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FR. THOMAS AQUINAS WEIKERT, O.S.B. (1863-1906) – ORIENTALIST AND CONSULTANT OF THE PAPAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION

Erasmus Gass

Fr. Thomas Aquinas Weikert, O.S.B., is today almost forgotten, which is surprising, considering the fact that during his lifetime he was a highly regarded scholar who was invited onto the newly-created Papal Biblical Commission. Weikert was born in Germany, but migrated to the United States. There he joined St. Meinrad's Abbey, Indiana, where he soon had a bright career that was abruptly ended by an early, unfortunate death. In what follows, we will look at his biographical data before appreciating his scholarly contribution in a separate section.¹

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Birth, Childhood and Youth in Oberelsbach (1863-83)

On the evening of Dec. 20, 1863, a son was born in Oberelsbach to Joseph Valentine Weikert and his second wife, Monika Herbert. Already on the following day he was baptized Joseph Weikert in the family home.²

The quiet market town of Oberelsbach at that time was located in the Kingdom of Bavaria on the southern slope of the Hoher Rhön and numbered about 900 people. This traditionally Catholic area always held its own with success against Protestantism of the neighboring principedom of Gotha-Sachsen-Weimar. Until the twentieth century, it was a self-contained world. The parish priests saw to it that non-Catholics in Oberelsbach converted to the Catholic faith. Oberelsbach was also the birthplace of several important Benedictines, like the Baroque composer Fr. Valentin Rathgeber of Banz Abbey, and the two Benedictine abbots Kasper Weyper and Valentin Alberti of the Abbey of Theres in Lower Franconia. Up to the time of Weikert, Oberelsbach

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¹ Abbreviations: AAM-Weikert = Archives of the Archabbey of St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad Monks Personal Records and Papers Thomas Weikert (1886-1906). DAW = Diözesanarchiv Würzburg. StAW = Staatsarchiv Würzburg.

² See DAW Parish Register of Oberelsbach, Taufen B 1 [Fiche 25] 162-63.

counted fifty vocations who chose either to be diocesan priests or religious. Into this Catholic milieu was young Weikert born, and it would especially mark his future.

Joseph Valentin Weikert, the father of the Benedictine priest, was a respected farmer in Oberelsbach. After the untimely death of his first wife, Crescentia Moritz, who died on Feb. 14, 1862, of a mucoid impaction, he married Monika Herbert a year later when he was fifty years old. Soon she bore him a son, the future monk.³

The elder Weikerts were considered well-to-do and respectable citizens in Oberelsbach and beyond. Unfortunately, little is known of young Weikert's childhood and youth. Along with the difficult conditions that prevailed in the district, the family life of the Weikerts later became difficult when the second wife, Monika Herbert, tried to force her sixteen-year-old step-daughter into marriage with her (Monika's) brother. When the girl resisted the arranged marriage, the thing became a scandal. The father beat his daughter so severely that she could hardly find a healthy spot on her flayed body. Only by flight to the house of her brother (by the first wife) was she able to save herself from worse. Then she was disinherited by her father, so she entered into service as a maid. She emigrated to America, where she lived with her husband in Astoria, New York, on Long Island.⁴ Despite such incidents in the Weikert home, in which the mother of the future Benedictine played a central and unsettling role, he remained devoted to her throughout his life. During his time in Rome, he spent ten of his vacations visiting his mother and his beloved home village of Oberelsbach.⁵ He was especially concerned for the well-being of his mother, which he expressed in correspondence with friends.⁶

On the basis of his great talent and the obviously brilliant future awaiting him, his parents destined him for study and sent him to the gymnasium (college) run by the Augustinians at Műnnerstadt, 20 miles distant.⁷ The education at the Műnnerstadt gymnasium gave him the necessary preparation for later university studies. In Műnnerstadt

³ See DAW Oberelsbach Parish Register, Sterbefälle B 1 [Fiche 32] 550; Ehen B 1 [Fiche 29] 320.

⁴ Mrs. Abt (Weikert's sister) described these events in a letter of August 2, 1896. AAM-Weikert, Box 1.

⁵ Weikert was in Oberelsbach in the years 1891, 1893, 1894, 1897, 1899, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904 and 1905.

⁶ Johannes Nunn wrote from neighboring Weisbach on March 5, 1892: "I have visited your mother twice; she is alert and fares much like all old widows" (AAM-Weikert, Box 5 General Correspondence 1887-94).

⁷ See Albert Kleber, *History of St. Meinrad Archabbey 1854-1954*, American Benedictine Academy Historical Studies 1 (St. Meinrad, IN: Grail 1954) 419.

he also came to know his later abbot, Athanasius Schmitt, who also emigrated to America along with Weikert. The reason why Weikert and Schmitt left their homeland is not so clear. Perhaps young Weikert had trouble with his father, which strengthened in him the desire to flee the narrow confines of his family. Aside from the quarrel between his father and stepsister, there is nothing to indicate that the relationship was troubled. The Benedictine often offered Masses for his deceased relatives, and especially for his father,⁸ so surely his reason for leaving his beloved Rhön is not to be sought there. On the contrary, throughout his life Weikert cultivated good relations with his German family and his home region. Perhaps both of the emigrants wished to avoid obligatory military service, which was demanded of all twenty-year-olds in Germany. Either they could have completed the normal three-year service, or they could have registered for the volunteer service. It only lasted one year, but was more costly. Probably both of them worried that their vocation to priestly service could be endangered by military service.⁹

Not for no reason are priesthood candidates today in Germany free from military service. Probably it would have pushed the talented and curious young Weikert also to see the wide world and to seek his fortune there. Finally, in contrast to today it may have been difficult in his region to find a place in a monastery or acceptance into a seminary, so that if he wished to remain faithful to his calling, he was forced to seek acceptance in an Order overseas. Whatever the case, throughout his life he maintained good relations with his mother and home village. So family problems could not have motivated his emigration—completely unlike his stepsister.

Emigration to the USA and Entry into the Benedictine Abbey of St. Meinrad (1883-91)

On Sept. 16, 1883, Weikert left his Bavarian homeland together with his classmate Joseph Schmitt from Oberweissenbrun, whom he had met in the Augustinian gymnasium at Münnerstadt. Both emigrants tried their luck first at St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania, where they arrived Oct. 1, 1883. They must not have been accepted there as novices. Instead they were sent on to St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, but they surely never went there because

⁸ See Mass records in AAM-Weikert, Box 9.

⁹ See here also Kleber, *History*, 419.

they went to St. Meinrad Archabbey, where they arrived Oct. 18.¹⁰ Fortunately, both applicants were accepted there, so the strenuous quest for a long-desired place in a religious Order was successful. Already in the following year, Weikert began pursuing American citizenship in Spencer County Circuit Court, an effort that reached completion in 1891.¹¹ After their entry into the monastery, both men received the lower and higher orders together. On Jan. 21, 1885, they professed vows, at which time Weikert received the religious name Brother Thomas Aquinas, which was no doubt related to his outstanding intellectual talent.¹²

In the same year, on November 27, his father died of chronic bronchitis at age seventy-two in his home district of Rhön.¹³ Because of the great distance, he could not travel to the funeral service. He only made his first visit to the grave six years later. Both candidates were ordained to the subdeaconate in the Abbey church on June 15, 1886, by Francis Silas Chatard, Bishop of Vincennes, Indiana (1834-1919), and they were ordained deacons at Ferdinand, Indiana, June 19, 1886.¹⁴ Priestly ordination finally took place on December 3, 1886.¹⁵ Fr. Thomas celebrated his First Mass on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, December 8, 1886.¹⁶ In the following years, Fr. Thomas was subprior of the monastery, and a professor in the abbey theologate.¹⁷ Beyond that, he played violin in the St. Meinrad Orchestra,¹⁸ which suggests he must have been gifted. Whether he mastered any other instruments is not known.

Education in Rome and First Scholarly Success (1891-94)

In October, 1891, Fr. Thomas was sent to the College of Sant' Anselmo in Rome for graduate studies, so he could deepen his knowledge of the Hebrew language. In this way he was better able to cope with the secrets of Holy Scripture.

¹⁰ Kleber, *History*, 419.

¹¹ See AAM-Weikert, Box 10.

¹² In this sense, Johannes Nunn of Weisbach praised him in a letter of March 5, 1892: "May St. Thomas, whom you so emulate in your striving for knowledge, be your patron on earth and in heaven" AAM-Weikert, Box 5, General Correspondence 1887-94).

¹³ DAW Parish Records of Oberelsbach, Sterbefälle B 1 [Fiche 33] 130-31. For the dates of ordination, see AAM-Weikert, Box 10 and Kleber, *History*, 419.

¹⁴ For the dates of ordination, see AAM-Weikert, Box 10 and Kleber, *History*, 419

¹⁵ See the entry in the circular death notice; AAM-Weikert, Box 1.

¹⁶ See Mass records in AAM-Weikert, Box 9.

¹⁷ See the Rotula in AAM-Weikert, Box 1.

¹⁸ See Kleber, *History*, 339

On October 3, Fr. Thomas left America, and he arrived in Ireland five days later. At that time of year, it was not a casual undertaking to cross the Atlantic, for there were numerous storms. After that, his journey led from Liverpool to London, Frankfurt and Würzburg in his old homeland. He spent a short time with the Augustinians in Münnerstadt, where he had enjoyed his education, before he went to Oberelsbach, where he finally saw his mother after eight years. With the current pastor, Fr. Manger, who was having some trouble with his parish,¹⁹ he made some trips in the neighborhood. And he hiked in the mountains of the Upper Rhön.

After his absence, Fr. Thomas found a friendly reception everywhere: "In the old home region, I was received everywhere with great rejoicing. I must feel free to preach and sing the Offices to my heart's content."²⁰ On October 31, he left for Rome by way of Würzburg, Ansbach, Ingolstadt, Munich, Innsbruck and Einsiedeln. The detour to Einsiedeln was owing to the fact that the Benedictine Abbey of Einsiedeln had founded Weikert's home Abbey of St. Meinrad forty years previously.

In Rome, Fr. Thomas continued his philosophical studies under the prefect of studies, Fr. Athanasius Miller (1842-1906). His diploma was awarded with very high praise.²¹ During this time he was also working on a text-critical dissertation on Psalm 110. Before submitting his dissertation, Fr. Thomas sent an outline of it to Fr. Friedrich Raffl, O.F.M., (1851-1915) at Salzburg to seek his valued opinion. He was an outstanding expert on Hebrew language and a specialist on the Psalms.²² Raffl referred him to the Coptic translation of Ps 110, which in many ways is considered a version of the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint. This shows that Fr. Thomas often consulted with colleagues on scholarly questions, for he appreciated collegial counsel. As will be seen, he also assisted other colleagues by word and deed. During his first semester vacation, Fr. Thomas visited Monte Cassino and Einsiedeln.

¹⁹ See Michael Müller, *Das Landkapitel Melrichstadt* (Franconia Sacra. Geschichte und Beschreibung des Bisthums [Würzburg: Fränk. Gesellschaftsdruckerei 1901]) 276. The suspension of Manger followed on July 6, 1894. On the problems of the Rhön community, see StAW, Regierung von Unterfranken 7810, Religions- und Kirchenangelegenheiten Oberelsbach 1875-1927 and DAW Parish Archive of Oberelsbach K 13.

²⁰ Letter to Abbot Fintan Mundwiler of Nov. 9, 1891 (AAM-Weikert, Box 9, Mundwiler Correspondence 1888-93).

²¹ See grade report of 1892 in AAM-Weikert, Box 8: *laudem eminentem*.

²² Friedrich Raffl, O.F.M., wrote the standard work: *Die Psalmen—nach dem Urtexte übersetzt und erklärt* (Freiburg: Herder 1892).

In 1893, Abbot Fintan Mundwiler of St. Meinrad (1835-98) came to Europe to visit their founding abbey of Einsiedeln and the College of Sant' Anselmo in Rome. In Rome, Fr. Thomas sought for lodging for the Abbot, which he somehow arranged. [The present spacious quarters of Sant' Anselmo were not yet built: Trans.] On May 25, 1893, Fr. Thomas received his PhD²³ for a text-critical work on Psalm 110, which he published in Latin the same year.

Already at this time Fr. Thomas was pursuing the goal of visiting the Holy Land. Unfortunately, a dangerous cholera epidemic was raging there that summer, so many friends advised against such a journey. He showed his disappointment over this unlucky situation when he wrote: "I am still in Germany. Cholera has struck in the Middle East stronger and more devastatingly than was believed at the beginning. Therefore, I cannot journey this year. People have warned me from many sides."²⁴ Actually, the cholera probably raged even worse than the newspapers reported, because of the unsanitary conditions in eastern cities. So it was a wise decision not to travel to the Near East at that time.

Also, the heat in the Near East would have been a serious problem for the physically weak Fr. Thomas. He had already suffered through two heat waves in America.²⁵ Because of his health, which was always precarious, he had to be very careful. After his educational trip was ruled out, he spent his summer vacation in Bavaria, where he visited his mother and other relatives. After his holiday, Abbot Primate Hildebrand de Hemptinne (1849-1913) asked him on October 12 if he wished to teach at the College of Sant' Anselmo starting in November. This was quite an honor for a thirty-year-old.

In 1894, Fr. Thomas pursued his plan for an eastern journey even more intensely, and the Abbot Primate was also very much in favor of such an educational journey. In addition, his home abbot, Fintan Mundwiler, gave permission for the trip, provided that the danger of plague had abated. Since Weikert's cousin was celebrating his golden jubilee of priesthood at Helmstadt in Lower Franconia, he (Weikert) was faced with a difficult decision, which he stated in a letter to his abbot: "Should I perhaps make a trip to the Near East this year? I believe the Abbot Primate is all for it. My priest cousin in Lower

²³ AAM-Weikert, Box 5.

²⁴ Letter to Abbot Fintan Mundwiler of August 18, 1893 (AAM-Weikert, Box 9, Mundwiler Correspondence 1888-93).

²⁵ See Weikert, "Meine Orientreise I," in *Studien und Mittheilungen aus dem Benediktiner- und dem Cistercienser Order [SMGBO]* 16 (1895) 611-33, here 613.

Franconia, who will soon celebrate his golden jubilee, also awaits my decision with anxiety. What should I do?"²⁶

For this reason, a plan was formed whereby he should begin the trip to the Near East later, thus deferring it until September and the following months. That way, he could avoid the extreme burdens of summer heat. Consequently, he was able to visit his cousin in Helmstadt during the summer vacation. He could help him with the parish work, and then travel to the Near East in autumn. This arrangement also gave him the possibility of undertaking another detour to his old home of Oberelsbach.²⁷ Finally, he visited Metten Abbey, home of his old friend and colleague, Fr. Bede Adhoch (1854-1910), who became a professor of philosophy at the College of Sant' Anselmo.²⁸

Journey to the Near East (1894-95)

We have a detailed account of the journey to the Near East, so only the most important things will be mentioned here. After his holidays in Bavaria, Fr. Thomas set out on September 20 from Trieste for Alexandria (Egypt) equipped with only a small suitcase and a second class ticket on the Austrian steamship *Thalia*. He thus embarked for seven months in the Holy Land, without taking in the Egyptian sights at Cairo and its environs. But this was also owing to the intense heat in Egypt, to which Fr. Thomas attributes his quick getaway.²⁹ From Port Said he departed for Jaffa, where he stayed overnight at a Franciscan monastery and visited some biblical memorial sites.³⁰ First, he wanted to go to Nablus to build up his knowledge of Arabic, for one can make the speediest progress in an Arab-speaking milieu. Since he had the address of a pastor in Nablus, he wanted to go there right away. The journey there was unsafe, however, especially when he met a dubious-looking group who allegedly wished to guide him to Nablus.

Out of concern for his safety, Fr. Thomas changed his original plan, and so he set out for Jerusalem on October 1. On the following day he saw for the first time the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. There and at St. Saviour he would celebrate many Masses in the days that followed. In Jerusalem, Fr. Thomas found in Bernadino Hamamée an

²⁶ See the letter of Feb. 26, 1894 (AAM-Weikert, Box 10 Mundwiler correspondence 1894-98).

²⁷ On this visit he heard an organ piece called *Idylle für die Orgel in E-Major* (AAM-Weikert, Box 9). Whether Fr. Thomas knew how to play the organ is not known.

²⁸ See Weikert, "Orientreise I," 614.

²⁹ See Weikert, "Orientreise I," 630.

³⁰ Weikert, "Meine Orientreise II," in *SMGBO* 17 (1896) 123-40, here 131-32.

ideal guide and language teacher. First he stayed in the Casa Nuova of the Franciscans, but the mosquitos and other things caused him sleepless nights as he himself reported: "The mosquitos (a kind of large gnat) have done a frightful job on me. . . . My face and hands are covered with red dots and little bumps."³¹ Obviously there were other reasons that also caused Fr. Thomas to seek different lodgings, but he preferred to cover them with a mantle of silence.³²

He was soon accepted at the École Biblique, which is run by the Dominicans of St. Étienne. This biblical study center offers a full theological curriculum. The strong point, however, is exegesis, archeology, topography and oriental languages, which coincided with Fr. Thomas' special interests. By means of archeological trips one was able to become better acquainted with the Holy Land. A letter of recommendation from the Dominican General in Rome facilitated his change of domicile.³³ With expert guidance, he was able to study the archeological sites of Jerusalem in the days that followed. In addition, he was able to attend the lectures of Fr. M.J. Lagrange, O.P. (1855-1938) and Fr. P.J. Sejourné, O.P. (1857-1922), the founders of the École Biblique et Archéologique de Jérusalem, who were among the leading Catholic exegetes of that day. In addition, he spent a period in Amwas, the biblical Emmaus, where there was a Trappist community. The archeological trips took him to biblical sites at Bethlehem, Hebron and Beersheba, as well as in the Jordan Valley and at the Dead Sea. Already in November he was invited by Lagrange to contribute to the famous periodical *Revue Biblique*. Subsequently he was named a corresponding member of the Society of Biblical Studies in Rome.³⁴ Both of these things indicate that Fr. Thomas already in this period had established a name as a scholar.

In March, 1895, he received a letter from his Abbot urging him to break off his Near Eastern trip, for which he gave two reasons.³⁵ First, the expected heat would be hard on the health of Fr. Thomas, and second, the financial situation of St. Meinrad had become difficult, making a longer sojourn impossible. For these reasons, Fr. Thomas had to return from the Near East to Rome. On the return journey he

³¹ Weikert, "Meine Orientreise III," in *SMGBO* 17 (1896) 292-313, here 292.

³² See Thomas Aquinas Weikert, "Die 'Posaune' und meine Ausführungen über Sion," in *SMGBO* 18 (1897) 372-76, here 372.

³³ Weikert, "Orientreise III," 297-98.

³⁴ AAM-Weikert, Box 11.

³⁵ Letter of Abbot Fintan Mundwiler of March 20, 1895 (AAM-Weikert, Box 10, Mundwiler Correspondence 1894-98).

made a side trip to Constantinople where he fulfilled a mission for the Abbot Primate at the Church of St. Pulcheria.³⁶

Professor in Rome (1895-1906)

After his trip to the East, Fr. Thomas was *Lector Linguarum Orientalium* at the College of Sant' Anselmo until his early death. Fr. Franz Sales Tiefenthal (1840-1917) of Einsiedeln became *Lector Exegeseos et Historiae Ecclesiasti.*, and Horatius Marucchi (1852-1931) became *Lector Archaeologiae Christianae*.³⁷ Tiefenthal had already made a name for his work on the Song of Songs (1889), the Apocalypse of John (1892), the Gospel of Mark (1894) and his work on Daniel (1895). For his part, Marucchi, a student of the famous scholar of Christian Archeology and Epigraphy, Giovanni Battista de Rossi (1822-94), wrote his own standard works in the years that followed. In the summer vacation, Fr. Thomas visited some cities and pilgrimage sites in Europe, along with his Bavarian home. There was neither time nor money available for more extensive journeys.

In the year 1896, Fr. Thomas undertook a journey to the Benedictine Abbey of Santa Maria de Montserrat, about 40 km northwest of Barcelona. In this monastery was the Marian statue from the twelfth century called *Our Dear Lady of Montserrat*, the patron saint beloved of the Catalonians. For this trip, Fr. Thomas had at his disposal 170 Lire and a letter of introduction from Wayne MacVeagh, the American Ambassador in Italy, which assured him of free escort and assistance.³⁸

On his visit to Oberelsbach in the summer vacation of 1897, he witnessed the rebuilding of his home village, which had been 75% destroyed in a great fire on September 27, 1895.³⁹ Fortunately, the family home was spared destruction. At great cost, Oberelsbach was soon rebuilt. Yet because the costs were not equally divided, there was a good deal of tension in his home town.

At the beginning of the new academic school year 1897-98, Fr. Thomas arranged that an introductory course in Hebrew and Syriac

³⁶ See the diary entry of April 1, 1895 (Diary #22 in AAM-Weikert, Box 4, Diaries 1893-1906).

³⁷ See Sant' Anselmo Conferences in AAM-Weikert, Box 11.

³⁸ See AAM-Weikert, Box 10. In this letter, Fr. Thomas also wrote: "Stature 5 ft. 11 ½ Inches Eng., Forehead high, Eyes gray, Nose proportioned, Mouth small, Chin round, Hair light-brown fair, face round." On the absence of cost for this journey, see AAM-Weikert, Box 11. Unlisted material.

³⁹ Erasmus Gass, "Das Grosse Brandunglück von Oberelsbach im Jahr 1895 in den Erinnerungen Pfarrer Volkheimers," in *Würzburger Diözeangeschichtsblätter* 68 (2006) 299-322.

would be available for the advanced students.⁴⁰ Apparently Fr. Thomas' health was poor in the following semester, so that often he could not celebrate Mass and he also could not leave Rome. It was already clear that he must learn to husband his energy better. Nonetheless, he was continuously active in scholarly affairs and pushed himself to the limits of his physical endurance. In the year 1900, he did not leave Rome. From the sources we have available, it is not possible to tell whether this happened for health reasons or whether he used this time for his planned publication.

After the year 1900, he made numerous contacts with expert researchers in semitics and rabbinics, who also were important for their own investigations, e.g., Sir Arthur Ernest Cowley (1861-1931) of Oxford, Prof. Dr. h.c. Abraham Berliner (1833-1915) and Dr. Alexander Marx (1878-1953) of Berlin, Prof. Dr. Ludwig Blau (1861-1936) from Budapest or Rabbi Heinrich Brody (1868-1942) from Náchod in Czecheslovakia. The correspondence shows that there was mutual esteem, which often resulted in fruitful collaboration. Especially because of his good contacts with the Vatican Library was Fr. Thomas a valuable correspondent for foreign researchers.

In 1901, through the good offices of the Abbey of Einsiedeln, Fr. Thomas was able to work as a confessor during the summer vacation at the pilgrimage shrine of Lourdes. He was asked to this international pilgrimage center because of his outstanding knowledge of languages.⁴¹ In the apartments of *Notre-Dame de Sion* of Céleste Bourdoncle in Lourdes he always found a comfortable lodging in the following years.

On January 26, 1903, Fr. Thomas was named as an advisor of the newly founded (by Pope Leo XIII [1810-1903]) Papal Biblical Commission, a group of cardinals in Rome who, together with advisors, were responsible for the correct interpretation of the Bible according to the encyclical *Proventissimus Deus*. The Papal Biblical Commission itself began with the apostolic letter *Vigilantiae Studii* of October 30, 1902. In his letter of appointment, Cardinal Mariano Rampolla del Tindaro (1843-1913) especially mentions the intelligence of Fr. Thomas. But surely his conservative approach to exegesis contributed to his call to the Commission. For at that time the Catholic Church

⁴⁰ Sant' Anselmo Conferences in AAM-Weikert, Box 11.

⁴¹ See also Pius Engelbert, *Geschichte des Benediktinerkollegs St. Anselm in Rom: Von den Anfängen (1888) bis zur Gegenwart*, *Studia Anselmiana* 98 (Rome: Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo 1988) 70: "Because of his many modern languages, he was particularly well-suited for work at this much-sought-after pilgrimage spot."

was determined to restrain the insights of historical-critical exegesis. Perhaps for this very reason had Fr. Thomas involved himself with Oriental languages and rabbinic (and middle Hebrew) literature so as not to come into conflict with the magisterium. On these subjects, he was valued by all sides as an advisor. At any rate, he was numbered by the Vatican among the forty most outstanding Catholic exegetes.

In 1905, Fr. Thomas received an invitation to be a guest professor at Salzburg. In Salzburg he was to give a lecture on the philosophical content of the Wisdom Books of the Old Testament or on a similar theme. This lecture was to be of two hours duration and held within a three-month period. We do not know any more about this.

*Death at Arcs sur Argens (July 8, 1906)*⁴²

As in the previous years, Fr. Thomas also wished to work in the summer vacation of 1906 as a confessor in the famous pilgrimage shrine of Lourdes. This would be his last journey. He never reached his destination. On June 30, Fr. Thomas bid farewell to all whom he met in the College of Sant' Anselmo. To the rest, he left a hearty greeting. Although his health was not good, he nevertheless set out on the long journey. First he judged a competition sponsored by the Biblical Commission. Although this left him exhausted, he left Rome in good spirits. One day later he felt unwell, so he wished to leave his journey for a short respite. He thought his discomfort was due to the great heat that was burning up the French Riviera at that time. In Arcs sur Argens he broke his journey and took a room at the Hotel Batailler. After a two-day rest, he proposed to continue his journey.

The town of Arcs lies on the railway line between Cannes and Toulon, between Ventimillia and Marseille. At that time, Arcs had 3000 inhabitants. This town belongs to the Department of Var and the Catholic Diocese of Fréjus. At Draguignan, 12 km distant, a sub-prefecture of the department, was a hospital with a chaplain and religious Sisters that he could go to if his condition worsened. Fr. Rimbaud, the pastor of Arcs sur Argens took responsibility for him when Fr. Thomas called for him on Sunday evening. In the following days, Fr. Rimbaud visited many times a day. In addition to Fr. Rimbaud, Fr. Thomas was attended by Dr. Hugues, the doctor and mayor of the town. The manager of the Batailler Hotel and his son also visited, as

⁴² The details concerning his death are reconstructed on the basis of the death report (AAM-Weikert, Box 1) and the letters of the parish priest of Arcs sur Argens, Fr. Rimbaud of July 6, 1906 and August 21, 1906 (AAM-Weikert, Box 1).

did a Dominican Sister from the Hospital of Draguignan. But the rest of the people of Arcs also were concerned for the health of Fr. Thomas.

When Fr. Thomas interrupted his journey at Arcs sur Argens, he was afflicted with a high fever and stomach cramps. Since he seemed to have a strong constitution, some of those involved hoped that he would soon overcome this complaint—a catastrophic misdiagnosis seeing that he had health problems for a long time and was not as strong as he appeared. In 1904 he had suffered a heart attack.

In his quarters, he apparently by chance revealed to Dr. Hugues the pain in his head and in his abdomen. There is also dependable information indicating that Dr. Hugues was officially summoned. Dr. Hugues, however, did not judge the sickness of Fr. Thomas as harmless as the official death report might suggest.⁴³ In order to lower the fever, Dr. Hugues prescribed ice packs, which alleviated the problem a bit, but by Thursday this had brought no real improvement. According to the death report, three more doctors were called in to monitor the illness.⁴⁴ They verified the symptoms of gastric fever as well as irregular heartbeat. Thus they prescribed the necessary medication, which brought some relief, enough that Fr. Thomas did not feel it necessary to inform his family of his condition. These facts appear in the death report, but a surviving letter of the parish priest gives a useful and realistic picture that indicates that mistakes in the treatment of Fr. Thomas were covered up.

On Friday the condition of Fr. Thomas appreciably worsened. The fever did not go down, and the breathing was so labored that it worried the doctor. The heart was sick, the head was hot and the stomach was afflicted. A true diagnosis of the illness still could not be made. It could have been a mucous fever or typhus. On Sunday, the condition of the sick man was deemed hopeless. Apparently those responsible for the situation were entirely overmatched, even though they warmly supported the sick man. In the death report, there seems to be more effort to cover things up rather than offer an explanation for the true causes that lead to his death.

On Sunday, Dr. Hugues informed Fr. Rimbaud about the deterioration of the patient. Since nothing more could be done for Fr. Thomas, he thought he should be given the Last Sacraments. Fr. Thomas received this sacrament with great reverence and openness to the will of God. He also expressed his wishes concerning his burial:

⁴³ On this, see the reliable report of Rimbaud of August 21, 1906 (AAM-Weikert, Box 1).

⁴⁴ From his letter of August 21, 1906, Rimbaud shows that he did not know this (AAM-Weikert, Box 1).

since he was a religious, he wanted to be buried as a pauper. Since his illness continued unabated, on Sunday all medical treatment was suspended. He was now in a state of confusion. He could no longer recognize Fr. Rimbaud. He spoke in foreign languages that no one could understand. Probably he was praying to God. The official death report also cosmeticizes the last hours of Fr. Thomas, describing him as a religious given over to the will of God, a man who gladly receives his fate from the hand of God and, despite some lapses, remained fully conscious until the end.

On Sunday, July 8, 1906, Fr. Thomas died as a result of his illness at 3 p.m. in Arcs sur Argens. Whether he could have survived his fever in the nearby hospital of Draguignan cannot be said, even if the medical treatment in Arcs sur Argens was surely not optimal. In view of the great heat and the danger of infection, the corpse was taken to the mortuary outside the city and encased in a triple casket so the corpse could be shipped to his family or the monastery in Rome. Beyond that, we know nothing.

Burial and Reactions

The leaders of Sant' Anselmo heard about the dire illness of Weikert one day before his death, when they received a telegram from Fr. Rimbaud, the pastor: "Fr. Thomas anointed; Condition hopeless. Rimbaud, pastor." At seven in the evening a letter from Rimbaud arrived which tried to describe the sickness of Fr. Thomas in more detail.

They immediately informed the Abbot Primate and sent a message to Arcs sur Argens expressing the deepest sympathy for the sick man. The telegram of Sunday, announcing the imminent arrival of Fr. Peter Bastien, did not reach Fr. Thomas before he died. This confrere, who was hurriedly dispatched by the Abbot Primate, arrived on Monday when Fr. Thomas was long dead.

Already on Tuesday, July 10, 1906, Fr. Thomas was buried by Pastor Rimbaud in Arcs sur Argens. The parishioners, who had followed the condition of the foreign monk for a week already, showed great sympathy since the deceased related to everybody he met in a lovable, simple and friendly manner. Fr. Peter Bastien represented the Abbot Primate at the burial.

One day after the reception of the sad news of the unfortunate death of their confrere, the monks of Sant' Anselmo held a simple

requiem Mass attended by all who were present. The official Mass for the Dead was celebrated at the beginning of the following school year. In his home Abbey of St. Meinrad, all the priests celebrated five Masses for the deceased. In addition, all the other monasteries of the Swiss Congregation celebrated a Mass for the deceased.⁴⁵ By means of these Masses people showed their dead confrere the last honors in Rome and America.

But the case of Weikert in the southern French town of Arcs sur Argen was still not closed. Mrs. Céleste Bourdoncle, owner of the Hotel Villa Notre Dame de Sion, in which Fr. Thomas always lodged in Lourdes, petitioned for the exhumation of the corpse and its transfer to Lourdes. Since the Abbey of St. Meinrad and also the relatives at Oberelsbach did not oppose the wish of Mrs. Bourdoncle,⁴⁶ her request was almost fulfilled. But the pastor, Fr. Rimbaud, decided against it since he was afraid that Mrs. Bourdoncle might use the corpse of this man who was known and admired on all sides as a means of advertising her hotel. The true motivation of Mrs. Bourdoncle cannot be determined from the sources available to us. In any case, there was no exhumation and reburial of the corpse.

After Weikert's death the Belgian Fr. Emanuel Valet O.S.B., held the chair for Oriental languages at Sant' Anselmo.⁴⁷ Previously, Fr. Emanuel was a professor at the Pontifical Greek College of St. Athanasius. He was also Undersecretary of the Pontifical Biblical Commission.

The condolences that came in for Fr. Thomas indicate how highly regarded he was. His premature and unexpected death evoked great sorrow on all sides. Only three letters are mentioned in the following. Abbot Primate Hildebrand de Hemptinne wrote, full of sorrow at the unexpected death:

The loving God in his justice and mercy calls us home, and we can only bow the knee and head in thanks and praise at his decision
Who would have foreseen this death? Who would have dreamt of

⁴⁵ On this, see the appeal of the death notice: "For the repose of his soul, each reverend father of our abbey should say five Masses; the clerics, novices and brothers should offer fifteen Holy Communion and recite the Rosary. All the priests of our congregation should celebrate one Mass; the clerics, brothers and novices should offer one Holy Communion and recite a third part of the Rosary" (AAM-Weikert, Box 1).

⁴⁶ See the letter of August 25, 1906, of Pastor Schultheis of Bischofsheim (AAM-Weikert, Box 1).

⁴⁷ Maurus Kinter, "Ordensgeschichtliche Rundschau," in *SMGBO* 27 (1906) 751-95, here 776.

the sad circumstances of this death? Our dear confrere Fr. Thomas died all alone and now lies dead in a French village, the name of which we have never known before!⁴⁸

Cardinal Mariano Rampolla del Tindaro, President of the Biblical Commission likewise found moving words of grief:

I heard with great sorrow of the unexpected death of Fr. Thomas Weikert, who served the Church and the Order so well. God willed to call his true servant to himself; we adore His holy will, we sincerely hope that the good Fr. Weikert has already found himself in the possession of the Eternal God. Moreover, I will not fail to stand by this dear soul in my prayers.⁴⁹

But from the Jewish side there was a statement of the loss of this researcher who was so proficient in the Jewish language. The Head Rabbi of Rome, Prof. Vittorio Castiglioni (1840-1911): "I wish to express my deeper condolences at the all too early death of the outstanding Prof. Thomas Weikert. And I also wish for his soul the delights of paradise."⁵⁰ In the journal published by him, *Il Vessillo Israelitico*, the same Rabbi wrote even more personally: "With Fr. Weikert the Catholic Church has lost a learned, enlightened servant; the Jewish language and biblical studies have lost a powerful enthusiast and I myself have lost an estimable friend, whose memory will not depart from my heart."⁵¹

To this day, the cause of the sudden death of Fr. Thomas is unexplained. Possible causes have been proposed: gastric or mucous fever, typhus or inflammation of the brain.⁵² When he abandoned his journey at Arc sur Argens, he did so feeling weak; he complained first of fever and stomach cramps. Yet what caused this distress is not known. In addition, he had an irregular heartbeat. Probably Dr. Hugues was stumped by the symptoms and did not know what medicine to prescribe. Since Fr. Thomas' constitution seemed strong, no special care was taken with him at first. But no one in Arcs sur Argens really knew the previous medical history of Fr. Thomas, who, as we have already mentioned, was weakened at that time. For that

⁴⁸ Death Report in AAM-Weikert, Box 1.

⁴⁹ Death Report in AAM-Weikert, Box 1.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Vittorio Castiglioni, "Padre Tommaso Aquino Weikert," in *Il Vessillo Israelitico* 54 (1906) 587-89, here 589.

⁵² See also Engelbert, *Geschichte*, 70.

reason, the early death of this overworked scholar in poor health was not surprising.

CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE WORK OF FR. THOMAS WEIKERT

Fr. Thomas published four books in only thirteen years, plus numerous articles and book reviews. Even though his work was valued at that time as an important contribution to Old Testament textual criticism, Hebrew and rabbinic literature and Semitic syntax, his work is forgotten today, largely because it is mostly written in Latin. Translation into modern languages is not being promoted, which is not surprising seeing that Latin is no longer used in Catholic institutions. In what follows, the books and articles will be presented and evaluated one by one.

*The Original Text of Psalm 109:3b*⁵³

In his first booklet, Weikert followed the verse numbering of the Septuagint and the Vulgate, whereas most modern biblical publications employ the numbering of the Hebrew Masoretic text. Thus Weikert examined the difficult vs. 3 for the liturgically and doctrinally significant Ps. 110, which still presents exegetes with numerous problems.⁵⁴ Today, scholars solve the textual difficulties by an addition that could be a significant rereading of the original text.⁵⁵ In his study, Weikert focuses on the short text of Ps. 110:3 טל ילדתיך לך מרחם משחר לך,⁵⁶ which he understands as a Messianic text.⁵⁷ First Weikert discusses the various renditions of this short sentence in each of the versions, and points out the attempt of each translator to come to grips with the lexical problems. Then follow some fundamental

⁵³ See Weikert, *Textus originalis Psalmi 109,3b* (Rome: S.C. de Propaganda Fide 1893).

⁵⁴ See the outstanding commentary of Erich Zenger, *Psalmen 101-150*. Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament (Freiberg, Ger.: Herder 2008) 198: "The old versions offer different suggestions for vs. 3, which not only strongly differ from the MT, but which even digress from it completely."

⁵⁵ See Zenger, 198.

⁵⁶ On the problematic construction מרחם משחר see Zenger, 199: either "from a womb, namely, from the dawn" or משחר as a synonym for שחר. Miriam von Nordheim, *Geboren von der Morgenröte? Psalm 110 in Tradition, Redaktion und Rezeption* WMANT 117 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener 2008) 27, points to the problematical vocalization of משחר as the nominal form of the root שחר. Thus there are two nominal phrases that might be suspected here, namely, לך טל ילדתיך and מרחם משחר.

⁵⁷ See Weikert, *Textus*, 7: "This psalm (109) is strictly and exclusively messianic and definitely ought to be understood in the literal sense."

comments, in which he strives to avoid all polemics. Here he shows clearly that he is determined to present his thesis primarily in terms of argument and not polemics.⁵⁸

In his work Weikert especially opposed the arguments of Prof. Franz Philipp Kaulen (1827-1907) of Bonn, who wished to stay with the Vulgate reading *genui te* (I have begotten you).⁵⁹ In opposition to Kaulen, Weikert suggests the reading ילדתך—a nominative form with a suffix—as the original, into which the letter י has been inserted in the course of transmission. He is especially impressed by the Greek versions, which contain no first person in the verbal form. Yet such an interpretation also has its problems, which Weikert in his booklet of only 20 pages cannot handle.⁶⁰ Here is a translation which would surely also be acceptable to Weikert: “From the womb of the dawn comes to you the dew of your youth.”⁶¹

*Isaac Israeli, Yesod Olam*⁶²

In the year 1901, Weikert published part of the important astronomical work *Yesod Olam* by Isaac Israeli the Younger. This is an autograph manuscript written in large and clear letters, and based on a manuscript in the possession of Weikert. To this work also belongs a chapter of Abraham ben David’s ס' הקבלה. The Hebrew manuscript, on which Weikert’s autograph depends, is unfortunately marred by some scribal errors, but it also has some readings that are lacking in other editions. Weikert not only studied the text of this Hebrew manuscript, but also the *editio princeps* of the book יוחסין in the Krakauer Edition,⁶³ including the notes on רמ"א. In this lovely publication, Weikert shows his love for the late Hebrew text, which

⁵⁸ See Weikert, *Textus*, 8: “If they do not adduce reasons, attacks and excited words are of no use. We wish to find the truth, and that in peace.”

⁵⁹ Franz Philipp Kaulen, “Originalis forma loci Ps. 109:3,” in *Katholik* (1865) 129-74. Such an interpretation is problematic because it pays too little heed to the preceding words לך טל. See also E. Zenger, *Psalmen*, 200.

⁶⁰ See Weikert, *Textus*, 19-20: “What pertains to the genuine sense of these words, and whether the LXX exhausts and transmits that genuine sense, does not properly and directly pertain to our investigation. This produces a new and even greater difficulty.”

⁶¹ Zenger, *Psalmen*, 197. See also the translation of Gary A. Rendsburg, “Psalm CX 3B,” in *VT* 49 (1999) 548-53, here 551: “With the rain of dawn, yours is the dew of your mouth.”

⁶² Weikert ed., *Isak Israeli, Jesod Olam. IV Abschnitt 18 des astronomische Buches* (Rome 1901); see Alexander Marx, “Rezension,” in *Zeitschrift für Hebräische Bibliographie* 6 (1902) 101.

⁶³ See Abraham Zakhut, ed., *Sefer Yuhasin: . . . shalshet qabalat ha-Torah mi Mosheh Rabenu* (Krakow: Itschaq ben Aharom mi-Prostiti 1580).

he painstakingly collected, edited and in this way tried to save from oblivion.

*Maffei/Romanelli, La Merope*⁶⁴

In 1903, Weikert published his third book, a Hebrew translation of the five-act tragedy *La Merope* by Francesco Scipione Maffei (1675-1755), which is based on a drama fragment of Euripides.⁶⁵ This theater piece deals with the fate of Merope, the daughter of the Arcadian King Kypselos. After the murder of her husband Kresphontes, the King of Messina, and her two oldest children, by Polyphontes, Merope was forced to marry the usurper. She was still able to save her youngest son Aegyptus, by sending him home to Aetolia. After some years, when Aegyptus had grown up, he put to death the usurper Polyphontes with the help of Merope. Thus he avenged the death of his family.

During the Enlightenment, Voltaire (1694-1778) and Francesco Scipione Maffei (1675-1755) worked with this mythic material. The tragedy of Maffei was soon translated into French by Nicholas Fréret (1688-1749) and into English by William Ayre. It was translated into Hebrew by the Italian poet and traveler Samuel Aaron Romanelli (1757-1814).⁶⁶

Weikert's edition of the Hebrew Romanelli translation is based on two manuscripts. An autograph [author's handwritten copy] was discovered and purchased by Weikert, and the second manuscript came from the Jewish Seminar of Budapest. According to the opinion of Rabbi Heinrich Brody, the manuscript purchased by Weikert came from Romanelli himself: "The manuscript is probably the autograph of the author since at the time when the work appeared, it was no longer a regular thing to make new handwritten copies. A new work was either printed or it remained unpublished."⁶⁷ In the run-up to publication, Weikert also discussed numerous linguistic problems with qualified correspondents.

In his edition, Weikert published the Italian original of Maffei along with the Hebrew translation, although his colleagues advised him not to do so. In his edition of Romanelli's *Merope*, he offers,

⁶⁴ *La Merope tragoedia* (Rome: S.C. de Propaganda Fide 1903).

⁶⁵ Francesco Scipione Maffei, *La Merope, tragedia* (Venice: Appresso Giacomo Tommasini 1714).

⁶⁶ See Ernest Lindl, "Review," in *Literarische Rundschau für das Katholische Deutschland* 30 (1904) 249.

⁶⁷ Letter of Brody of March 6, 1902 (AMM-Weikert, Box 6, General Correspondence 1900-02).

along with the text of both of his sources, an accurate biography of Romanelli and a considerably complete bibliography of his works and manuscripts.⁶⁸ In the accompanying footnotes, Weikert includes variants and emendations. Moreover, he uses a punctuation which follows the rules of the Masoretic system.

In his Hebrew translation, Romanelli shows himself to be a real master, who knows how to render the Italian original into Hebrew. He was even able to render almost all of Maffei's iambics into Hebrew. The new edition of Weikert was praised on all sides for its accuracy. Weikert goes to great lengths to find the best reading.⁶⁹ From his conversations with specialists in Late Hebrew, he was able to avoid many of the typographical errors and mistakes in the vocalization.

*Grammatica Linguae Hebraicae*⁷⁰

In 1904, Weikert published his major work, the Latin 459-page *Grammatica Linguae Hebraicae*. This book came from a language course that he had already taught in the academic year 1895-96. Since many of his exercises for grammatical studies had been provided with lithographically duplicated material, he strove in this publication to meet the needs of students of Hebrew language in the Catholic realm. Catholic introductions to Hebrew were at this time rather rare. Only Fr. Vincent Zapletal, O.P. (1867-1938) had published, shortly before, a popular Hebrew grammar in Latin, which certainly was much shorter than the one by Weikert. Perhaps because of its brevity and its special appropriateness for academic work, Zapletal's grammar already went into a second edition in 1910, and then a third one in 1921.⁷¹ Of course, in the years that followed, there were other Catholic Hebrew grammars that replaced the work of Weikert and Zapletal. Italian semiticists

⁶⁸ See Albin Kocourek, "Rezension zu Weikert: Romanellis hebräische Übersetzung von Maffeis Tragödie 'Merope,'" in *SMGBO* 24 (1903) 487-88, here 487. More critical, however, is Ludwig Blau, "Zu Samuel Romanelli's literarischer Tätigkeit," in *Zeitschrift für hebräische Bibliographie* 8 (1904) 16-20.

⁶⁹ See the review on Weikert's work also in *Revue Benedictine* 21 (1904) 204-05, here 204: "The edition is neat, clear and well-laid out; it makes a new approach to modern Hebrew literature; we hope it is not the last," or the review of J. Göttberger in *Biblische Zeitschrift* 2 (1904) 311-12, which calls this publication "pleasant reading for the literate, and a useful practice piece for the linguistically keen." See also the wish of A. Kocourek, "Rezension," 488, that this publication bring pleasure to the Hebraist, but that it prove useful to those who study Holy Scripture.

⁷⁰ Weikert, *Grammatica Linguae Hebraicae cum Chrestomathia et Glossario* (Rome S.C. de Propaganda Fide 1904).

⁷¹ Vincenz Zapletal, *Grammatica Linguae hebraicae cum exercitiis et glossario studiis academicis accomodata* (Paderborn, Ger.: Schöningh 1902).

showed themselves to be especially prolific writers of textbooks.⁷² The grammar of Weikert takes a middle position between extensive treatments and simple, accessible school grammars.⁷³

Weikert divides his grammar into three sections: *de elementis* (phonetics); *de formis* (morphology) and *summa syntaxis capita* (syntax), even if the division between morphology and syntax is fluid, and also questionable for pedagogical reasons.⁷⁴ In this manner, Weikert first describes the Hebrew alphabet and the Masoretic system of accents (phonetics), and the individual forms of pronouns, verbs, nouns and particles (morphology) before he refers to the syntax of pronouns, verbs, nouns, particles and prepositions (syntax). He ends his grammar with paradigms, chrestomathy (excerpts) from Genesis, Isaiah, Psalms and the Gospel of Luke and a basic glossary.

Before we go any further in the grammar, we will indicate three problems in Weikert's methodology: Weikert orders his grammar according to categories, as is useful for the description of Western languages.⁷⁵ This is problematic, however, because the Semitic languages do not display the same speech-logic as do the Indo-European languages. Thus one often has the impression that certain grammatical structures cannot be adequately described in this way, even if there are certain similarities. Apart from this method of selection, the book shows a deep understanding of the enigmatic aspects of Hebrew speech.

Beyond this, Weikert also employs examples that are not to be found in the Hebrew Bible. This is problematical because biblical Hebrew is a dead language. Therefore, many examples of forms may be adequate to illustrate the law in question, but this is not certain because of the long diachronic development of the language. Some of the model sentences brought forward by Weikert actually contradict the laws under discussion,⁷⁶ even if he can point to rather different

⁷² Enrico Gismondi, *Linguae hebraicae grammatica et chrestomathia cum glossario* (Rome: C. De Luigi 1907); Ferruccio Valente, *Linguae hebraicae grammatica institutio quam in usum discipulorum suorum* (Verona: Typ. Camilliana 1910); Bonaventura Ubach, *Legisne Toram? Grammatica practica linguae hebraicae seminariis scholisque publicis accomodata*, 2 vols. (Rome: Herder 1919 and 1926).

⁷³ See L. Blau, "Rezension," 137; V. Lecoffre, "Rezension," in *Revue Biblique* 2 (1905) 312: "A complete and methodical manual of the Hebrew language."

⁷⁴ See L. Blau, "Rezension," 138.

⁷⁵ For criticism on this, see D.E. Valet, "Rezension," in *Revue Bénédictine* 23 (1906) 112-13, here 113.

⁷⁶ See especially L. Blau, "Rezension," 137, on this point.

forms that are found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.⁷⁷ Moreover, he sometimes adds to his Hebrew citations translations of the Septuagint and the Vulgate, which is a very questionable practice.

Finally, Weikert proceeds empirically in his description of grammar, by simply interchanging the different linguistic forms without going further into the underlying morphological principles or the diachronic development that produced them. Often he orders the various forms among themselves merely according to their external features.⁷⁸ Probably this truncation of the presentation is attributable to the fact that, as a skilled and experienced teacher, Weikert does not want to overburden his students. By means of his inclination to the classification of the multiple forms of Hebrew he shows a concern that the fundamental laws cannot be presented, which certainly would be necessary for a deeper understanding.

Despite these weaknesses in the methodological arrangement of the book, Weikert shows his comprehensive knowledge of Semitics and his great love for the Hebrew language. After his Hebrew grammar, Weikert planned to write an introduction to the Aramaic language.⁷⁹ He never completed this undertaking. Overall, we have here a basic and easily accessible introduction to Hebrew grammar, that shows a special feeling for the classical forms and a careful distinction between old and new literature.⁸⁰

In what follows, we will give some examples of Weikert's method, along with critical commentary. In his division of the syntax of nouns, it becomes clear that he is especially oriented to the syntactical rules of Indo-European language. In this way, Weikert distinguishes in Hebrew five cases (nominative, genitive, dative, accusative and vocative),⁸¹ even if these so-called "cases" are not formed by enclitic morphemes

⁷⁷ See *ibid.*: "The author pays sufficient attention to the traditional word forms, for which he gives the Plena and the Defectiva, and he makes us aware in a praiseworthy manner of the former orthographic peculiarities."

⁷⁸ On this problem, see also Joseph Sauer, "Rezension," in *Literarische Rundschau für Katholische Deutschland* 31 (1905) 106, or L. Blau, "Rezension," 137: "In dividing the material, the author is strictly systematic, and his presentation is clear and thorough. The individual rules are given in a clear and decisive form, which shows he is an experienced teacher. His empiricism in the presentation of forms, in which he often gives us disparate word forms according to the external features (see especially pp. 141-44, where the words are grouped according only according to an external feature) must depend mainly on pedagogical considerations." or V. Lecoffre, "Rezension" 315: "The author does not spend time discussing the facts and searching for their reasons; he is more often content to state them and give them a general formula."

⁷⁹ This is referred to by Dr. Aron Freimann in a letter of Nov. 10, 1904 (AAM-Weikert, Box 7, General Correspondence 1903-04): "I am pleased to hear that you are also preparing an Aramaic grammar."

⁸⁰ See Bonifacio Stakemeier, "Rezension," in *SMGBO* 27 (1906) 181-83.

⁸¹ Weikert, *Grammatica*, 270-76.

(endings) but by prepositions. Only in regard to usage, but not form, can these grammatical forms be compared with the cases of Western languages. Basically, there are no Hebrew case endings. But Weikert is fully aware of this problem.⁸²

On the basis of his over-classification, he in fact creates new problems. In his presentation of personal suffixes, he must then distinguish between the different cases: accusative, dative and genitive (subjective and objective), even if there are no clear references to such here. But he makes the interesting observation that the verbs with double accusative have the personal suffix for person and add the other object with the preposition $\Pi\lambda$.⁸³

The section on Hebrew syntax is very highly developed in comparison to other grammars.⁸⁴ This is where the real strength of this introduction to Hebrew language lies. A few examples here should be enough to show this.

Weikert claims in his syntax that the relative pronoun $\lambda\psi\gamma$ can be used as a conjunction (indicating an object clause or with a final, causal, imperfect or perfect sense).⁸⁵ Besides that, he distinguishes in his verbal syntax between imperfective and perfective circumstances. The imperfect forms an antithesis to the perfect, which indicates an absolute and completed circumstance.⁸⁶ The imperfect, however, can stand for a future or present circumstance.⁸⁷

Yet there are also mixed forms that elude clear classification.⁸⁸ According to Weikert, a modal meaning is only connected to the imperfect, while the indicative can be indicated by both verbal forms.⁸⁹ At least in the verbal system Weikert abandons the classical

⁸² See *ibid.*, 167: "Talk of cases can only be made improperly and analogically. Case endings, as are in used western languages, which indicate Nom., Gen., Dat., Acc., Voc., Abl., do not exist." But then the question arises as to why Weikert uses this terminology. In this regard, the criticism of D.E. Valet, "Rezension," 112, is thoroughly valid: "But if these cases do not exist, why speak of them at all? It would be better to leave aside completely these terms which in no way pertain to the Hebrew language, and can only confuse young students."

⁸³ See Weikert, *Grammatica*, 224.

⁸⁴ See Valet, "Rezension," 112.

⁸⁵ See Weikert, *Grammatica*, 229. For the conjunctive function of $\lambda\psi\gamma$, see Theodor Seidl, "*úšr* als Konjunktion. Überblick und Versuch einer Klassifikation der Belege in Gen-2 Kön." in W. Gross/H. Irsigler/T. Seidl, ed., *Text, Methode und Grammatik, FS.W. Richter* (St. Ottilien: EOS-Verlag 1991) 445-69.

⁸⁶ See Weikert, *Grammatica*, 242: "The perfect especially denotes absolute, finite, time."

⁸⁷ See *ibid.*, 243: "The imperfect (tense) denotes the simple future . . . it often corresponds to our present (tense) . . . since it denotes duration and continuity."

⁸⁸ See *ibid.*, 244: "The perfect and imperfect often seem to penetrate each other and are used in a mixed fashion in coordinated speech. Yet a closer inspection can indicate which one of them predominates over the other."

⁸⁹ See *ibid.*, 241.

descriptions because the forms of Hebrew can only describe a system of "aspect" and not "time." Nonetheless, Weikert still uses the expression *tempus* when he describes the verbal system. Regarding sentence syntax, Weikert certainly is devoted to Aristotelian classification.⁹⁰ Dependent clauses are thus classified as declarative, final, consecutive, conditional, concessive, causal, local, temporal or comparative. Such a system, however, is foreign to Hebrew and can only be helpful in translation into the target languages.

These few examples show the main weaknesses of this introduction, which tries to describe Hebrew like an Indo-European language. But in fact it undermines the distinctiveness of the Semitic language. Still, this grammar is very much more than a typical Catholic introduction to the Hebrew language, and it can in fact be put on a level with Protestant and Jewish works.⁹¹ It offers a comprehensive view of the distinctiveness of the Hebrew language. Whether it really is suitable as an introduction for beginning students seems questionable. Yet those who are more advanced in a basic understanding of Hebrew can certainly read this book with much profit. As such, it is also understandable that this grammar could not perdure as a standard work for Hebrew instruction in Catholic institutions.

Unfortunately, the book contains many typos and errors, which certainly cannot be blamed on Weikert alone, for the publisher had not published a book with Hebrew letters in fifty years. In addition, Weikert must have proofread the whole book alone.⁹² Furthermore, at that time, other publishers also had their problems with printing *Hebraica*.⁹³ The informed reader will easily spot these errors.

⁹⁰ See *ibid.*, 324, note 1: "Consider the example of the causes: Two intrinsic causes (material and formal in relation to substantive propositions); two extrinsic causes (efficient and final) in relation to causal propositions (efficient cause), in relation to final propositions (final cause according to the intention of the actor), and in relation to consecutive causes (final cause from a natural thing)." B. Stakemeier, "Rezension," 182, praises this passage: "It is enlightening that the eternal laws of being must also control the thoughts of men and therefore their speech." L. Blau, "Rezension," 138, however, disapproves of such schematizing, which is foreign to the Hebrew.

⁹¹ B. Stakemeier, "Rezension," 183: "One can only greet the appearance of this book with joy and recommend it most warmly to all those who wish to deal with the true spirit of the Hebrew language: L. Blau, "Rezension," 141: "This pleasantly laid out book will doubtless capture a wide audience of students. It will be very effective in spreading knowledge of the Hebrew language." Here are the remarks of D.E. Valet, "Rezension," 112: "Here is a work to consult for anyone who wants to achieve complete knowledge of the Hebrew language. One finds here real treasures of erudition. Professors themselves, who are already familiar with the Hebrew language, will be able to make wide use of the useful ideas found here.

⁹² For some of the typos, see B. Stakemeier, "Rezension," 183; L. Blau, "Rezension," 138-41.

⁹³ Weikert, "Rezension zu Margel: Deutsch-hebräische Wörterbuch," in *SMGBO* 25 (1904) 358-59.

With this grammar, Weikert definitely showed that he was very familiar with the Hebrew language and its stylistic rules.⁹⁴ Along with numerous positive reviews, Weikert also received many positive communications from colleagues. His friend Prof. Ludwig Blau wrote him: "I have read your grammar through and I congratulate you on your work. I hope to write a report for the *Hebr. Bibl.* yet today. As a textbook it is made with much skill, and I hope for many others of the same kind. Well written!"⁹⁵ His former teacher in Jerusalem, Fr. Marie-Joseph Lagrange, warmly thanked him for this monumental Hebrew grammar. In his home abbey of St. Meinrad, it was doubted whether this comprehensive grammar would be very useful for the average student: "P. Gregor told me that this book is too large for our circumstances—and I firmly believe that an American would distrust such a book, that is not about 'business.' But for someone who wants to learn Hebrew grammar, such a book will be most welcome."⁹⁶ Despite this slight criticism, the writer thanks Weikert for this outstanding piece of work.

Articles and Reviews

"My Journey in the East"

Weikert preserved his experiences with the land and people of the Near East in a series of twelve articles. This comprehensive article extends to almost 200 pages, so this series of articles almost has the character of a monograph.

Along with the many oriental customs that he details, but also at times describes in excessive detail, his essays are of interest for historical and topographical research. Weikert describes numerous well-known biblical places like Jaffa,⁹⁷ Sichem,⁹⁸ Salem,⁹⁹ Emmaus,¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ See Engelbert, *Geschichte*, 70.

⁹⁵ Letter of Sept. 26, 1903 (AAM-Weikert, Box 7, General Correspondence 1903-04).

⁹⁶ See letter of Kleber of Dec. 9, 1904 (AAM-Weikert, Box 7, General Correspondence 1903-04).

⁹⁷ See Weikert, "Orientreise II," 128-30.

⁹⁸ See *ibid.*, 136, note 1.

⁹⁹ See Weikert, "Meine Orientreise," VI, in *SMGBO* 18 (1897) 206-26, here 213.

¹⁰⁰ See Weikert, "Meine Orientreise IX," in *SMGBO* 19 (1898) 286-300, here 286-92.

Bethlehem,¹⁰¹ Hebron,¹⁰² Beersheba,¹⁰³ Adullam,¹⁰⁴ as well as unknown places like Halhul,¹⁰⁵ Janim,¹⁰⁶ Zif, Jutta, Karmel, Eschtemoa, Maon, Eschan,¹⁰⁷ Madmanah, En-Rimmon,¹⁰⁸ Ruma,¹⁰⁹ Socho, Jarmut and Zanoah.¹¹⁰

Local traditions as well as biblical stories are valued (by Weikert) as very reliable, even if they have been somewhat embellished over time, like the legend about Peter, the leader of the Apostles, who rescued a child who had fallen into a well at Jaffa.¹¹¹

His description of the city of Jerusalem has special interest.¹¹² He offers a topography of Jerusalem as well as the surrounding hills and wadis. The pre-Israelite history of Jerusalem is sketched out according to biblical data. According to Weikert, Jerusalem was a military stronghold of the Jebusites. In his opinion, Jebus and the City of David are to be sought on the southern spur of the eastern hill, the so-called Ophel.¹¹³ The biblical toponyms Zion, Moria and Ophel lie under the northern part of the eastern hill. He details the subsequent history of Jerusalem with reference to the Bible and Flavius Josephus.¹¹⁴ Weikert also discusses the etymology of "Jerusalem." He derives the first syllable of the toponym from the root ירה, and says that the

¹⁰¹ See Weikert, "Orientreise IX," 292-96; "Meine Orientreise XI," in *SMGBO* 20 (1899) 151-61; Weikert, "Meine Orientreise XII," in *SMGBO* 20 (1899) 476-82. He explains the name Bethlehem as "house of bread," see T.A. Weikert, "Orientreise XI," 152, note 2: "In the near environs of Jerusalem there was at that time no area as fruitful as the neighborhood of Bethlehem . . . where the grain grows, and the inhabitants are at home: Bethlehem, House of Bread."

¹⁰² See Weikert, "Orientreise IX," 298-300.

¹⁰³ See Weikert, "Meine Orientreise X," in *SMGBO* 19 (1898) 661-67, here 664-66.

¹⁰⁴ See *ibid.*, 669.

¹⁰⁵ See Weikert, "Orientreise IX," 297.

¹⁰⁶ See Weikert, "Orientreise X," 661-67, here 661.

¹⁰⁷ See Weikert, "Orientreise X," 662-63; Jutta, Carmel, Eschtemoa, Maon and Eschan.

¹⁰⁸ See *ibid.*, 667; Madmanah and En-Rimmon.

¹⁰⁹ See *ibid.*, 668.

¹¹⁰ See *ibid.*, 670; Socho, Jarmut, Zanoah and the Terebintental.

¹¹¹ See Weikert, "Orientreise II," 132: "Overall (making the necessary exceptions), one should trust the tradition without a great deal of misgiving. Yet it is also necessary to look at everything with fresh eyes and treat as secondary what has been interpolated in the course of time."

¹¹² See in the following T.A. Weikert, "Meine Orientreise IV," in *SMGBO* 17 (1896) 463-87.

¹¹³ Against such localization, however, Georg Gatt (1843-1924) strenuously objected (AAM-Weikert, Box 5, General Correspondence 1887-94). Gatt had published much on the subject of Jerusalem, e.g. *Beschreibung über Jerusalem und seine Umgebung* (Waldsee: Liebel 1877); *Die Hügel von Jerusalem: Neue Erklärung der Beschreibung Jerusalems bei Josephus Bell. Jud. V.4:1 u.2* (Freiburg: Herder 1897); *Sion in Jerusalem, was es war, und wo es lag nach den Angaben der alter Urkunden mit Bezug auf die diesbezüglichen Ansichten der Gelehrten* (Brixen: Kath.-polit. Pressverein 1900). Weikert answered these objections in "Posaune."

¹¹⁴ Weikert, *Meine Orientreise V*, in *SMGBO* 17 (1896) 671-80; *Orientreise VI*, 206-27; *Orientreise VII*, *SMGBO* 18 (1897) 651-63; *Meine Orientreise VIII*, *SMGBO* 19 (1898) 78-97, here 78-84.

real name was *foundation of peace*.¹¹⁵ The difficult concept מלוא he renders as *artistic panel, wall, dike* and he seeks this formation at the northwestern end of the eastern hill.¹¹⁶ Finally, Weikert summarizes all the information on the walls and towers of Jerusalem.¹¹⁷

In his explanation of the phrase "Promised Land," that was by no means as successful as he originally thought, he treads on biblicist terrain: God really wished to separate the Chosen People in the Promised Land from other peoples: "There they could peacefully contemplate the revelation given to them without fear at that moment of being crushed by an enemy; there they could serve their Lord, practice virtue and prepare for their great mission."¹¹⁸ Because of their mission, they were only given a moderately fertile land: "The natural fertility of the land also makes people soft and will naturally become the cause of their idleness and inactivity."¹¹⁹ Accordingly, Jerusalem must lie in a place which is remote from other nations: "For where there is much commerce with strangers, morality is usually looser."¹²⁰

Weikert especially praises the engagement of the Dominicans of St. Étienne, who are doing groundbreaking work with their school in the Holy Land.¹²¹ Because he had been accepted (for studies) by the Dominicans, he was able to experience many new things firsthand.

Article on "Textual Criticism"

For Weikert the term "textual criticism" includes not only the history of transmission of the Hebrew text and its translations, but also the search for source materials and the smallest units which today is usually termed literary criticism. In his numerous articles on this theme, he not only leaves us a history of this discipline, but especially criticizes the so-called "Polychrome Bible" of Prof. Paul Haupt (1858-1926). It appeared in separate fascicles in the years 1893-1904, but was never completed.

Weikert remains entirely rooted in Scholastic thinking, and so he insists that the first task of the Jewish and Christian exegete is to look for the *integritas* of the Hebrew text. For him, because of verbal inspiration, the *genuitas* and *veracitas* can hardly be called into

¹¹⁵ Weikert, "Orientreise VI," 222-23.

¹¹⁶ See Weikert, "Orientreise V," 671-73.

¹¹⁷ Weikert, "Orientreise VII," 658-63.

¹¹⁸ Weikert, "Orientreise IV," 465.

¹¹⁹ See *ibid.*, 466.

¹²⁰ See *ibid.*, 467.

¹²¹ See Weikert, "Orientreise III," 306-11.

question.¹²² While text critical work could scarcely have achieved better results in regard to *integritas*, people more and more also questioned the *genuitas*, so that the various source histories came into being.¹²³ According to Weikert, literary-critical work on the biblical text can be divided into three epochs: a) from Johann Salomo Semler (1725-91) to Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg (1802-69) b) from Hengstenberg to Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) and c) from Wellhausen to the time of Weikert.¹²⁴ Precisely in the last period had the rationalists over-criticized the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch or questioned the unity of Isaiah and Daniel. In regard to his history of research, he also discusses the critical debate between Prof. William Rainey Harper (1856-1906) of the University of Chicago and Prof. William Henry Green (1825-1900) of Princeton Theological Seminary. In numerous articles in the periodical *Hebraica: A Quarterly Journal in the Interests of Hebrew Study*, they represented the liberal (Harper) and conservative (Green) positions.

In the opinion of Weikert, the hypercritical attitude of the liberals was arbitrary and methodologically questionable. According to Weikert, the great variation in the results shows the limits of this method, as the *Polychrome Bible* demonstrates, although all these scholars had worked on similar projects.¹²⁵

Finally, Weikert focuses on a discussion of the commentary on Genesis by the English Hebraist Charles James Ball (1851-1924) from London. Weikert praises especially his text-critical notes, though many of his critical conjectures do not win his approval.

He accuses the liberal position of subjectivism and for a lack of scholarly method. On the other hand, Weikert relies on the Christian, Jewish and pagan tradition that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. In

¹²² T.A. Weikert, "Über alttestamentliche Textkritik I," in *SMGBO* 20 (1899) 425-54, here 436: "That critical activity in essence only concentrates on the integrity of the text, and its genuineness (and even more its truthfulness) is only dealt with indirectly, despite the practical dismissal of genuineness in reference to some books and passages of Scripture by the Protestant side."

¹²³ T.A. Weikert, "Textkritik I," 436: "It seems to me that, after the integrity and the correction and completion [of a document] had been treated in an almost unmatched fashion, according to the best principles, by one DeRossi and another, the concentration of critical activity was steered mainly to genuineness, by those who saw that in the first area [integrity, etc.] they could not overtake the reputation of one DeRossi or another, but they could earn their laurels by cultivating an area less worked on. Many of them, unfortunately, dug too deep: they mixed good humus with rough soil, and so they did not cultivate the field, they wrecked it."

¹²⁴ Weikert, "Textkritik I," 440.

¹²⁵ Weikert, "Über alttestamentliche Text Kritik II," in *SMGBO* 21 (1900) 399-411, here 401: "Up to now they have worked together, and they have, as we will soon see, yielded widely divergent results. All the more, what will be the result when each one decides for himself?"

Weikert's view, there is no convincing internal or external reason for rejecting this tradition. For this reason, he holds to this tradition.

Furthermore, he points out the following problems: Although the liberal exegetes are all seeking the truth, and have linguistic, philosophical, theological, historical and archeological competence in this field, they come up with widely differing results.¹²⁶ Since for a Scholastic like Weikert truth is unitary, these liberal methods cannot be used since they lead to differing "truths." In place of this, he accuses the liberal exegetes of a certain preconceived *a priori*, a research goal distorted by interests, or prejudice of a moral or religious nature. That the direction of this research cannot be taken seriously is shown by the fact that the Protestants have taken two positions that are not compatible with either the Catholic/Jewish or the liberal positions.¹²⁷ In these approaches, which explicitly attack the liberal position, Weikert's roots are seen to be in the conservative scholastic research climate of Catholic exegesis, which can at best examine the *integritas* of the biblical text. But it cannot allow the *genuitas* and the *veracitas* to be called into question because this would explicitly call the doctrine of verbal inspiration into question.

Late Hebrew in Montefiascone

Weikert also offered late Hebrew texts, which he printed in his editions of Isaak Israeli's *Yesod Olam* or Romanelli's *La Merope*. He often searched libraries and archives for Hebrew manuscripts. In the library of the episcopal seminary of Montefiascone, which was founded by Cardinal Marco Antonio Barbarigo (1640-1706) in the year 1706, he found biblical and post-biblical texts which were unknown up to that time. Among these manuscripts he numbered a complutus מרוזר, which was written in a fourteenth-to-fifteenth century hand, an unvocalized Pentateuch fragment (Num 6:26-Deut 6:24) and two vocalized Tehilim fragments (Ps 17:19b-106:17a and Ps 17:3b-150).¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Weikert, "Ein Gang durch die Bibliothek der neueren Literature für alttestamentliche Textkritik," in *SMGBO* 22 (1901) 356-81) here 357.

¹²⁷ See *ibid.*, 357-58.

¹²⁸ Weikert, "Aus Montefiascone," in *Zeitschrift für hebräische bibliographie* 5 (1901) 23-28.

Overviews of Literature

Beyond that, Weikert always sought to be aware of the latest findings of scholarly research, which he published in his overviews of literature. He brought together the important journals for research on the Old Testament and Judaism.¹²⁹ Also in the report on his journey to the Near East he placed an overview of helpful studies on the Bible, archeology and historical topography.¹³⁰ Finally, he collected a comprehensive literary overview of the newest works on the Old Testament,¹³¹ which unfortunately he only notated but did not comment on.

Book Reviews

As he had already showed in his papers on the liberal literary criticism, works which referred to the integrity of the Hebrew Bible were of special interest. In this regard, he praised an introduction to historical criticism by Fr. Josef Anton a Lovera/Schalkhammer O.F.M. (1854-1924), since it is particularly appropriate for students. Lovera does not deal with Hebrew manuscripts, whose number, significance and priority he therefore overlooks.¹³² Beyond this he also praises the standard work of Lovera on the archeology of the Holy Land,¹³³ which is informative on many geographical and topographical questions, and also presents customs and traditions.

Next Weikert discusses two books of his colleague and friend Prof. Ludwig Blau of Budapest, who mainly offers a tradition-history of the biblical books, but who also takes the post-biblical period into consideration.¹³⁴ According to Weikert, this is especially important for an evaluation of the various versions. Blau and Weikert were united in

¹²⁹ See Weikert, "Verzeichnis der hauptsächlichlichen periodischen Literature über das Alte Testament, nebst praktischen Angaben;" in *SMGBO* 25 (1904) 812-24.

¹³⁰ Weikert, "Orientreise III," 311-13.

¹³¹ See Weikert, "Ein Gang durch die Bibliothek der neueren Literature für alttestamentliche Textkritik," in *SMGBO* 22 (1901) 356-81; *ibid.*, "Ein Gang, etc." in *SMGBO* 23 (1902) 87-98; 460-73; 662-69 and "Ein zweiter Gang, etc." *SMGBO* 24 (1903) 116-24; 379-91; 683-87.

¹³² See Weikert, "Rezension zu Lovera: Introductio Historico-Critica in sacram Scripturam ad usum scholarum," in *SMGBO* 20 (1899) 185: "In seminaries and schools where Latin is studied and where studies are taken seriously, this clear, short handbook will be very welcome."

¹³³ Josef Anton a Lovera. *Archaeologiae biblicae Compendium exaratum studio et opera* (Jerusalem: Typ. Franciscanibus, 2nd ed. 1896).

¹³⁴ See Weikert, "Rezension zu Blau: Zur Einleitung in die Heilige Schrift; Studien zum althebräischen Buchwesen und zur biblischen Literaturgeschichte," in *SMGBO* 23 (1902) 707-09.

their critique of the liberal exegetes, who in their opinion undervalued the tradition.¹³⁵

His bibliophilic interests also influenced the choice of books which he finally decided to review. Thus he discussed literary overviews on Judaism or on church history.¹³⁶ In his reviews, however, Weikert not only covered Old Testament scholarship, but also other fields such as church history. So he discussed the two monumental volumes of Fr. Konrad Eubel, O.F.M. (1842-1923) on the Catholic hierarchy of the years 1198-1503,¹³⁷ and the work on St. Romarich of Remiremont (c. 570-653) by Alphonse Didier-Laurent (1850-1930).¹³⁸ He also reviewed books on spirituality, such as the studies on the cult of St. Ann by Fr. Heinrich Rickenbach, O.S.B. (1831-1911)¹³⁹ or the booklet published by Fr. Antoine Staerk, O.S.B. on the *Journal Spirituel* of St. John of Kronstadt (1829-1908).¹⁴⁰

Summary Remarks on the Person of Fr. Thomas Weikert

Fr. Thomas Weikert was a very gifted, hard-working scholar at the beginning of the twentieth century. In his scholarly judgment, he was often modest and hardly polemical. Since he was educated in the traditional Scholastic and conservative manner, he clung to the general unity of the Hebrew Old Testament and consequently opposed the excesses of the literary criticism of his time. As far as possible, he stuck to the traditional Hebrew text. Because of his vigorous criticism of the literary criticism of his time in his many articles, he certainly won many friends in conservative circles. It is no surprise that he was named as a consultant to the Papal Biblical Commission despite his

¹³⁵ See *ibid.*, 708: "We would also employ sharp textual criticism, if we did not think about what kind of contraptions we would use to transport the text." Or in the words of Blaus: "It (knowledge of the nature of Scripture) naturally transmits first of all important insights into the history of the text and points out the only proper way to textual criticism."

¹³⁶ See Weikert, "Schwab: Repertoire des articles relatifs à l'Histoire et à la Littérature juives parus dans les Périodiques de 1883 à 1898," in *SMGBO* 25 (1904) 348-49 or "Rezension zu Index Indicum," in *SMGBO* 18 (1897) 162.

¹³⁷ Weikert, "Rezension zu Eubel: Hierarchia catholica," in *SMGBO* 20 (1899) 507-09; *Rezension zu Eubel: Hierarchia catholica*, in *SMGBO* 23 (1902) 489-90.

¹³⁸ See T.A. Weikert, "Rezension zu Didier-Laurent: Saint Romary," *SMGBO* 23 (1902) 713-14.

¹³⁹ See Weikert, "Rezension zu Rickenbach: Le Lodi di Sant Anna. Ruhmeskranz der hl. Anna," *SMGBO* 23 (1902) 710-11.

¹⁴⁰ See Weikert, "Rezension zu Staerk: Le Père de Cronstadt, Archiprêtre de l'Eglise Russe," *SMGBO* 23 (1902) 715.

young age.¹⁴¹ Yet there were also liberal exegetes such as Dr. Henri Andreas Poels of Louvain named to the Commission. In spite of Weikert's conservative attitude, many of his colleagues respected him and valued his works.

After his return from the Holy Land, where Weikert became familiar with the most outstanding Catholic exegetes of his time, his scholarly reputation appreciably increased.¹⁴² One can easily imagine what would have happened if he had a few more decades in which to pursue his research and learning.

Weikert was universally acclaimed as an expert on Semitic languages. He sought to delve ever deeper into this linguistic world by seeking contact outside the Catholic context with Jewish scholars such as Prof. Ludwig Blau and Rabbi Heinrich Brody. They appreciated his work and usually held the same opinions. In this discipline, he was an authority, not only among Catholic exegetes, but also among Jewish scholars, which was quite unusual for those times.

His special love for Hebraica also showed itself in his work with late Hebrew manuscripts. Along with his study of rabbinic and post-rabbinic Judaism, he provided worthwhile insight in his text critical work on the Hebrew Old Testament, since the Masoretic text occasionally witnesses to later developments in the Hebrew language.

His trip to the Near East also had further results, and that in four ways: First, he got firsthand knowledge of the Holy Land, which is important for an understanding of the Old and New Testaments. According to his teacher, Lagrange, the Holy Scriptures "were not written in Paris, London, Berlin, Vienna or Copenhagen, but here—in the Holy Land."¹⁴³ Second, he was able to learn the mentality of the Near East and some of its unfamiliar customs. Third, he was able to build up his knowledge of Oriental languages and improve his spoken Arabic. Fourth, he came to know many important scholars, which could have been important for his subsequent career. Surely his appointment to the Biblical Commission is to be explained by this connection. Prof. Lagrange, one of his teachers in Jerusalem, was active on this Commission.

Furthermore, Weikert was a great bibliophile. He always strove to remain current with the latest state of research and to survey the

¹⁴¹ That was also the case with Giuseppe Balestri, O.S.A. (1866-1939) Rome; Giovanni Mercati (1866-1957) Rome; Henri Andreas Poels (1868-1948) Louvain; Emilio Román Torio (1869-1930) Palencia. All of them were even younger consultants on the Papal Biblical Commission.

¹⁴² See Engelbert. *Geschicht*, 69.

¹⁴³ Weikert, "Orientreise III," 310.

general range of the literature, a thing which was easier in his time than in ours. He collected almost all that was necessary for scholarly work on the Old Testament. His private library, which consisted of both old and new books, must have become very large. His collection of rare Hebrew manuscripts became significant.¹⁴⁴ Within but one academic year he invested almost 800 Lire in books, including a Syro-Arabic lexicon.¹⁴⁵ Because of his wide reading and his passion for collecting, he was able to remain on top of Semitic research, and this was then communicated in his printed works.

Although Weikert became a cosmopolitan who felt at home on three continents, he was also bound to his Bavarian homeland throughout his life. As far as circumstances permitted, he visited his mother and relatives in Oberelsbach. His emigration to the United States was surely not the result of family problems. Despite his cosmopolitan and open character, he was always interested in the affairs of his Bavarian home.

Weikert was also a dutiful Benedictine priest. Early on he felt a love for the monastic life, which he must have first come to know when he was with the Augustinians of Münnerstadt. Directly upon his settlement in the United States, he entered the Benedictine Order and in his youthful enthusiasm, he dedicated his life to the service of God. From his notes it can be seen that he tried to say Mass every day, even under unfavorable circumstances. Only when he was sick, which must have been often, did he need to forego the obligatory Mass. Weikert created numerous sermon outlines, which reveal the believing man behind the acute scholar.¹⁴⁶ His priestly calling impelled him from 1901 onward to the famous Marian shrine at Lourdes. He was able to function as a confessor to the many international pilgrims because of his outstanding gift of languages. So then Weikert was not only a highly gifted scholar, but a devoted religious who loved his priestly calling.

His untimely death brought his outstanding career as a biblical scholar to an unfortunate end. With his death, not only the scholarly world lost a very gifted fellow researcher, who surely would have become greater, but the Benedictine community also lost a confrere of deep faith.

¹⁴⁴ See P. Engelbert, *Geschichte*, 69.

¹⁴⁵ On this publication of the years 1897/98, see AAM-Weikert, Box 11, unlisted material.

¹⁴⁶ These notes were always divided into three parts: introduction, body of the sermon and conclusion. Only a single sermon for Easter Sunday is written out. See AAM-Weikert, Box 11.