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**Title:** Händel's *Messiah*: The Biography of a Theological Idea

**Abstract:** What or who is the “*Messiah*”? Händel’s famous oratorio devoted to this figure or to this theological construct begins with the comforting announcement of God’s intervention in favor of his people. The messiah who is the agent of this promise, it becomes increasingly clear, has already become part of history. In the oratorio, the proclamations of a coming messiah are arranged to form the biography of the savior in whom God has already visited his people.

Our paper will follow some traces of how the libretto compiled by Charles Jennens from texts taken mainly from the Old Testament prophets gradually shapes the announcements in such a way that they describe a specific life (birth, suffering, death, resurrection) and identify the “biography” of a theological concept (the messiah) with that of a historical figure. In doing so, the work turns (messianic) theology into history, biography, *euaggelion*.

The paper will combine exegetical observations with insight from musicology and musical performance.