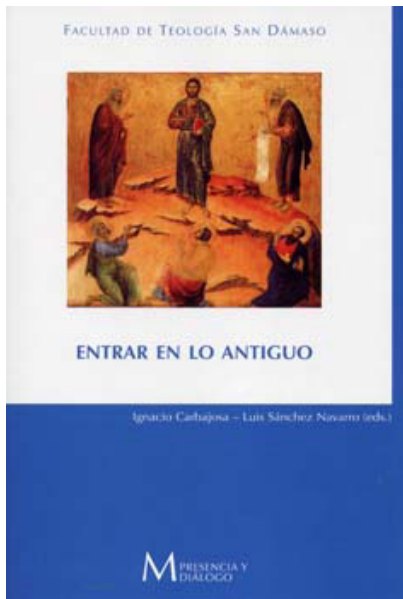


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**Carbajosa, Ignacio, and Luis Sánchez Navarro, eds.**

***Entrar en lo antiguo: Acerca de la relación entre Antiguo y Nuevo Testamento***

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This collection of five essays seeks to articulate what the editors understand to be a Catholic reading of scripture. The death of the editors' colleague, Monsignor D. Eugenio Romero Pose, inspired the volume. In one of his final papers, D. Eugenio outlined the relationship between the Old and the New Testaments, stressing that a faithful reading of the Bible recognizes the relationship between what has been announced and fulfilled. In this way, any Catholic interpretation must "enter into the old." In other words, the New Testament is incomprehensible without a proper grasp of its interaction with the Old, and, for Catholics, vice versa. All the papers in the volume in one way or another operate under this assumption. The book is divided into two sections: the first deals with the general theological rationale for reading the Old and New Testaments in light of one another; the second offers an examples of what that reading may look like.

In the first essay, "The Old Testament: Open Reality," Ignacio Carbajosa argues that the Old Testament is anything but a closed canon. Rather, Carbajosa avers, the text is open, operating in a tension yet to be resolved and/or waiting for fulfillment in the future. His essay is a response to Harold Bloom's contention that the Hebrew Bible is a closed canon that has been violently deformed by the New Testament (Carbajosa interacts primarily with the 2006 Spanish translation of Bloom's *Jesus and Yahweh: Names Divine*). In

response, Carbajosa first asserts that the form and content of the Old Testament was largely in flux until the fourth century C.E. for both Jews and Christians. Second, Carbajosa offers a reading of the three parts of the Old Testament (Law, Prophets, and Writings) that highlights the way in which each of the divisions is future-oriented, still waiting for fulfillment. He points out that the historical development of the Pentateuch suggests that the text was perceived to be open even in its initial formation. Moreover, the Pentateuch itself is forward-looking, filled with promises that have yet to be fulfilled. Likewise, the Prophets speak of a restoration that is yet to be experienced. A key text for Carbajosa in this regard is Jer 31:31, the promise of a new covenant. The Writings, especially wisdom literature, exist in a tension with one another (the key example being Proverbs and Sirach on one side and Ecclesiastes and Job on the other). This tension still awaits a resolution, again pointing to an opening for later revelation. Third, and finally, Carbajosa explores pre-Christian Jewish interpretations of the Old Testament to test his hypothesis, specifically those found at Qumran. He draws attention to several texts that are specifically eschatological and messianic (e.g., 4QTestimonia, 4QFlorilegium, and 11QMelchizedek). At the end of the essay, Carbajosa's position is clear enough. This does not mean, however, that all the issues are satisfactorily addressed. For one, his reading of the Old Testament is incredibly Christian. At the end of his summary of the Law, Prophets, and Writings, if his reading is taken at face value, one wonders how Jews in the first century did not all become Christians. Likewise, his test case, Qumran, is very selective, because the community at Qumran is only a small sample of the various Jewish interpretations prior to and contemporary with the early Christian movement and the texts explored from Qumran themselves (and Carbajosa's interpretation) are only a small slice of the literature from the site, with shared Christian-like interpretations.

The second article, "The Relationship of the Old and the New: Hermeneutical Key of Scripture," by Luis Sánchez Navarro argues that to interpret the Christian scriptures one is obliged to pay particular attention to the relationship between the Old and the New Testaments. Navarro argues that this is demanded by the text itself. Relying primarily on Luke (see, e.g., Luke 24:13–27; Acts 9:36), he contends that the New Testament describes the Old Testament as the essential hermeneutical key to understanding who Jesus is. Likewise, the Old Testament looks ahead to a "new covenant" in Jer 31:31–33, thus placing the New Testament in a similar interpretive role. Navarro thus turns to the canonical studies of Brevard Childs and Paul Beauchamp, from which he concludes that it is only in the union of the Old Testament and the New Testament that the Bible becomes "the Book." This means that the Old and New Testaments can be understood only in relationship to one another. Together they become a unified reality in their subject (the people of God, Israel and the church), their origin (the inspiration of God), and their finality (a continuous revelation that culminates in the Christ event).

Carlos Jódar Estrella offers what I found to be the most nuanced piece in the collection, “The Old-New Testament Relationship and the Configuration of the Bible as Text.” Estrella begins his essay with the question of how the Bible can be considered a single, unitary text. His answer to the question is threefold: (1) challenging Navarro’s argument above, the idea of a bipartite, unitary text is not born out of the Old and New Testaments but is rather an a priori decision based on doctrine; (2) because this is a doctrinal decision, bringing together many disparate works into a single text, the resulting book is quite heterogeneous; and (3) since, the unity of the Old Testament and New Testament is a theological a priori, it follows that the idea of a unified text has no significance outside of a theological context. Estrella next proceeds to justify this theological a priori. He offers two justifications. First, and he reveals perhaps a bit of discomfort with the idea, the Bible, as the words of God, is something “spoken” by God. All texts, both old and new, thus share authorship. Second, the Bible has been received by so many as a single text. This is especially evident in the shift in identification of the collection of texts from the plural *ta biblia* to the singular *biblia* (-ae). Since the Bible is perceived to be a unity, Estrella next explores the way in which the Bible acts as a text. He offers three criticisms of historical positivism and concludes that in light of those weaknesses canonical criticism is a legitimate mode of interpretation. The historical situation is not rejected outright, just recognized for its limitations, especially its inability to deal with the Bible as a unitary whole.

The fourth and final article of the first section, “Why Did Paul Use the Scriptures of Israel? A Sketch,” by Filippo Belli, explores the situations that led Paul to either argue extensively using scripture or without reference to it at all. Belli begins by briefly noting Paul’s deep Jewish heritage and consequent value he placed on the Jewish scriptures. The scriptures carry significant authority for Paul, but they are not the only authoritative voice. Thus, when Paul has a case to make in which there is no scriptural precedent, such as his argument in Rom 11 as to why Jews have not accepted the gospel, Paul relies on personal revelation and the concept of “mystery.” Finally, Belli argues, Paul also has no need to make a scriptural argument when he is giving certain moral and/or practical directives, especially when they are reflective of his broader Greco-Roman culture.

The final 60 pages are devoted to the second part of the book, a single article (“The Pentateuch in Saint John,” by Domingo Muñoz León) exploring the use of the Old Testament, specifically the first five books of Moses, in the Gospel of John. The article proceeds in three main movements. The first section describes two key principles in Johannine use of the Old Testament, namely, to express completion and/or to demonstrate how Christ surpasses the law. The second movement is a chapter-by-chapter survey of the use of the Pentateuch in John. This section simply aims to demonstrate how the use of the law is ubiquitous in the Gospel. A major critique here would be that several

instances of what León understands to be “use” of the law may have no dependence on a written text whatsoever. A key example would be his contention that in depicting Jesus as a sacrificial lamb John is indebted to Exod 12 and Lev 1:10–13. Since the idea of a sacrificial animal is so general and so widespread in Judaism, does this simple reference necessarily point to textual engagement? The third section aims to synthesize the findings of the survey, again demonstrating the twin principles enumerated in section one of the essay.

In general, the arguments of the essays in the collection are clear, and the position of the authors is never in doubt. The essays cohere with one another, although the book would have been enhanced had there been given more space to dissenting positions. As it stands, the book is not much of a dialogue, and I do not think that it will convince anyone who thinks differently than the authors. Rather, they seem to be speaking to an audience that will already more or less affirm their positions. Finally, and related, I do not feel that the book advances the hermeneutical discipline very significantly. The book is too general, more suitable for a seminary or pastoral context.