalem temple becomes increasingly emphasized as the Persian period goes on (pp. 19-38).

For Yahwistic worship outside of Jerusalem, Knowles points out that the correspondence from Elephantine suggests that when that community attempted to rebuild its temple, it explicitly made the move to eliminate animal sacrifice there. In their first letter to Bagohi, the

find such information in the footnotes on the relevant pages of *Centrality Practiced*.

governor of Judah, they describe the temple as a place for burnt sacrifices, among other kinds of offerings. The memorandum that they receive in reply allows for the rebuilding, but says nothing about animal sacrifice even while it does mention the other kinds of offerings, and when Yahwists in Elephantine offer money to rebuild the temple, they do so on the condition that animal sacrifices not be offered there. Do these attempts at an elimination of animal sacrifice there arise out of a worldview that makes Jerusalem central in the sense of the only legitimate place of sacrifice to the God of Israel? Quite possibly; especially when one considers that the Elephantine temple seems to have been rebuilt on an alignment with Jerusalem (pp. 40-44).

Outside of Elephantine, there is little current scholarly consensus that Yahwists sacrificed elsewhere in the Persian period (although Lachish, Bethel, and Mizpah have been offered as possibilities), with the exception of Mount Gerizim. For Knowles, then, the picture we get from the biblical texts about a growing concern for a centralization of sacrifice in Jerusalem is largely borne out by the archaeological record. On the other hand, the fact that there was a Yahwistic shrine at Gerizim suggests that a text, such as Chronicles, promotes centralization in Jerusalem "in a context of rival shrines" (p. 53). So, if there is a growing movement toward the centrality of Jerusalem in this sense, Yahwists of the period would appear to have had more than one opinion on the matter. Here we see a fine example of Knowles' use of the archaeological evidence in order to check and, in fact, to better interpret the ideological spin of the biblical writings.

Knowles also examines how the religious use of incense was handled among Yahwists of the Persian period (pp. 55-71). Incense burning in the Persian period is normally linked to small stone or clay platforms that can be found throughout the Near East, although it is not always clear that these are used in religious practice. Among the Persian period texts, Chronicles condemns incense offerings by anyone outside of cultic officials and anywhere outside of the temple. Third Isaiah sees incense as belonging only inside the temple as well, but Malachi permits offerings of incense to God anywhere. Incense altars from the Persian period have been found in tombs in Gezer, and a Yahwistic name appears on such an altar in Lachish, where others have been found in cultic contexts. The Elephantine correspondence also shows that incense was used in the cult there.

In the same chapter, Knowles notes that while Persian period figurines (mainly of women and bearded men on horseback) are common throughout the Near East, none have been discovered in Yehud or Samaria (pp. 71-74). Ephraim Stern, for one, sees religious significance in this. Certainly the biblical texts never speak favorably of their use, and Chronicles and Nehemiah speak negatively of their use in Israel's past, which may indicate Yahwistic employment of them during the Persian period. When combined with the evidence involving incense offerings, then, Knowles concludes that we see "both the cultic hegemony of Jerusalem and the practice of religion outside the city walls" (p. 75).

Although pilgrimage is not widespread among Yahwists until the Hasmonean period, it is clearly something that pre-existed the exile. In Zechariah, Haggai, and Third Isaiah we see pictures of a future or es-

chatological pilgrimage to Jerusalem by the diaspora and nations (pp. 77-81). In Ezra, we see the celebration of the pilgrimage festivals of Booths (in Ezra 3) and Passover (in Ezra 6), and Knowles argues extensively that the stories of the returns in Ezra 1-2 and 7-8 are constructed on the pattern of a pilgrimage rather than an exodus (pp. 81-90). As a result, the community in Ezra 1-10 “is portrayed as a worshipping community and one that is open to its Diasporic components” (p. 90). Knowles also points to Psalms 120-134 (a corpus which she dates to the Persian period for linguistic reasons) as utilizing pilgrimage themes and motifs (pp. 93-102). It is unclear, however, whether or not Jerusalem truly was an important pilgrimage destination during the Persian period, especially considering the small size of the city at that time. It is possible that the biblical texts only reflect the desire that Jerusalem be seen as a center of worship and pilgrimage (pp. 102-3).

In the final part of her investigation, Knowles asks whether Jerusalem was an important center for taxes and tithes. Some texts, such as Haggai, Malachi, and Nehemiah emphasize community support of the temple cult. Zechariah 1-8, on the other hand, sees support of the temple as coming from the Diaspora, while in Ezra the bulk of the donations for the temple come from the Persians. Chronicles, too, emphasizes gifts to the temple by the monarchy, although such generosity is met by a response of giving by the people (pp. 105-15). When Knowles turns to the archaeological record, she finds that temples in the Persian period had to finance their own operations, and of course Cambyses ordered a reduction and in some cases elimination of imperial funding for temples in Egypt. As a result, it makes most sense to see the temple in Jerusalem as supported by its adherents, and to see the picture in Ezra as, at best, an exaggeration of imperial support, if not an outright fabrication (pp. 115-20). It is also possible, as Joachim Schaper argues, that the temple was a depot for taxes, although Knowles, rightly, regards this as unclear.

For Knowles, then, there was no one way in which communities of Yahwists in the Persian period understood Jerusalem to be central. While she talks about a connection of Jerusalem to these communities as “visible” and “desired and mandated” (p. 121), she also talks about the ideological landscape of Jerusalem of this period as a palimpsest. The centrality of Jerusalem was something that evolved, that was written and then overwritten, that was constructed and reconstructed. It makes more sense to talk of communities (again in the plural), each with its own picture of how Jerusalem should be central, and each thus advocating different practices that reflected such centrality. And while we can see overlaps in the different ways in which these centralities were practiced, these overlaps are not absolute. When it comes to describing pilgrimage (either actual or future), Haggai, Zechariah, and Third Isaiah are ethnically inclusive, but Nehemiah is not. For some communities, the practice of the religious use of incense points to the centrality of Jerusalem, for other groups it does not. It is unlikely that all Yahwists regarded Jerusalem as intrinsically central, as the establishment of a shrine with sacrifice at Gerizim suggests, a case of an attempt to erase the centrality of Jerusalem without overwriting it (pp. 119-28).

As I hope this summary has made clear, Knowles' book is an ambitious one, and we have a lot to thank her for. Although a short monograph, it discusses seven different biblical books (eight, if you separate Ezra and Nehemiah, as Knowles does) as well as the archaeological record for the period. The material is well researched, well organized, and judiciously evaluated. Anyone working on the issues discussed here—centrality in the Persian period, sacrifice, figurines, incense, and tithing—will want to consult this book.

I do not always come to the same conclusions that Knowles does concerning the material that she evaluates, but the evidence from each of her sources is presented clearly enough and on its own so that one can see how she comes to her evaluation of it, even as one may come to a different conclusion. Let me supply two kinds of examples in this respect. As the first, smaller kind of example, I am not as convinced as Knowles is that Ezra really portrays a community that “is open to its Diasporic components,” or at least not in the same way as Knowles understands this. Her clear and distinct presentation of the material, however, allows me to see clearly that our difference of interpretation lies largely in a difference of translation of a particular verse—Ezra 6:21, specifically.⁴ As a second, larger scale example, I am also not as convinced as Knowles is that the biblical texts evince a growing concern with the centrality of Jerusalem regarding sacrifice. Her argument would be more persuasive for me if some discussion of the respective dates of the particular writings had been included. It is just as easy, I think, to see in the different texts that Knowles presents various snapshots of beliefs concerning the Jerusalem cult, some of which focus on sacrifice and some of which do not. If Ezra or Chronicles says more about sacrifice than Haggai does, that may or may not be because Haggai has less of a concern that sacrifice be practiced only in Jerusalem. But it is Knowles' clear arrangement of the material, discussing each book separately, that helps me come to this conclusion.

This leads me to one last point, and I am still not sure if I see this as a lack in the work or as a future project that could build on it. It certainly does reflect my own interests in texts. Knowles largely uses the various biblical texts as sources of information for how their authors (or editors) believe particular acts should be practiced. How does the author or editor of Ezra feel about sacrifice outside of Jerusalem? Does Malachi believe it to be legitimate to offer incense to God outside of the Jerusalem cult? And so on. For my interests, though, I would like to know more about how the texts understand the centrality of Jerusalem in general. That is, I think it is possible that the way in which Ezra-Nehemiah (I would connect the texts rather than separate them) understands Jerusalem to be central is more than just the sum of what it says about sacrifice, pilgrimage, and so on. From my perspective, a useful chapter (or two) would have been one that examined the basic theologi-

⁴ Knowles' interpretation of this verse clearly follows the interpretation of the majority of scholars, however; for the defense of my minority position, see David Janzen, “The Cries of Jerusalem: Ethnic, Legal, and Geographic Boundaries in Ezra-Nehemiah” in *(Dis)Unity of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (ed. Mark J. Boda and Paul L. Redditt; Old Testament Monograph Series; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, forthcoming 2007) n. 28.

cal tendencies of the different biblical texts that Knowles uses, with an especial emphasis on how each text understands Jerusalem.

The benefit of this kind of study would be two-fold. First, it could help us better interpret the information drawn from each text when approaching each topic that Knowles discusses. For example, such a study of Ezra-Nehemiah would show that Jerusalem is, to Ezra-Nehemiah, “the holy city” (Neh 11:1) that should be reserved for “the holy seed” (Ezra 9:2). Clearly, as Knowles notes, Ezra-Nehemiah takes it for granted that sacrifice to God should only take place in Jerusalem; but for this work, what is more important than where sacrifice to God takes place is who gets to perform the sacrifice in the temple. If the work can be said to focus on one thing, it is on the formation of a community: who gets to be part of it (descendants of the exiles); and what barriers are erected in order to protect it from outsiders. The cult is one of these barriers, in the sense that participation in it is limited to those who belong to the community of Ezra-Nehemiah, since God, through the Persians, has chosen only them to rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:2-4; 4:1-3; 6:6-12). So would the Persian period community that read and preserved Ezra-Nehemiah have cared if Yahwists outside of their own community sacrificed elsewhere? On the one hand, maybe this would be true. But, on the other hand, maybe not. When, in Ezra 4, “the adversaries” of the exiles want to help build the temple, the exiles do not try to stop them from sacrificing to God; they just do not want them to sacrifice in Jerusalem. We do not see any polemic in Ezra-Nehemiah against sacrifice outside of Jerusalem, but that is likely because the community of Yahwists who would have agreed with the message of the book did not care. What mattered is that only descendants of the exiles got to sacrifice in Jerusalem. With this kind of study we would see that a lack of criticism of extra-Jerusalem sacrifice in Ezra-Nehemiah is not necessarily evidence that Yahwists did not sacrifice outside of the city.

The second benefit to this kind of study would be that it would help us answer the question of how or in what ways did different communities see Jerusalem as central. For Ezra-Nehemiah, for example, Jerusalem is ethnically central—that is, it is the place that God has sent the *ethnos*, the nation, from Babylon. People not part of this nation may live there, but that is more or less an annoying fact that Ezra-Nehemiah would like to ignore (although cannot do so completely—see Neh 13:16). When Ezra 1-10 talks about the temple, it is for the exiles alone. When Nehemiah 1-13 talks about the walls, they are for the exiles alone. Jerusalem is central to Ezra-Nehemiah because, even if not all of the exiles live in Jerusalem or even in Yehud, Jerusalem is their city, the holy city. So, how is Jerusalem central to this community? It is a geographic symbol of their status as “Israel.”

But the way in which the temple is central to the community or communities that prized Ezra-Nehemiah would certainly not have been the way Jerusalem was central to the Yahwistic community in Elephantine, even though they put a stop to animal sacrifice there. Their vision of how Jerusalem was central might be seen as closer to that of Chronicles’, which, as Knowles points out, seems to want to urge an elimination of sacrifice outside of Jerusalem, even while admitting Yahwists outside of Judah and Benjamin to the temple cult. It may be that this

extra work I am suggesting really goes beyond the scope of one extra chapter, although I believe that a chapter along the lines of what I have been describing would have been helpful. Perhaps a thoroughgoing examination of the ideology of each biblical work and Jerusalem's place in it is really something that should be built on the work that Knowles has already accomplished here.

I think that Knowles has met basic objections to Jerusalem's centrality in the Persian period, and I would like to hear what she has to say about the different ways that Jerusalem was central. How literally should we take her palimpsest metaphor? Did the different ways of picturing the centralities of Jerusalem follow one upon the other, or did some of them coexist? Does the picture of Jerusalem within the worldview of the Chronicler really fit that of the Yahwistic community in Elephantine? Is there any biblical work from the Persian period that might reflect the place of Jerusalem within the thought of the community at Gerizim? These are questions that I hope Knowles will take up in the future.

A RESPONSE

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The book under review is an encouraging promise of what the next generation will contribute to our knowledge of the history, literature, and theology of early Judaism in the Persian period. The Knowles' volume, which was originally her dissertation at Princeton Seminary, looks at God's geographical location and the role of the temple in the physical expressions of the Yahwists of the Persian period in order to see how the centrality of Jerusalem was practiced. The bases of her argument are, on the one hand, biblical texts—Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Third Isaiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the so-called Psalms of Ascent (pp. 120-134)—and, on the other hand, archeology, in terms both of inscriptions and material finds insofar as they can contribute to our understanding of these questions. After an opening chapter in which she defines basic terms and describes her methodology, including the limitations of the evidence, successive chapters are devoted to the centralities of animal sacrifice, the use of incense and figurines, Jerusalem as a pilgrimage center in the Persian period, and paying taxes and tithes in Jerusalem. A final chapter is entitled *The Palimpsest of Jerusalem's Centrality*.

In the chapter on animal sacrifice, in many ways the most important and the most convincing, Knowles takes note of what we do not know and what we do know. She remains undecided whether Joseph Blenkinsopp is right in proposing that sacrifices were carried on at Bethel during the exilic period, and it is not clear who used the temple or altar at Lachish in the Persian period—that is, were these people Yahwists and do they therefore contribute to our understanding of Israelite worship? The “house of Yahu” inscription, dated to the fourth century BCE and discovered south and west of Yehud, indicates at least that a temple of YHWH was located in this area. But of course we do not know what kind of cultic practices were practiced at this temple. Knowles believes that Ezra 4:3 implies that sacrifice took place in Jerusalem before the exiles came back from Babylon,⁵ and that would seemingly be supported by Jer 41:5: “Eighty men arrived from Shechem and Shiloh and Samaria, with their beards shaved and their clothes torn, and their bodies gashed, bringing grain offerings and incense to present at the temple of the LORD.” Surprisingly there is no reference in the

⁵ Less convincing, in my judgment, is the claim, p. 30. that the Jewish builders in this verse asserted that they worshiped a different god than their adversaries from Judah and Benjamin

bibliography to the fine essay by Douglas Jones in 1963 about the cessation of sacrifice after the destruction of the temple in 586.⁶

A pair of passages in Trito-Isaiah (57:5 and 65:3) contain polemics against animal sacrifice outside Jerusalem in locales that are now unidentifiable (p. 122).⁷ One could argue, I suppose, that the polemic in these passages is not so much about the locale as about the syncretistic character of these cultic actions. In Malachi, although worship of the LORD in general transcends the borders of Yehud (1:11, 14), animal sacrifice is primarily/exclusively localized in the Jerusalem temple. Hence the restrictions on animal sacrifice outside Jerusalem became increasingly important within the texts of the Hebrew Bible.

We do know that animal sacrifice ceased at Elephantine in 407 BCE,⁸ although apparently this Jewish colony did practice grain sacrifice and the cultic burning of incense after that date (just as in Jer 41:5). She agrees with the latest excavator of Mt. Gerizim that animal sacrifice took place there, due to the mention of a “house of sacrifice” in an inscription in lapidary Aramaic for which she does not supply a date and because of the large number of animal bones in the recent excavation.

This excavation and the recent publications of Ingrid Hjelm have complicated the assessment of when the definitive split between Samaria and Jerusalem took place.⁹ Does the Chronicler's plea for the central importance of Jerusalem and his more or less open invitation to the north to rally around the Jerusalem temple have Gerizim in mind as a contemporary rival to the exclusiveness of Jerusalem? Until the rise of the Hasmonaean state, did Yehud have any way of enforcing its theological claims in Samaritan territory? This is the question behind the question in the Knowles dissertation. What authority did the Jerusalem temple have, and how was that authority exercised. Neither in her bibliography nor in the text of the book does she address the challenge of Diana Edelman, who has recently redated the construction of the temple to the tenure of Nehemiah instead of 515.¹⁰ While this is not the place to discuss Edelman's proposal, I wonder how Knowles would have to reframe her argument if the Edelman hypothesis were true, or is the data gathered by Knowles sufficient to call Edelman's proposal into question?

Knowles does not address the type of worship that was carried on by the Jews in Babylon during and following the exile. She notes early on Ezekiel's reference to God's functioning “for a little while” or “to some extent” as a sanctuary there (Ezek 11:16), but does not discuss the meaning of this except for a reference to a chapter dealing with this question by Andreas Ruwe. Was animal or grain sacrifice ever practiced

⁶ Douglas Jones, “The Cessation of Sacrifice after the Destruction of the Temple in 586 B.C.,” *JTS N.S.* 14 (1963) 12-31.

⁷ See also Hag 2:14.

⁸ How they would have correlated animal sacrifice with Deuteronomy 12 before 407 is unclear.

⁹ Ingrid Hjelm, *The Samaritans and Early Judaism. A Literary Analysis* (JSOT-Sup 303; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) and “What Do Samaritans and Jews Have in Common? Recent Trends in Samaritan Studies,” *CBR* 3 (2005) 9-59.

¹⁰ Diana Edelman, *The Origins of the ‘Second’ Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem* (London: Equinox, 2005).

in Babylon, and if so, when did it stop? Perhaps we cannot know. If the Elephantine colony could erect a temple in the “unclean land” of Egypt, could the Babylonian Jewish community have had some kind of cultic worship? She also mentions “the place” Casiphia (Ezra 8:17), but finds this designation too vague to identify this place as an area for animal sacrifice (p. 30). Incidentally she errs in stating that Ezra recruited priests from there, since it was instead Levites and 200 *Nethinim* that Ezra acquired from this site.

I am not convinced by her conclusion that Zech 5:5-11, the woman in the *ephah* pot, means that any kind of worship involving iconographic representations of the deity in Babylon is unsanctioned and ultimately powerless (p. 38) or again that it offers a critique of worship outside Jerusalem, that is, of non-sacrificial worship in Babylon. Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers conclude that this vision means that foreign elements brought to Jerusalem must be thoroughly excised from the place of Yahweh in his restored temple. Perhaps this vision is also an expression of the semi-independence of Yehud, with the Yehudite God alone residing in the land.¹¹ David L. Petersen argues that Jerusalem is being purified and Babylon contaminated in this vision. The Babylonians will fix and venerate this new cultic object. Evil and impurity have been collected, and they must be removed from the land.¹² If these commentators are correct, the discussion of this vision could have been omitted from this chapter.

It is unclear to me what Sanballat means in Neh 3:34 by asking “Will they sacrifice?” Knowles takes it to imply that the community in Yehud was not sacrificing up to this point. H. G. M. Williamson admits the obscurity of Sanballat’s questions, but translates “Will they commit their cause to God? Will they simply offer sacrifices?” and believes that Sanballat is ridiculing the suggestion that God can be cajoled into prospering the work as if by a magic wand.¹³ In general, I believe Knowles could have given more in-depth exegesis for many of the passages she cites. (I also think that Knowles is unduly pessimistic about determining what the Chronicler’s source in Kings had to say).

In her concluding chapter, Knowles notes that the Jerusalem authorities would have considered sites outside Jerusalem transgressive, whereas those who worshiped there held them to be honorable. When did the time come that the Jerusalem authorities could enforce their point of view and not just criticize alternative practices?

Chapter 3 addresses the question of the cultic use of incense, noting that Chronicles condemns the religious use of aromatics outside Jerusalem (pp. 55, 62); incense is acceptable only when offered by temple personnel in the temple itself. Uzziah and Ahaz are condemned for their inappropriate use of incense, while Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah are commended for destroying (incense) altars outside Jerusalem. Is the polemic in Chronicles against incense part of a wider rejection of syncretistic practices? References in Malachi (1:11, where the deity speaks approvingly about incense offered among the nations) and Elephantine and the archeological recovery of incense burners from the Persian peri-

¹¹ *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8* (AB 25B; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1987) 316.

¹² *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984) 261-62.

¹³ *Ezra, Nehemiah* (WBC 16; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985) 216.

od at Tell en Nasbeh, Gezer, and Lachish indicate that use of incense was engaged in by Yahwists outside of the city. Incense burners have also been found at Samaria and Shechem. A conclusion might be drawn that the Chronicler's prohibition of incense-burning outside the temple was not effective.

Knowles concludes that the use of images or figurines was forbidden everywhere—both in the temple and outside the temple. Hence this neither contributes to nor detracts from her thesis about the practice of centrality, and perhaps could have been omitted. Or it could have been used to document the authority of the Jerusalem temple throughout the community? Or does the prohibition of images indicate the authority of the Ten Commandments throughout early Judaism?

The discussion of Pilgrimages is taken up in chapter 4. The returns of exiles from Babylon usher in a future pilgrimage from the Diaspora and the nations in Zech 6:9-15, 8:7-8, 21-23. . Haggai and Third Isaiah foresee the journeys of nations to the temple bearing rich offerings (Hag 2:6-8; Isa 56:6-7; 60:9, 13). The best part of her argument about pilgrimages to Jerusalem are the centralized celebrations of booths and unleavened bread in Ezra 3:1-4 (cf. Neh 8:13-18) and Ezra 6:19-22 respectively. Less convincing to me as pilgrimages are the trips home from Babylon to Jerusalem reported in Ezra 1-2 and 7-8 (cf. Isa 51:9-11). Knowles notes the presence of Exodus and pilgrimage motifs in these passages and they surely underscore the importance of Jerusalem, but I am reluctant to call these one-way journeys pilgrimages. In the Chronicler's account of the Passovers of Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 30) and Josiah (2 Chronicles 35), pilgrims come from both Judah and Israel to the centralized celebration in Jerusalem. The other evidence adduced by her for pilgrimage comes from Psalms 120-134, and Knowles calls attention to wording or editing in these Psalms that could indeed come from the Persian period. It seems to me, however, that the pilgrimages implied here can hardly be limited to one period.

As far as taxing and tithing are concerned, Knowles engages in a rare exercise of *Literarkritik* in distinguishing between an earlier text in Neh 10:36-38a, describing annual journeys to Jerusalem to pay tithes, whereas the later layer in Neh 10:38b-40 demonstrates that this scenario was not practiced and that an alternative solution was designed, namely, that the Levites collected the tithes locally and transported them to Jerusalem. She notes a wide variety of positions on financial support for the cult in literature from the Persian period. Haggai expects the costs for reconstructing the temple to come from the community in Yehud, although additional treasure will come from the nations in the future. In Zechariah the temple is funded by the returned exiles as well as by the Diaspora, while in Trito Isaiah it is the future Diaspora and the nations who support the temple. Malachi and Nehemiah report that the local community alone brings offerings to the temple. While the Diaspora and the nations give some support for rebuilding the temple in Ezra, the cult is largely supported by the Persian kings. She finds this unusual and historically doubtful. Chronicles reports lavish and generous gifts of kings like David, whose example is intended to inspire lay people to be similarly generous.

The bottom line: the practice of centrality was neither univocal nor consistent. I hope that in future studies Knowles might attend to the question of the authority of the temple and its regulations—which is somewhat different than the question of religious practices. If her interpretation of Gerizim is correct, the Jerusalem temple lacked authority in Samaria long before the definitive split and in fact achieved authority only through the Hasmonean rise to power. Also the interface between centrality practiced and the authority of Deuteronomy 12 might be pursued further. Her proposal of a palimpsest as a model for this period is only partially successful. While centrality was constantly being rewritten and nuanced, the palimpsest metaphor does not encompass as well the competing voices that she has so clearly uncovered.

**FLAMES, CANDLES, AND HUMILITY:
A RESPONSE TO THE SESSION DISCUSSING
*CENTRALITY PRACTICED***

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It is a great honor to be a part of this session, and I would like to thank Tamara Eshkenazi and Gary Knoppers for suggesting it, and for the panelists who read *Centrality Practiced: Jerusalem in the Religious Practice of Yehud and the Diaspora in the Persian Period* (SBLABS 16; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006) with such thoroughness, acumen, and generous spirits.

In the middle of writing the dissertation on which *Centrality Practiced* is based, I walked across the bridge in Paris under which Princess Diana had been killed in a car crash more than a year previously. Just past the bridge was a public square, Place de l'Alma, in which was a statue of a golden flame. Photos of the Princess, handwritten notes, and bouquets of flowers covered the base of the statue. The notes were mostly vows to remember and encomiums of praise, with the exception of one large sign that presented a history of the statue itself. "This is not the 'Candle in the Wind'" it said in French, "this flame preceded Diana. It is 'la flamme de la liberté,' a copy of the flame that the Statue of Liberty carries in New York. It is a symbol of the friendship between France and America."

As a doctoral student, this scene (like so many scenes for doctoral students!) reminded me of my dissertation. The surprising re-use of the statue was another instance of what my superb doctoral advisor, Leong Seow, was teaching me to see, namely, the liveliness of tradition. What was originally a symbol of the friendship between France and America became a symbol for an English Princess and her too-short life. The flame of liberty became the candle in the wind.

The scene was also a reminder of the significance of geography. The statue's new life was a product of its proximity to the sad site under the bridge. Of course, the statue had to have some small relation to Diana in its basic field of significance — proximity alone probably could not have transformed a statue of a general on a horse to a shrine for the anti-land mine Queen of Hearts — but I think that the popular imagination could have transformed a statue of a female queen or saint, or even an obelisk or reflecting pool. All of these monuments would also have worked as made-over memorials, I think, if they had the correct geography.

In Place de l'Alma, feelings (including love, admiration, longing, and grief) were enacted in time and space. What I wanted to do in my

dissertation was to see another feeling, that of Jerusalem's significance, also enacted in time and space. In the absence of surviving bouquets of flowers, I had to find other ways to trace this sense of centrality. Hoping to capture more than just one person's (or one school's) textual perspective on what Jerusalem should be or stand for, I wanted to see if a sense of Jerusalem could be seen in popular religion. So I focused my research on activities that demonstrated and constructed ties to the city even for people outside the city itself: the avoidance of rituals such as animal sacrifice outside the city, ritual visits to the city (pilgrimage), and the sending of tithes. In later periods, many of these practices would become more popular, and others, such as sending bodies to Jerusalem for burial, would develop, but I wanted to see acts such as these in their earlier form.

After the death of Princess Diana in 1997, the flame in Place de l'Alma was inscribed with a new meaning. It became, in some way, a palimpsest. Looking at photographs of the statue on the internet recently, I noticed that it actually has a bronze plaque on its base with the information about its original significance. But when I visited in 1998, the plaque was papered over with photographs and letters, which were themselves partially covered by the handwritten poster telling the viewer of the statue's earlier history. So first there was the plaque, then it was obscured by Diana posters, and these posters were themselves later obscured by another poster reminding viewers of the information on the plaque underneath the posters. Yet no poster, no matter the size, can now take Princess Diana out of the meaning of this statue. Announcing that "this flame preceded Diana" simply reminds the viewer that this flame of liberty will always call to mind the candle in the wind. Symbols are supple, and adherents creative.

In my final chapter of *Centrality Practiced*, I used the imagery of a palimpsest to talk about Jerusalem and its geographic connections (i.e., its landscape) partially to highlight the liveliness of tradition. Symbols can change their meaning through time, and in the Persian period Jerusalem was reinventing itself as a central place that looked different than what it previously looked like as a central place. When the Chronicler re-wrote the narratives in Kings, he included several stories of rulers giving financial gifts to the temple and followed these stories with accounts of the people responding with their own offerings to the temple (1 Chr 26:26–28; 29:5–9; 2 Chr 30:24; 31:3–10; 35:7–9). Given the frequency of this pattern, it is difficult not to come to the conclusion that the stories aim to foster a new financial generosity to the temple. In what I take to be a later expansion of Nehemiah 10, verses 39b–40 were added to ensure that the people brought their tithes annually to Jerusalem.

But seeing such changes under the rubric "liveliness of tradition" implies an openness that is not necessarily always present. With the metaphor of palimpsest I also wanted to gesture to the contested nature of these attempts to efface and cover over. The Chronicler could emphasize again and again that incense was not to be used outside the city, but Malachi commended the practice to his readers. The picture of the very generous *imperium* in Ezra, so different in comparison with other Persian period biblical texts, leaves one with the impression that the au-

thor seeks to cover over and obscure a contradictory picture in other biblical and extra-biblical texts. Yet with the canon and the archaeological record, the communities that produced texts, such as Chronicles and Ezra, are individually unable to tell the whole story. The image of a palimpsest reminds us that meanings and authorized practices are not set in stone, despite the wishes of the communities that produced them. Even though contemporary historically correct poster-makers can tape up large signs to instruct viewers ("This flame preceded Diana"), such signs cannot completely obliterate the past and do not get the final say in assigning meaning to the statue. And the metaphor was also intended to point to the ways in which several competing meanings can coexist at any one time. Erasures are not always complete around the edges and texts can sometimes be detected underneath other texts.

The image of palimpsest additionally points to the doomed nature of some of these attempts to reconstruct history: not all are recoverable, and it is tempting to wonder what parts of the story are now lost forever. In Place de L'Alma we can peel back the Princess Diana layer to see the American-French friendship layer, but one wonders which of these layers will survive 2,000 years hence? What new layers will be added? What will this monument be reconstructed to signify? Perhaps we could add an additional layer of meaning to this statue, that of academic humility. At the same time that we see several layers of significance in operation, we also are reminded of what may be lost in time. Will the flame ultimately snuff out the candle? Or will they both continue to exist together?

The esteemed panelists have made several helpful suggestions to enrich *Centrality Practiced*, and I think that attention to Jerusalem's growing authority to enforce its regulations and the specific ideology of Jerusalem suggested by individual biblical books are helpful avenues of research. Yet I hope that such questions can proceed with continued attention to Jerusalem within its own landscape and the role of religious practices to shape and be shaped by perceptions of geography. That is, my work in this book has led me to realize that study of this city must engage its place on the map and the ways in which other places on the map (Elephantine, Lachish, Gerizim, etc.) enacted or dismissed their bonds to Jerusalem, bonds that were influenced by received memories and traditions.