

## Editor's Foreword

I suspect I first came across the name of Othmar Keel as an undergraduate religion Bible major (who can read anything on the Psalms and not encounter some reference to his *Symbolism of the Biblical World?*),<sup>1</sup> but I was not exposed to Keel's work formally until my graduate school days at Princeton Theological Seminary under the tutelage of J. J. M. Roberts and Patrick D. Miller. There, especially while writing a dissertation under Miller, my engagement with Keel's pioneering work in *Symbolism* led to further study of his larger oeuvre: his Song of Songs commentary, for example,<sup>2</sup> and especially the breakthrough work coauthored with Christoph Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*,<sup>3</sup> but also a number of Keel's earlier but equally path-breaking monographs such as *Die Weisheit spielt vor Gott* (Wisdom Plays before God), *Wirkmächtige Siegeszeichen im Alten Testament* (Powerful Symbols of Victory in the Old Testament), *Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst* (Visions of Yahweh and Seal Art), *Jahwes Entgegnung an Ijob* (Yahweh's Answer to Job), and *Deine Blicke sind Tauben* (Your Eyes are Doves)<sup>4</sup>—to mention

1. Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (trans. Timothy J. Hallett; repr. ed.; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997 [ET orig: 1978; German orig: 1972; 5th ed. = 1996]).
2. Othmar Keel, *The Song of Songs: A Continental Commentary* (trans. Frederick J. Gaiser; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994).
3. Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (trans. Thomas H. Trapp; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998 [German orig: 1992; 7th ed. = 2012]).
4. Othmar Keel, *Die Weisheit spielt vor Gott: Ein ikonographischer Beitrag zur Deutung des mešahāqāt in Spr. 8,30f.* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974); idem, *Wirkmächtige Siegeszeichen im Alten Testament: Ikonographische Studien zu Jos 8, 18–26, Ex 17, 8–13, 2 Kön 13, 14–19 und 1 Kön 22, 11* (OBO 5; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1974); idem, *Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst: Eine neue Deutung der Majestätsschilderungen in Jes 6, Ez 1 und 10 und Sach 4* (SBS 84/85; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1977); idem, *Jahwes Entgegnung an Ijob: Eine Deutung von Ijob 38–41 vor dem Hintergrund der zeitgenössischen Bildkunst* (FRLANT 121; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1978); and idem, *Deine Blicke sind Tauben: Zur Metaphorik des Hohen Liedes* (SBS 114/115; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1984).

only a few.<sup>5</sup> Given my own interests in art that ran back to my early childhood, it was perhaps inevitable that I would find in Keel's work (and the work of the "Fribourg School" that he inspired and inaugurated) something that resonated deeply and profoundly with me. And so it was that, as a doctoral student, I pursued a Fulbright application to study with Keel in Switzerland. While that opportunity did not, in the end, come to pass, I was pleased that the correspondence and collegiality that Keel and I began at that time continued thereafter and blossomed still further. My wife, Holly, and I were delighted to welcome Othmar to our little student apartment in the late 1990s and I was thrilled that he served as a member of my dissertation committee. It is still a very fond memory that he was present at my defense in 2001.

My history, then, with Keel goes back some twenty years now and working with him—and for him—in trying to get more of his work known among and disseminated across a larger English-speaking public has long been a part of our joint strategic plan. To be sure, a number of his important writings have been translated into English<sup>6</sup> (among many others!),<sup>7</sup> but there is much that has not been translated. Furthermore, what is arguably Keel's *magnum opus* or, better, his *Lebenswerk*—his monumental *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel* (five vols. to date)<sup>8</sup>—has not yet been mined by scholars for the amazing treasures it contains. And this is not yet to mention Keel's longstanding interest in monotheism and, more particularly, Jerusalem, culminating in his *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und der Entstehung der Monotheismus* (The History of Jerusalem and the Rise of

5. Among more recent monographs, the most important is probably *Das Recht der Bilder gesehen zu werden: Drei Fallstudien zur Methode der Interpretation altorientalischer Bilder* (OBO 122; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992). For further works, see the annotated bibliography of Keel's publications in this volume. Note also the extensive treatment of Keel and the "Fribourg School" in Izaak J. de Hulster, *Illuminating Images: An Iconographic Method of Old Testament Exegesis with Three Case Studies from Third Isaiah* (Utrecht: n.p., 2007), 21–131.

6. Most recently, e.g., Othmar Keel and Silvia Schroer, *Creation: Biblical Theologies in the Context of the Ancient Near East* (trans. Peter T. Daniels; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015 [German orig: 2002]).

7. See, e.g., Othmar Keel, *Dieu répond à Job: Une interprétation de Job 38–41 à la lumière de l'iconographie du Proche-Orient ancien* (trans. Françoise Smyth; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1993).

8. Othmar Keel, *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit* (5 vols. to date; OBO.SA; Fribourg: Academic Press and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995-): *Einleitung* (OBO.SA 10; 1995), *Katalog Band I: Von Tell Abu Faraġ bis 'Atlit* (OBO.SA 13; 1997); *Katalog Band II: Von Bahan bis Tel Eton* (OBO.SA 29; 2010); *Katalog Band III: Von Tell el-Far' a Nord bis Tell el-Fir* (OBO.SA 31; 2010); and *Katalog Band IV: Von Tel Gamma bis Chirbet Husche* (OBO.SA 33; 2013). Note also Jürg Egger and Othmar Keel, *Corpus der Siegel-Amulette aus Jordanien: Von Neolithikum bis zur Perserzeit* (OBO.SA 25; Fribourg: Academic Press and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006).

Monotheism)<sup>9</sup>—a massive two-volume work, coming in at over 1,300 pages with more than 700 illustrations.

As some have noted, Keel's history of Jerusalem is virtually three books in one:<sup>10</sup> First, there are elements in the book that reflect the original design of the series in which it appears, which was to serve as a set of handbooks for educated pilgrims to the Holy Land. But, second, Keel writes an extensive history of Jerusalem itself, spanning from 1700 BCE to 63 CE. Third and finally, Keel mounts an extended argument about how that history can be used to trace the rise of monotheism. Given the density of Keel's *Geschichte*, it was an excellent idea when Keel decided to epitomize that large work—and particularly the latter two of its three facets—into a smaller and more manageable “booklet” (as he likes to call it), which was published in 2011.<sup>11</sup> It is this latter volume that is presented here in English translation. The translation is a result of the excellent work of Morven McLean, whom I thank heartily for her work, though its final presentation is the result of extensive editorial work by myself so as to make the prose as fluid and “native” as possible. The end product is, I hope, an improvement over the original German version, especially given certain updates, corrections, and additions—including an annotated bibliography of Keel's iconographic endeavors based on a list initially compiled by Izaak J. de Hulster.

Beyond my gratitude to McLean, I thank above all others Othmar himself, who trusted a young American graduate student many years ago with the mission to spread the gospel of iconographic studies in the fields of North America. I cannot claim to have been altogether successful in that calling, but Othmar's support of me and my work and his friendship and collegiality have remained steadfast, and so I remain profoundly indebted to him in more ways than I can recount here. I remember an editor once marveling at how I had the good fortune of working with both Patrick D. Miller and Othmar Keel, “two of the greatest and nicest,” as he put it, “scholars in the field.” I could not agree more, and so thank Othmar (and his wife Hildi as well) for their countless kindnesses, including his great patience with me through the course of several unfortunate delays in finishing this project.

I also wish to thank Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht for allowing this work

9. Othmar Keel, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und der Entstehung der Monotheismus* (2 vols.; OLB IV/1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007).

10. Cf. Ernst Axel Knauf's review in *RBL* 05/2008 (online at: [https://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/6377\\_6859.pdf](https://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/6377_6859.pdf); accessed 8/1/2016).

11. Othmar Keel, *Jerusalem und der eine Gott: Eine Religionsgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011; 2nd ed. = 2014).

## JERUSALEM AND THE ONE GOD

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Brent A. Strawn  
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