humble. The term kenosis goes back to the statement made in Phil 2:6–8, which describes Christ’s renunciation of his divine attributes: “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus. Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross.”

Feodosii exhibits a kenotic attitude in his demeanor, appearance, and actions; for him, kenosis is not simply an aspect of the monastic existence, but its focal point. Among later Russian monastic and lay saints, the most radical expression of kenosis occurs among holy fools.

In part because of many Russian writers’ extensive familiarity with hagiographical literature and contemporary saintly personalities, 19th-century Russian literature contains a wealth of kenotic characters. Both a humble and virtuous monk (Pimen) and a holy fool (Nikolka) figure in Aleksandr Pushkin’s historical drama Boris Godunov (1825), which is set in the Time of Troubles at the turn of the 17th century. The writings of Fedor Dostoevsky are remarkable for their array of saintly monks, holy fools, and less conventional realizations of the kenotic type. Examples include Prince Myshkin (Idiot, 1868), Mariia Lebiadkina, the crippled secret wife of Nikolai Stavrogin, and the monk Tikhon (Besy, 1872, The Possessed), the wanderer Makar Ivanovich (Podrostok, 1875, The Adolescent), and Father Zostima and Aleksei Karamazov (Bret’ta Karamazovy, 1880: The Brothers Karamazov). Often regarded as eccentric by those around them, these characters are totally lacking in any vanity or self-serving tendencies. Their pervasive humility is expressed in a gentle compassion for and refusal to condemn others. The spiritual reward such characters apparently receive for their selflessness is their often remarkable insight into the complex motives behind human behavior.

The potential eccentricity of the kenotic type comes even more to the fore in the stories of the quirk-loving writer Nikolai Leskov. The hermit Pamva in “Zapechatlennyi angel” (1873, “The Sealed Angel”), the monk Kiriak in “Na kraiu sveta” (1975, “At the Edge of the World”), the lay brother Fedotov, and the holy fool Feodosii exhibit a kenotic attitude in their devotion to the point of death— even death on a cross. The radical writer Gleb Uspenskii also created an entire gallery of kenotic characters in stories like “Rodion radetel’” (1889, “Rodion the Concerned”), “Slepoi pevets” (1888, “The Blind Singer”), and “Nevidimka Avdot’ia” (1880, “Invisible Avdot’ia”). Uspenskii’s characters embody an ideal of secular sanctity that implicitly calls for radical self-abnegation for the good of others.

Note-worthy 20th-century examples of kenotic behavior include Iuri Zhivago, who at the end of Boris Pasternak’s Doktor Zhivago (1957) ceases writing and practicing medicine and instead lives in great poverty, doing odd jobs to support himself and his common-law wife in what appears to be a voluntary striving for self-humiliation, and Matrena, the protagonist of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s “Matrenin dvor” (1963, “Matryona’s House”), who is a model of self-sacrificing service to one’s neighbors without expectation of recompense or even gratitude.

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Margaret C. Ziolkowski
she worked with John Crowfoot at the site of Samaria, capital of ancient Israel. During the summer of 1935, she took charge of excavating the summit and royal palace. Her final pottery report, not published until 1957, became the standard reference work for the chronology of Iron Age Palestine.

The Second World War prevented Kenyon’s return to the Near East until 1952, when she began excavating at Jericho. Her original goal was to check John Garstang’s claim that his 1930s excavations had discovered a city destroyed in the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1500–1400 BCE), and so possibly that of Joshua fame. Kenyon’s excavations, however, demonstrated that Garstang’s city belonged to the Early Bronze Age. Her excavations at Jericho (from 1952 to 1958) went on to reveal that urban life on the site extended back to the ninth millennium BCE, making Jericho, at least at the time, the “oldest city in the world.” These excavations also served to train a new generation of archaeologists in the rigorous Wheeler-Kenyon method.

Kenyon’s final excavations were at Jerusalem from 1961 to 1967, where she confirmed that the original city had been built on the eastern ridge of Ophel. An indefatigable excavator, Kenyon’s major drawback as an archaeologist is that she didn’t promptly publish her excavation reports. She was still working on the Jericho publication at the time of her death in 1978, and it had to be completed by one of her students. The Jerusalem excavation reports were written entirely by others.

Throughout her career, she attempted to make connections between the archaeological remains from the Iron Age Southern Levant and the biblical text, in particular in relation to the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah. As a result, she played a central role in some of the bigger debates in “biblical archaeology” during the 1960s and 1970s, such as the size of Iron Age Jerusalem and the dating and historical correlation of the different strata discovered at the Israelite capital of Samaria. Kenyon also published several semi-popular books on “biblical archaeology,” including her classic summary of the Archaeology of the Holy Land (first published 1960 with many subsequent editions).


Miriam Davis

Kepler, Johannes

The German astronomer Johannes Kepler (b. 1571 in Weil der Stadt; d. 1630 in Regensburg) began as a student of theology and went on to contribute to cosmology, celestial mechanics, mathematics, optics, and crystallography. Principally known for his discovery of the elliptical orbits of planets and the three laws of planetary motion, Kepler’s work synthesized several thought-worlds. His cosmology is framed by Neopythagorean and Neoplatonic commitments, which led him to expect, seek and find number, ratio, and harmony in the universe. He accepted some of the premises of astrology and cast horoscopes for patrons. His religion and astronomy were animated by irenicism, Lutheran piety (with some Calvinist sympathies), a conviction that his work was divinely blessed, and above all a devotion to the Creator and a profound faith in the Scriptures.

Kepler entered the Lutheran University of Tübingen in 1589 to study Protestant theology. He received his MA in 1591 and then began theological training. While there he came under the sway of Copernican astronomer Michael Maestlin and became a passionate convert to heliocentrism. But at the midpoint of the third and final year of his studies in theology, the Tübingen faculty recommended him as mathematics teacher for the Lutheran school in Graz, Austria.

Initially disappointed at being snatched away from theology, Kepler soon reconciled himself to his new role. He wrote to Maestlin in 1595: “I wished to be a theologian; for a long time I was troubled, but now see how God is also praised through my work in astronomy.” The first fruits of this work was his Mysterium cosmographicum (1596), the initial term in the title possibly reflecting a sacramental view of the cosmos. This work announced his discovery that the five Platonic solids could be nested between the orbits of the six planets. While this did not hold up to scrutiny, the Mysterium is the first book to endorse Copernicus’ solar system since De revolutionibus (1543) and its focus on physical causes and robust use of mathematics signaled a new direction in astronomy. Kepler had intended to include a discussion reconciling Copernicanism with the Scriptures, but the Tübingen faculty requested that this be left out. In a letter he wrote in 1598, and alluding to the biblical Melechizedek, Kepler celebrated his new vocation by declaring that astronomers are “priests of the most high God, with respect to the Book of Nature.”

It was in Kepler’s next great work, the Astronomia nova of 1609, which presents his first two laws of planetary motion, that his reconciliation of heliocentrism with the Bible appeared. His approach updates the Augustinian exegetical principle that the Bible is not a physics text, but accommodated to the language of the common people, speaking “with humans in the human manner, or order to be understood by them.” Kepler’s background in optics also shines through: the Bible “speaks in accordance with human perception when the truth of...