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Luigi Walt

Paolo e le parole di Gesù: Frammenti di un insegnamento orale

Antico e Nuovo Testamento 20

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This interesting book seeks to determine how much Paul has preserved of Jesus's teaching. The method followed by Walt is an analysis of all the passages from Paul's surely authentic letters that may contain allusions to words of Jesus. The criteria followed are those of multiple attestation, discontinuity, embarrassment, coherence, and necessary explanation (108–9). Many of the derivations suggested are not certain but possible or probable. After an introduction that expounds the status quo of scholarship with regard to Paul's appropriation of the sayings of Jesus and describes the above-mentioned criteria, the bulk of the volume consists of an analytical discussion of all possible references to sayings of Jesus in Paul, in almost one hundred chapters structured according to the sequence of Paul's letters, from the undisputed Paulines to the other epistles, such as "God and Father" (ch. 1); "The Holy Triad: Faith, Hope, and Love" (ch. 2); "The Kingdom and the Glory" (ch. 7); "The Angels of the Parousia" (ch. 11); "The Coming Judgment of the Saints" (ch. 32); "Celibacy as a Gift" (ch. 37); "Faith That Moves Mountains" (ch. 51); "Like Children" (ch. 52); "If the Seed Does Not Die" (ch. 55); "No Division in Christ" (ch. 65); "Abba, Father" (ch. 67); "Caesar and God" (ch. 81); "The Signs of the End" (ch. 90; for a complete table of contents, see <http://tinyurl.com/RBL2017-01>). A useful appendix (409–17) lists all the parallels detected and details

whether Paul is explicitly citing or alluding to Jesus's words or whether there is only a thematic convergence. A bibliography and thorough indices round out the volume.

Sometimes a possible Jesuan parallel to Paul seems to have escaped Walt, for instance in the discussion of 1 Thess 2:7, "I was amiable among you, as a nursing mother warms/cuddles [θάλπη] her babies" (137–38), which may echo Jesus's simile "how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings," later attested in Matt 23:37—all the more so in that θάλπω, used by Paul, also means "to incubate eggs/warm chicks" of a hen.

Following Mauro Pesce, Walt suggests (20) that λόγια in the title of Papias's work, *Exegesis of the Lord's Logia*, refers to the inspiration of Jesus's word, in accordance with the meaning of λόγιον as "oracle." This meaning in relation to Papias's oeuvre is now also emphasized by Richard Bauckham, "Did Papias Write History or Exegesis?" *JTS* 65 (2014): 46. According to Dennis MacDonald, *Two Shipwrecked Gospels* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), Papias's work, composed around 110 CE, was a running commentary on three earlier Gospels: Mark, Matthew, and a third with affinities with Matthew, identifiable with a lost gospel, the *Logoi of Jesus* (Q+). Papias supplemented these sources with information from people who had spoken with Jesus's followers.

Walt, with Jacob Taubes, dates Acts twenty to thirty years after Paul and on this dating builds conclusions about the historicity of the portrayal of Paul in Acts (25–26). He does not take into account or refute the alternative hypothesis that places Acts in the second century, which would change his conclusions. But Walt's methodological remark is right that in an investigation into Paul's allusions to Jesus's words it must always be taken into account that Paul was an oral preacher before being a letter writer; therefore, his letters allude to a richer oral teaching in which he could have relied more fully on Jesus's teaching.

With most scholars, Walt dates the pseudepigraphic correspondence between Seneca and Paul to the fourth century (46). However, apart from two letters, which were added afterward, there are good reasons to date the rest of the letters earlier and possibly to relate them to Marcion's *Apostolikon* (see further my "A Pseudepigraphon inside a Pseudepigraphon? The Seneca-Paul Correspondence and the Letters Added Afterwards," *JSP* 23 [2014]: 259–89). Also, Walt provides several interesting early Christian parallels to the precept of not repaying anyone evil for evil in Rom 2:17 and 1 Thess 5:15 (173–74). To these I would add the Acts of Philip, in which this same motif is paramount.

In 1 Cor 11:2 κατέχετε is traced back by Walt to κατηχέω, which he translates "to keep accurately" ("conservarle accuratamente," 54). In fact, however, κατέχετε comes from

κατέχω, which means “to keep,” while κατηχέω means “to instruct, teach,” hence “catechesis.” On other occasions, albeit rarely, Walt offers questionable translations, such as in 1 Cor 3:15: if someone’s work will be burned, “it will be lost forever” (204). However, “forever” is absent from Paul’s text, and ζημιωθήσεται can mean “it/he will suffer damage” or “will be punished”; further, σωθήσεται means “he *will* be saved,” not “he may/can be saved” (“potrà salvarsi”).

Walt, along with most translators and interpreters, renders οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστήσονται in 1 Thess 4:16 “the dead in Christ will rise” (159), yet he notes a problem with this translation: “the absence of any reference whatsoever to those who are *not* ‘dead in Christ’” (163), since on this interpretation Paul announces the resurrection of those “dead in Christ” and then the rapture into heaven of those still alive. This and other problems vanish if one translates οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστήσονται “the dead will rise in Christ.” There are strong grammatical, syntactical, and logical reasons that support this reading, as argued in David Konstan and Ilaria Rmelli, “The Syntax of ἐν Χριστῷ in 1 Thess 4:16,” *JBL* 126 (2007): 579–93.

That Matt 22:30, on risen humans not taking husband or wife, does not refer to the eschatological disappearance of gender differences, as Walt maintains (321), is debatable. A good deal of patristic exegesis testifies to the opposite. But Walt is surely right when he reads Paul’s reference to the final state, when God will be “all in all” (1Cor 15:28) as a description of “the eschatological restoration” (240). He correctly indicates the Coptic Gospel of Mary 7:20–26 (“This is why you are ill and die: it is a consequence of your deeds”) as a parallel to 1 Cor 11:30: “This is why many among you are weak and ill, and a good number are dying.” However, I would understand such illness and death as also spiritual, as I argued in “Spiritual Weakness, Illness, and Death in 1 Cor 11:30,” *JBL* 130 (2011): 145–63.

Discussing a passage from Philemon, Walt sticks to the traditional view that Onesimus was a runaway slave (389–90). It might have been good to at least acknowledge that this view has been largely contested by recent scholarship, which has proposed a number of alternative scenarios. Some have suggested that Onesimus asked Paul to serve as an intermediary on his behalf with Philemon, with whom he had troubles, as he hoped for emancipation. Or he may have been sent by Philemon’s house church to Paul with an offer during his imprisonment, but Paul kept him for some time; he wrote to Philemon to explain this and sent Onesimus back in hopes that Philemon would free him and send him again to Paul. On this hypothesis, Onesimus was a slave but no runaway. Allen Callahan argued that Onesimus was not even a slave but was Philemon’s brother, and Scott Elliot suggested that Philemon sent Onesimus to Paul as a gift, but Paul refused the gift. Ulrike Roth has even hypothesized that Onesimus was also a slave of Paul, who

owned him jointly with Philemon in the same association or *κοινωνία*. Some of these discussions would have been relevant to Walt's argument, since he is analyzing Paul's, and Jesus's, attitude to slavery, which are now addressed in Ilaria Ramelli, *Social Justice and the Legitimacy of Slavery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). This broader analysis yields results that are not in tension but are compatible with Walt's short chapter.

In an engaging section devoted to the presence of Jesus's injunction to return to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God in the background of Rom 13:7, Walt also brings in Sentences of Sextus 20: "Return to the world what belongs to the world, and to God what belongs to God" (362). He deems this testimony "problematic." I think this Sentence is surely reminiscent of Jesus's exhortation, since the Sentences of Sextus are a Christianized version of a Pythagorean moral collection. Rufinus in the late fourth century CE saw such a continuity between the ascetic ideas expressed in the Sentences and the Christian ideals of asceticism and monasticism as to ascribe this collection of Christianized Pythagorean wisdom to Pope Sixtus II, martyred under Valerian. Since this attribution is also found in the independent Syriac translation of these Sentences, Rufinus likely received it from an earlier tradition. As Rufinus was aware, already Origen in the third century CE knew this collection and attributed it to a *sapiens et fidelis vir*. Jerome, in Letter 133, claimed that the author of the Sentences was Sextus, a "pagan" Pythagorean. He was wrong, however, since the Sentences of Sextus were already Christianized. Therefore, it is virtually certain that Sent. 20 refers to Jesus's words. Indeed, this is not the only scriptural echo in the Sentences of Sextus.

All in all, this is a valuable work, the fruit of detailed research, and a helpful resource for anyone interested in Paul and his relation to Jesus's teaching.