



Reviews of the Enoch Seminar 2015.08.04

Eve-Marie Becker, Troels Engberg-Pedersen and Mogens Müller, eds., *Mark and Paul: Comparative Essays Part II for and against Pauline Influence on Mark*. Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 199. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014. Pp. viii+330. ISBN: 978-3-11-031455-7. Hardcover. €99.95/\$140.00.

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It is almost 60 years ago that I began research on the subject of St Paul's understanding of the atonement. When it came to submitting the results of my work to the University authorities, however, I found myself having to explain how my investigations into Pauline theology had led me to write a dissertation on the Son of Man in Mark! To me, of course, it was quite simple: the struggle to comprehend Paul's use of the figure of Adam had led me to consider the possibility that the explanation was to be found in an early Christian tradition to the effect that Jesus had spoken of himself as "the Son of Man," but when I came to explore that tradition, time and space meant that I had to confine myself to the Gospel of Mark.

It is no surprise, then, to find that two of the essays in this book deal with the Son of Man in Mark and the Adam-Christ Typology in Paul, though the question their authors pose is not the one I asked – "Did Paul use an earlier tradition which has been preserved in Mark?" – but "Was Mark influenced by Paul?" The shift reflects the change in perspective between the 1950's and today.

The essays gathered together here are the result of two conferences held in Denmark in 2010 and 2011. On the first occasion, professors and doctoral students from Aarhus and Copenhagen met alone, but on the second they were joined by invited participants from elsewhere, three of whom have contributed papers to the present volume.

In the volume's opening essay (13–27), the late Anne Vig Skoven traces the debate regarding the relationship between Paul and Mark back to the 19th century commentator Gustav Volkmar, who described Mark as "a Pauline gospel" and as "permeated by Pauline theology" (13). Adopting a very different genre from Paul's letters, what Mark offers in his narrative are "symbolic representations of Pauline theology" (18): he presents us, not with Jesus, but the risen Christ. As a result of Volkmar's work, the idea that Mark was a Pauline Gospel was widely accepted in Germany, until Martin Werner attacked it in 1923 in a book so influential that Volkmar's name

has been almost forgotten. Werner accused Volkmar of substituting an allegorical reading of the Gospel for a literal one, and pointed to what he considered to be serious differences between Paul and Mark on important issues. Nevertheless, Vig Skogen argues, Volkmar's work raised an important question and contained important insights which foreshadowed later scholarly work.

The history of research after Volkmar is sketched in a contribution from Heike Omerzu (51–61), but it was only in the late 20th century that Werner's rebuttal of Volkmar was seriously challenged. Among those to question his conclusions was Joel Marcus, whose 2000 essay (*NTS* 46) is republished here (29–49) in a revised version. Marcus points to various similarities and differences between Paul and Mark, but concentrates here on their very different approaches to the earthly career of Jesus – scarcely mentioned by Paul – and their remarkably similar theologies of the cross. He suggests that Mark wanted “to anchor Pauline theology in traditions about the earthly Jesus” (34), and since (unlike Luke) he limits himself to an account of Jesus' life, he is forced “to portray both the strength and glory of the risen Jesus, on the one hand, and the weakness of the earthly Jesus, on the other, through a narrative that is ostensibly set in Jesus' lifetime” (35). Both writers focus on the cross, and both emphasize the weakness and humiliation of the crucifixion, in which God's power and glory are revealed. But are these particularly *Pauline* emphases, or were they widely shared in the early Church? Here Marcus must rely on indirect evidence, found on the one hand in “pre-Pauline traditions,” from which reference to the cross is absent, and on the other in Paul's polemical rebuttal in 1–2 Corinthians of a gospel which apparently bypassed the shame and weakness of the cross – a gospel which, like that proclaimed by Judaizers, was preached by those whom he regarded as “enemies of the cross” (Phil. 3:18). But is it perhaps significant that it is in 1–2 Corinthians especially that we find Paul emphasizing the shame of the cross and its implications for the believer? Modern scholarship now tends to regard Paul's struggle with the Judaizers as confined to only some of his churches. Was his teaching in 1–2 Corinthians not also addressed to a particular problem which confronted him in Corinth? This is not to deny, of course, that the teaching in these epistles was typical of Paul – simply to point out that what we know of Paul's teaching is in a sense haphazard.

How much *more* haphazard, then, is our knowledge of the so-called “pre-Pauline traditions.” For a start, these are notoriously difficult to isolate, and conclusions based on their discovery can be speculative, as Marcus acknowledges. The assumption that the so-called Philippian “hymn” of 2:5–11 is pre-Pauline, for example, may or may not be true, but the deletion of the phrase θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ as a Pauline addition is based on the belief that this is “Pauline” language! The argument is clearly circular. Jesus' crucifixion is perhaps the only certain historical “fact” about him, and the “scandal” of the cross must have been a problem for all Christians, not Paul alone. Even if we accept all the passages suggested as “pre-Pauline,” moreover, it is doubtful whether they provide us with enough material to conclude that “certain aspects of Paul's thought on Jesus' death [. . .] do seem to set him apart from other contemporary Christians” (40). The fragments are too scanty, and the letters too few, to have any confidence that they can help us to establish agreements or disagreements between Paul and other Christians. Our only certain evidence is the core of the Pauline canon generally accepted as his; the fact that we have no direct evidence of the earliest period apart from this may be due to the fact that only Paul, engaged as he was on a world-wide mission, found it necessary to communicate with his churches by letter or because the writings of others have been lost. As Bro Larsen ably expresses it later in the book, “how can we know the *differentiae specificae* of Pauline thought when Paul's

own letters are the only surviving sources from the pre-Markan Christ movement?” (171). Paul was clearly a great theologian, with a brilliant gift of seeing the relevance of the gospel, but was his understanding of that gospel so very different from that of his Christian contemporaries? We simply do not know.

As for Mark, Marcus argues that his presentation of the death of Christ is distinctive. “In none of the other Gospels for example, is the revelation of Jesus’ divine sonship to human beings withheld until the precise moment of his death by crucifixion” (40). But is Mark’s interpretation of the death so very different from that of the other evangelists? And is he closer to Paul than is John? In the Fourth Gospel Jesus does indeed refer to himself repeatedly as “Son,” but it is clear that nobody comprehends him, and one of John’s central emphases is on the fact that Jesus’ δόξα is not revealed until the crucifixion. Indeed, it is arguable that John’s presentation of the cross corresponds precisely with Paul’s insistence that what appeared to human eyes to be folly, weakness, and shame, was in fact wisdom, strength, and glory.

Marcus is certainly right in his conclusion that Werner failed “in his attempt to drive a wedge between Paul and Mark on the subject of Jesus’ death” (43). Paul, we may be confident, would have been happy to endorse Mark’s Gospel. But similarities do not prove direct dependence.

Gerd Theissen’s contribution (63–86) considers the two authors’ use of the term εὐαγγέλιον, found almost exclusively in Paul and Mark (together with Matthaean parallels). For Mark, as for Paul, the εὐαγγέλιον is essentially the post-Easter message, which must be proclaimed worldwide (13:10; 14:9). In both, that proclamation concerns the kingship of God and of Christ, and so has political connotations. Theissen examines the Markan uses of the term, which resonate with Pauline teaching. Especially interesting is his demonstration of the parallels between Paul’s summary of the gospel in 1 Cor. 15:3–5 and the words of the angelic messenger in Mark 16:6–7. But are we to conclude from such similarities that Mark was reliant on Paul, or was he using early Christian tradition? Theissen concludes that Mark was aware of Paul’s teaching and that his knowledge of Paul can be traced back to Antioch, where he was also influenced by Peter and Barnabas; although Mark demonstrates Pauline influence, he was not a member of a Pauline “school.”

The next two essays concentrate on the different genres – letter and Gospel – used by our two authors. Their concern is to explore why Mark and Paul “did” theology so differently, rather than with whether or not Mark knew Paul’s writings. First, Eve-Marie Becker (87–105) considers the interaction of author, audience, and literary genre in what she calls “literary activity,” and stresses the role of the audience in that process. In the case of Paul, his letters are part of a conversation between himself and his “audience,” and his relationship with that audience affects the form of the letter. Mark’s Gospel is significantly different, since it is anonymous, and is not addressed to a particular community. Material which Paul refers to as “tradition” (e.g. 1 Cor. 11:23–5) is here embedded in a narrative, together with sayings attributed by Paul to the Lord (e.g. 1 Cor. 7:10). She concludes that it is divergent literary activity behind Paul and Mark that leads them to use very different genres, and in Mark’s case to create a new one.

Mogens Müller (107–117) concentrates on the needs of the congregation, which clearly gave rise to Paul’s letters, but which also – less obviously – led Mark to write his Gospel. In writing a

narrative account of Jesus' life and accomplishment from the baptism to the empty tomb, Mark "entered into the genre well known from the Jewish holy books of making theology through telling a story" (112). His Gospel was, Müller claims – unlike Paul's letters – intended to be received as scripture, and was probably written to be used in Christian worship. But Mark's Gospel "fulfils the same function as the Pauline gospel," facilitating "the new life which he expected the members of his congregations to realize." Whereas Paul "addressed concrete congregations in concrete situations," Mark wrote anonymously and, "in principle, for all congregations" (114).

The next four essays focus on particular texts. The first, by Oda Wischmeyer (121–46), is once again concerned with the question of genre, and looks at the opening verses of Romans and Mark. Paul stresses his role as God's *δοῦλος* and *ἀπόστολος*, and claims a position of honour and authority, whereas the author of Mark's Gospel remains nameless – though his opening words pick up those of Hosea, and so lead us to expect a prophetic narrative. Romans was written for a particular community, while Mark appears to have been addressing a wider audience. Paul, she concludes, was "the first Christian author," while "the author of the Gospel of Mark wrote the first Christian book" (145). But both authors were concerned to communicate the *εὐαγγέλιον*.

The remaining essays in this group use particular Markan passages as test cases. Do these texts show Pauline influence or not? Jan Dochhorn (147–68) examines Mark 2:23–8 and the Pauline parallels to verses 27–8. After arguing for a pre-Markan source behind Mark 2, he turns to an exegesis of vv. 23–8. The declaration that Jesus (here clearly identified with the Son of Man) is "Lord of the Sabbath" refers back to 2:10, and indicates what Dochhorn calls a "high" Christology, which derives from the pre-Markan source and which, by designating Jesus as *κύριος*, ascribes to Jesus the position of God, as is done in Phil. 2:5–11 and 1 Cor. 8:6. There are, however, problems with this interpretation. First, as Dochhorn himself points out, *κύριος* is not used here absolutely, as in the Pauline passages and as elsewhere in Mark, but with *τοῦ σαββάτου*. Secondly, the saying in Mark 2:28 depends on what is said about "man" in v. 27, and so – as Dochhorn goes on to emphasize – "man" and "Son of man" are used in parallel. He is on safer ground when he links Mark 2:27–8 with Psalm 8, and draws out the parallels with the "Adamic" Christology of Hebrews 1, 1 Corinthians 15, and Mark 1:3, passages which demonstrate Christ's superiority over creation. Dochhorn concludes by suggesting that "Mark and Paul share Christological ideas because they are witnesses to early Christian theology. Their common material may simply be very old" (168).

A similar conclusion is reached by Kasper Bro Larsen, who turns to Mark 7:1–23 for his test case (169–87). His aim is to find a *via media* between the views represented by Werner and Marcus: "historical reconstruction is not about proof, but about greater and lesser degrees of probability" (171). The context of Mark's Gospel, like that of the Pauline letters, is Gentile Christian belief, and not surprisingly we find overlaps. These are not necessarily significant, however, since there are parallels, either in contemporary Jewish writings (the condemnation of hypocrisy, the contrast between inner and outer) or in the New Testament (opposition from Pharisees and from Jerusalem, the debate about what is *κοινός*). The idea of the tradition of the elders is found in Josephus, though Paul and Mark both deviate from him by describing it as human, and as something which Christian believers leave behind. Both Col. 2:8, 22 and Mark 7:6–7 refer to Isa. 29:13, and this may be a significant link – though in this case Colossians is, in

Bro Larsen's judgement, Deutero-Pauline! This leads him to ask, "If there is any Pauline influence in Mark, was it mediated through the followers of Paul?" (178). As for the vice-list, there are parallels not only in Jewish but in Greco-Roman texts. Although Mark 7 is closer to Pauline dietary *halakah* than to other examples of *halakah* in the New Testament, therefore, the parallels are not sufficient to draw the conclusion that Mark 7 is dependent on Pauline teaching.

The author of the last essay in this section, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, focuses on Mark 8:34–9:1 (189–209), and comes to a very different conclusion. One of his aims, he writes, is to read Mark "in the light of certain, specific, Pauline conceptions," in the hope of reaching "a more adequate understanding of the Markan text than commentators have so far managed to achieve" (189). This approach is, as he himself recognizes, "risky," since there is an obvious danger of eisegesis, but he claims that it is justified, in order to explain certain elements in the Markan text. In reaction to Ernst Haenchen's insistence on a literal interpretation of "taking up the cross," which has been accepted by many commentators, Engberg-Pedersen insists that it must be interpreted metaphorically (though "strongly") as a "directedness" away from oneself, and as equivalent to "conversion" (191). His own approach is to examine the construction of Mark 8:34–9:1, which he assumes is built on Q material, but since this assumption is highly questionable, so too are his conclusions regarding Mark's "changes" to Q. Nevertheless, he is correct in suggesting that what we have in Mark may be a radical demand similar to the experience described by Paul in Gal. 2:19–20 and 6:14, rather than one envisaging persecution leading to crucifixion.

But did Mark derive this understanding of discipleship from Paul? Engberg-Pedersen spells out the similarities: the "individual experience of existential change" (204), the idea of metaphorically sharing in the literal death of Christ, and the language of gain and loss (cf. Phil. 3:7–8). This last parallel is surely accidental, however, for Paul uses the terms specifically in contrasting his loss of Jewish privileges with the overwhelming riches of gaining Christ, and though Engberg-Pedersen suggests that Mark's use of *σῶσαι* and *σωτηρία* has a "Pauline flavour" (205), this can hardly demonstrate direct Pauline influence. He himself goes on to point to a "striking" difference between Paul and Mark – namely that Paul used the first person, Mark the third. His solution is that "*What Mark has done in 8:34–9:1 [. . .] is to generalize what Paul has said of himself so as to make it cover all Christ followers and then to put that generalization back into the mouth of Jesus*" (206). Finally, he points to the parallel between the notion of being "ashamed" of Christ in 8:38 with Paul's words in Rom. 1:16, suggesting that Mark is once again generalizing something that Paul had written about himself. These are helpful insights into the Markan passage, but one is inclined to suggest that Engberg-Pedersen's explanation of a problem – apparent similarities which turn out to be differences – is a case of "Heads I win, tails you lose!"

Was Mark directly influenced by Paul? Engberg-Pedersen claims, on the basis of this examination of 8:34–9:1, that the answer is "Yes," but the evidence falls far short of proof. Nevertheless, his interpretation of the passage is illuminating and, and suggests that Mark and Paul understood the demands of the gospel in very similar ways.

The last four essays in the volume deal with "Topics and Perspectives." Gitte Buch-Hansen (213–42) believes that Stoicism is important in understanding Paul, though it is not always clear that this is necessary to her argument. She considers the interaction between Christology and

ethnicity in Paul's letters and the opening of Mark's Gospel, comparing the role of the *πνεῦμα* in each. Claiming that Paul thought of the *πνεῦμα* as the means by which the Gentiles were literally grafted into Judaism, Buch-Hansen first contrasts this view with Luke's account of the virgin birth which "effectively cuts off the Jewish roots which it was at the heart of Paul's thought to preserve. Luke's Christ is neither of David's semen nor of Abraham's seed [. . .] Luke's Christ has God as his one and only father" (237–8). Why, then, we wonder, did Luke trace Christ's divine sonship through both David and Abraham in his genealogy? And how can Luke be described as cutting off Christ's Jewish roots when his first two chapters are a pastiche of material taken from the LXX, aimed at showing the *continuity* of Christ with Judaism? The verses about Jesus' birth need to be read in context.

As for the opening of Mark, the reference to the Spirit here is described as the result of Mark projecting "Paul's understanding of baptism back into the history of Jesus" (239): if believers received the Spirit in baptism, then Jesus must have done so too. Mark has nevertheless moved away from Paul and towards the Christology represented by Luke, since his attitude to Judaism is negative, possibly because the fall of the temple seemed to signify its end. There are some interesting suggestions here, but too many questionable assumptions and conclusions in the argument to carry conviction.

Ole Davidsen picks up the theme of Adam-Christ typology once more (243–72) and, like Dochhorn, comes to the conclusion that the origins of the idea are to be found in material dating back before Paul. He begins by reminding us that agreements between Paul and Mark do not necessarily indicate that Mark used Paul but may be due to their use of common tradition; instead of trying to decide whether Mark is heavily influenced or totally uninfluenced by Paul, we should consider similarities between them as indications of a shared tradition. The Adam-Christ typology, which is explicit in Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15 and implicit in 1 Cor. 11:8–9 and Philippians 2, is central to Paul's understanding of Christ. Davidsen believes that Paul was using a tradition which already existed in Hellenistic Christianity. Mark makes no explicit reference to Adam, though Adamic imagery appears to lie behind 1:12–13, and Davidsen explores the relationship between the temptation story and the trial in Jerusalem, where Jesus again withstands temptation in his obedience to God's will. Mark, like Paul, sees Christ as the last Adam, but this does not mean that he is reliant on Paul. Rather, both make use of earlier tradition. Like Engberg-Pedersen, Davidsen recognises that he may be accused of eisegesis, but we can certainly agree with him that, fascinating as the parallels are, they do not lend support to the theory that Mark used Paul.

Jesper Tang Nielsen also recognizes that similarities between Mark and Paul may simply indicate that they have both used earlier material. He begins his study of "The Cross on the Way to Mark" (273–94) by examining passages in Paul's letters which have been suggested as embodying pre-Pauline material. Explicitly traditional are 1 Cor. 11:23–6 and 15:3–4, where we have fragments of a passion story. Elsewhere we find "rudiments of a narrative structure," e.g. in Rom. 1:3–4 and Gal. 4:4, but only in Philippians 2 do we have a "full-blown structure" (284). Verses 6–11 present us with a "vertical structure" (i.e. Christ's relationship to God), but not a "horizontal structure" (i.e. his work of salvation). Although other fragments interpret his death as "for sins," the two ideas are not brought together in the pre-Pauline fragments; it is only Paul himself who integrates them. He does this in two ways: firstly, he interprets Christ's death as an

act of obedience in which believers participate; secondly, he sees it as a model for Christian behaviour.

Turning to Mark, we find a complete narrative, with beginning, middle, and end. Mark, too, interprets Christ's death as an act of obedience, and also as "a ransom for many" – i.e. as salvific; and like Paul, he stresses the paradigmatic character of Jesus' sufferings. These are interesting parallels, and Nielsen's "tentative conclusion is that Mark builds on and continues Paul's interpretation of the earliest traditions about Jesus' death" (294). Although this is indeed possible, they hardly amount to the evidence that Nielsen himself demanded, that "Mark's presentation of the Christ event must be shown to be dependent on the *specifically Pauline* interpretation of that same event in order to establish a direct relation" (274). Not only is the pre-Pauline material so uncertain and so fragmentary that one cannot be sure that others besides Paul did not see the links between who Jesus was, the salvation experienced through his death, and its significance for Christian believers, but Nielsen seems to ignore the fact that different people can have very similar insights at roughly the same time: the almost simultaneous development of the theory of evolution by Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace is an obvious example. Paul was not the only early Christian to grapple with the questions "Why did Christ die?" and "What do his death and resurrection mean for the believer?"

In the final essay (295–310), Fim Damgaard considers Mark's portrayal of Peter and suggests that there is a striking similarity between Mark's emphasis on Peter's failings and Paul's focus on his own. He argues that "Mark focused especially on Peter's failings because he wanted to create a paradigmatic apostolic portrayal comparable to Paul's self-portrayal" (302). In his references to himself in Galatians and 1 Corinthians, Paul presents a "biography of reversal" – a theme developed in deutero-Pauline literature and in Acts. Mark, it is suggested, "created his portrayal of Peter in imitation of Paul's biography of reversal" (305). But why would he do this? Was Paul so influential in the early Church that Peter had to be shown to be like him? This seems unlikely. And why should it have been necessary? Were there not traditions about Peter's failures in existence? If not, Mark might have been seen as maligning his character! Nor was Paul unusual in experiencing a dramatic change in life-style. Countless early Christians must have experienced the "reversal" that came through repentance and conversion, and – assuming that the traditions about him *are* true – Peter himself was an obvious model. Damgaard suggests that Mark's portrayal of Peter was a "literary device," but maybe what he was doing was simply telling the story as it had come down to him.

Wide-ranging as the topics in this volume are, they are in fact only part of the picture. A companion volume, *Paul and Mark* (BNZW 198), carries the exploration even further afield. But the present volume alone demonstrates that the basic question – "Did Mark know Paul?" – can never be answered with certainty. Volkmar *may* have been right in saying that he did – even though his suggestion about the way he did so is implausible. Verner was certainly wrong to believe that one could prove that he did not: there can be no proof for or against – and the fact that those who tackle that question in this volume are evenly divided in their answers demonstrates this. But ultimately that does not matter. Anne Vig Skoven expressed it well when she wrote: "Maybe the task is not so much to refute Werner by *proving* that Mark constitutes *the* Pauline gospel, but to ask, more modestly, whether Paul can shed light on certain Markan phenomena which keep puzzling New Testament exegetes" (26). It is the light which the essays

gathered here throw on *that* question which makes this a valuable contribution to the ongoing debate about the relationship between these two great early theologians. As for my own never-completed research into the relationship between Paul's use of Adam typology and the Son of man traditions in the Gospels, it is gratifying to find that both the writers who address this problem here agree that its origins lie in pre-Pauline, pre-Markan, tradition.