

Wright. Vermes then traces the development of Logos-influenced Christology through various Christian authors from the Didache to the Council of Nicea, though he finds that Arius best represents common belief in that period.

Christian NT scholars would be perfectly happy with the Jewish context as outlined by Vermes as a context for understanding the historical Jesus. Most would also agree with the bulk of his detailed judgments, though one should beware of his use of that most common tactic of critical NT writers: if a text does not fit your general theory, reject it as being historically inauthentic. The problem is not so much the detail as the way the details are put together to form an overarching theological position. We have much to be grateful for in Vermes's work but we should remember that he has always had an agenda: he did not believe in the incarnation and he wanted to undermine the claims of Christianity by showing that Jesus was an important religious figure but not unique, and certainly not what Nicea and Chalcedon claimed for him. *Christian Beginnings*, then, will not be well received in its entirety by Christian readers.

Vermes's books on Jesus are written for educated laypeople and their accessibility has made them widely read. He has clearly been the most influential of Jewish scholars on Jesus, but that does not necessarily make him the best scholar on the historical Jesus (as has been claimed), or even the best Jewish scholar (Christian readers might find David Flusser more sympathetic). Yet we all have reason to be grateful for his life's work – though not uncritically.

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BYRSKOG, SAMUEL; HOLMÉN, TOM; KANKAANNIEMI, MATTI (eds.): *The Identity of Jesus: Nordic Voices*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2014, WUNT II 373, x + 250 p., ISBN: 978-3-16-152204-8.

A continued esteem for national, or cultural schools in scholarship is, to my mind, to be appreciated most highly lest cultural uniformity curtail scholarly diversity and, thereby, wealth. The contributions of one such school finds expression in the present volume; they were presented at the *First Nordic Symposium on the Historical Jesus*, held in Turku, Finland, in 2010 on *The Identity of Jesus*. Its contributors are exclusively from Norway, Sweden, Finland or Denmark. (In the meantime, the proceedings of the *Second Nordic Symposium on the Historical Jesus on The Mission of Jesus* are announced for publication in 2015.)

K. Syreeni, professor for New Testament at Åbo Akademi, Finland, makes an original start by turning his attention, not to Jesus' own identity, but to the identity of the Jesus scholar (1–16). He questions the uniformity of "Jesus quests" and points out the relevance of the scholars' ideological biases when constructing what he calls "Doubles of Jesus", by which he means *any* Jesus image other than the, in any case unattainable, "real" Jesus. These biases are, however, Syreeni maintains, not in and of themselves a hindrance to the "historical study of Jesus", but rather a prerequisite of understanding.

P. Bilde, Professor emeritus of Aarhus, investigates the originality, or individuality, of Jesus (cf. his monograph *Hvor original var Jesus*, København 2011, engl. 2013)

(17–37). He first constructs Jesus' life "as adequately as possible" (28) and then compares it with the lives of 14 selected figures in Palestine between 170 BCE and 135 CE (listed in n. 43). He concludes that Jesus cannot be considered "original" in terms of his demeanor as an eschatological prophet and his "apocalyptic quietism" (because he shared it with John the Baptist, Theudas, probably the Teacher of Righteousness, and perhaps others), but he can be considered "original" in terms of combining his expectation of God's kingdom with performing miracles and exorcisms, his relationship to Mosaic Law, and his affection for the outcast.

M. Kankaanniemi, lecturer of Biblical Studies and Social Sciences at Iso Kirja ("Big Book") College in the Finnish town of Keuruu, applies insights of psychoanalysis to the historical Jesus and investigates Jesus' relationship to his human father and how this influenced his teaching (38–69). Based on contemporary social-scientific studies, he proposes "that the idea of Jesus having had a good and warm relationship with Joseph rather well meets the demands of a solid psychobiographical explanation" (69). This he finds confirmed in selected pericopes picturing, *i.a.*, Jesus' view of God as Father, his empathy towards children and the outcast, his affections and emotions.

T. Hägerland, of Lund University, challenges J. P. Meier's thesis that the eschatological image of the returning Elijah pervasive in early Judaism was not only attributed to Jesus by his followers, but that Jesus consciously adopted this role in his self-presentation to Israel himself (70–86, esp. with reference to Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 3rd vol., *Companions and Competitors*, 2001). Hägerland analyses the occurrences of supposed similarities between the eschatological Elijah and Jesus as noted by Meier but dismisses them as inconclusive. This does not, however, affect the possibility that Jesus was considered as, and might have deliberately shaped his demeanor according to the image of, the *earthly* (still literary) Elijah as recorded in 1 and 2 Kings.

H. Kvalbein taught at Menighetsfakultet, a private theological faculty in Oslo; he died before the publication of the book in 2013. In his essay on Jesus' use of the term βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (87–98) he notes that this term is usually connected with prepositions or verbs indicating locality and space. Therefore, in Jesus' usage the term would more likely refer to a concrete sphere of God's reign, rather than to God's regal power itself. Jesus' meals with tax collectors and sinners could be seen as "acted parables" ("Gleichnishandlungen") and proleptic celebrations of the βασιλεία, likewise the "Lord's Supper", as an "extended acted parable, integrating the death of Jesus as a sacrifice into the proleptic celebration of the kingdom of God" (98).

S. Byrskog, professor of Lund University, and *R. W. Banschbach-Eggen*, of Trondheim University, are both interested in Jesus' didactics. Byrskog illuminates several characteristics of Jesus' teaching authority, mostly sparring with J. D. G. Dunn (99–109). Comparing the Gospel data on Jesus' didactics to the equivalent data in Early Jewish literature, Byrskog maintains that the distinctiveness of Jesus' teaching authority lay mostly in his relationship to his pupils: he selected them himself (as opposed to them approaching him of own accord), he acted as their only teacher (as opposed to them consulting several) and they never became independent teachers on their own (even in Matt 28:19f., Byrskog contends, the disciples remain enactors of Jesus' authority but claim no teaching authority of their own).

R. *Banschbach-Eggen* investigates how the figurative language of parables can be translated into literal language (110–126): “Parables gain meaning within context, and their meaning is determined by that context” (120). Therefore, drawing on M. Boucher’s and C. S. Keener’s hermeneutics, she maintains that the meaning of Jesus’ parables cannot be established by insights into the “historical Jesus”, nor will they lead to the “historical Jesus”. Rather, they must be interpreted “as the Synoptics do” (121), *i.e.* by establishing their meaning by the Gospels’ own context, such as Luke 15:4–6 by Luke 15:1–7.

Th. Kazen, professor of Teologiska Högskolan Stockholm, has contributed what can be considered a preview of his then forthcoming book *Scripture, Interpretation, or Authority? Motives and Arguments in Jesus’ Halakic Conflicts* (2013) (127–160). His interest lies in a nuanced picture of Jesus’ attitude towards halaka, *i.e.* Sabbath, purity and matrimonial regulations. He establishes detailed insights into different views of halaka within Second Temple Judaism diachronically, applies them to various New Testament texts and concludes, *e.g.*, that the issue of eating corn on a Sabbath and the “realist” dealing incorporated in it would fit well in Jesus’ own time, while a later, more “nominalist”, view on halaka comes to the fore on the redactional levels in Mark and Matthew.

The last two essays in the volume, written respectively by *J. Ådna* of Misjonshøgskolen, Oslo, and *T. Holmén*, who teaches, like K. Syreeni, at Åbo Akademi, Finland, thematize issues on Temple theology. Ådna revisits the old question why Jesus went up to Jerusalem to meet his fate on the cross (161–180) and seeks an answer by linking Jesus’ eschatological message about the kingdom of God to images of Jerusalem/Zion in apocalyptic/eschatological expectations in early Judaism as the venue of the establishment of God’s ultimate reign (4Bar; SibOr; TestXII; Sir; Qumran etc.). Ådna sees that image reflected in Jesus’ sayings on Jerusalem as well as on the destruction and re-establishment of the Temple, and acted out in the Temple incident.

Last but not least, *Holmén* continues his “continuum approach” in the longest essay of the collection by exploring two sayings attributed to Jesus on the temple or an equivalent edifice, Mk 13:1f. and Matt 16:18, and assessing their linkage to the “historical Jesus”. On the basis of a nuanced comparison of these sayings to both early Jewish and early Christian literature, he places them right between these two traditions and concludes that the imagery of Jesus inaugurating Peter as “rock” on which he would build his *ecclesia* carries as many features of continuity as of discontinuity to both early Jewish and early Christian tradition. Hence, Holmén finds those two sayings *plausible* both in relation to early Judaism and early Christianity: “This is the closest to the historical Jesus the continuum approach can come” (226).

Summary: This volume is a fine and insightful collection of contributions on various aspects of Jesus’ identity. Discussions on specific issues (Hägerland, Kvalbein, Byrskog, Ådna) are juxtaposed with more methodologically oriented, and exemplarily performed, contributions (Syreeni, Banschbach-Eggen, Kazen, Holmén); two of them I find methodologically bold, but not therefore less worth the read (Bilde, Kankaanniemi). In most (not all) of them historicist questions prevail; references to narratological or mnemonic approaches to historiography are rare (for exceptions see, *i.a.*, 26f.107.130). In a book whose title is somewhat reminiscent of the Jesus-psychology of the late 19th century, a

foundational essay on concepts of identity, personality or character in late antiquity might have been useful.

One will eagerly await the next raising of the Nordic Voices on *The Mission of Jesus*.

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BOURGINE, BENOÎT ; RODRIGUES, PAULO; SCOLAS, PAUL (dir): *La margelle du puits. Adolphe Gesché, une introduction*, (Coll *Théologies*), Paris, Cerf, 2013, 510 p., ISBN 978-2-204-10114-1.

Cet ouvrage collectif d'une douzaine d'auteurs présente l'œuvre magistrale d'un théologien parmi les plus éminents du XX^{ème} siècle, Adolphe Gesché, professeur à la Faculté de Théologie de Louvain à Louvain-la-Neuve. Adolphe Gesché est né à Uccle (Bruxelles) en 1928. Il obtint une licence en Philosophie et Lettres avec spécialisation en philologie classique à l'Université Catholique de Louvain. Ordonné prêtre en 1955, docteur et maître en théologie, il fut professeur de théologie au grand séminaire de Malines puis à l'Université Catholique de Louvain. Il mourut en 2003. Son œuvre théologique majeure *Dieu pour penser* se compose de 7 volumes (Le mal, L'homme, Dieu, Le cosmos, La destinée, le Christ, Le sens) dont la publication aux éditions du Cerf (Paris) s'étale de 1993 à 2003.

Dans une deuxième partie, après ces éléments de biographie, l'ouvrage présente le projet théologique de Gesché, son style, sa manière de le conduire dans le champ des questions du monde d'aujourd'hui. Le projet théologique de Gesché est non seulement de rendre Dieu pensable en cette période de postmodernité mais de montrer que le Dieu de la foi chrétienne peut même aider à penser l'homme, le mal, l'histoire, le cosmos. L'ambition de l'œuvre de Gesché est que la foi chrétienne, après avoir écouté le monde, puisse en être écoutée : « Le monde peut écouter la foi parce que la foi lui dit ce qu'il est, en vérité. Toute l'œuvre de M. Gesché est le témoignage de cette vérité » (J. Ladrière, p.91). Gesché reconnaît la puissance de la raison humaine et l'honore autant qu'il peut, mais il souligne avec insistance le fait que la raison humaine a ses limites et ne pourrait donc s'enfermer sur elle-même dans une suffisance qui la rendrait incapable d'écoute, de révélation et de visitation. Pour Gesché, « le mot et aussi l'idée de Dieu existent et gardent précisément parmi les hommes une ouverture sur l'excès » (P. Scolas, p. 118). La révélation de Dieu, singulièrement en son Témoin incomparable, Jésus qui aima jusqu'à l'extrême, auquel toute l'Écriture rend témoignage, appartient à cet excès et constitue le « lieu natal » de la théologie. Celle-ci tient ses droits et sa spécificité de ce lieu natal. Elle ne pourrait être colonisée par la philosophie bien qu'elle ne puisse s'en passer comme « servante » et aussi comme « gouvernante » au sens où la philosophie demeure dans le champ théologique une instance critique qui « assure sa cohérence parmi les discours humains ». « La raison voit mieux et plus clair lorsqu'elle consent à recourir aux ressources de la religion, qui lui fournit le recul de la transcendance » (B. Bourguine, p.140).

A l'instar de la révélation elle-même, la posture du théologien, pour Gesché, doit être dialogale. Gesché entend jusqu'au bout le monde. Il cite volontiers les philosophes,