

Adam WINN, *Reading Mark's Christology under Caesar. Jesus the Messiah and Roman Imperial Ideology*. Downers Grove IL, Inter Varsity Press, 2018, 15,2 × 22,8 cm, 263 p., ISBN 978-0-8308-5211-6

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commencements proposé comme thème unificateur. Bien que ce ne soit pas nécessairement requis par le genre *mélanges*, Aurélie Caldwell nous offre en outre le bonheur d'entrer en dialogue avec la pensée et les écrits du jubilaire, Michel Gourgues, ce qui rend sa contribution d'autant plus éclairante et à propos dans ce recueil. Il demeure que le binôme fins/commencements est diversement interprété par les contributeurs et contributrices: fin/début d'un livre biblique, d'une péricope, d'une tradition, du mouvement chrétien, du temps... de sorte que la cohésion de l'ensemble fait défaut un tant soit peu, si l'on fait abstraction de l'intention de fêter un collègue bien aimé de tous. À ce sujet, l'absence de présentation du thème et du titre choisis, soit dans l'avant-propos, soit dans une introduction qui eût été la bienvenue, laisse perplexe. Les quelques lignes qui sont consacrées à décrire le projet en quatrième de couverture ne suffisent pas à bien articuler le thème. Déjà il est question de « fins » et de « commencements » au pluriel, puis on ajoute à cela un degré supplémentaire de confusion avec « renvois et interactions ». Les titres des parties ne sont pas d'un grand secours et leur logique nous échappe: il semblerait y avoir un fil chronologique des traditions et pourtant un texte tiré du corpus paulinien est présent dans chaque section. Peut-être qu'un autre regroupement des contributions eût été plus transparent? Par exemple, les textes de Lavoie, Zumstein et Berder pourraient explorer ensemble la notion même de temps, tandis que ceux de Focant, Marguerat et Michaud analyseraient le début des récits, ou encore ceux de Buttica, Reynier et Létourneau traiteraient des finales... en tout cas, au moins un fil conducteur ou un guide rehausseraient l'expérience de lecture de l'ensemble, au-delà de l'apport incontesté des contributions individuelles. Sans compter qu'une meilleure organisation du livre ferait encore plus honneur à la clarté et à l'ordre légendaires des exposés de Michel Gourgues! En dépit de ce flou artistique, l'ouvrage se présente comme un recueil de solides études exégétiques qu'il m'a été donné de pouvoir saisir et refléter ici, moi aussi, en l'honneur de ce maître que j'estime.

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Adam WINN, **Reading Mark's Christology under Caesar. Jesus the Messiah and Roman Imperial Ideology.** Downers Grove IL, Inter Varsity Press, 2018, 15,2 × 22,8 cm, 263 p., ISBN 978-0-8308-5211-6.

The present book is a parting-of-the-ways between a professor and his pupil. Adam Winn, who wrote his doctoral dissertation at Fuller Theological Seminary, published as *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel. An Early Christian Response to Roman Imperial Propaganda* (WUNT/2, 245; Mohr Siebeck, 2008), decided to separate from R. Grundy who was the Director of his PhD: "Gundry's work is important [... However] I can no longer follow Gundry as far as I did in my previous work, but I do remain influenced by his important contributions to the understanding of Mark's Christology."

In *Reading Mark's Christology under Caesar. Jesus the Messiah and Roman Imperial Ideology*, Winn makes a Markan Christology in trying to intertwine a "nar-

ratival” presentation of Mark’s Gospel (from now MkG) and its historical setting. In the *Introduction* (pp. 1-27), Winn presents a *Status Quaestionis* of Mark’s Christology using the category of ‘pieces’ to make reference to various different and opposing Christological threads found in Mark’s Gospel. Winn points out four sets of pieces (the Christological titles’s set, the set of power pieces, the set of suffering pieces and the Markan secrecy motif) and shows us how these pieces have been assembled from Form Criticism up to Narrative Criticism by Markan scholars. In the last part of the introduction, the author offers his proposal to sew up the Christological pieces with what he calls a historical-narrative method (p. 24).

After presenting his purpose and plan, Winn reconstructs Mark’s historical setting in Chapter I (*Reconstructing Mark’s Historical Setting*, pp. 29-49) through the study of the date and provenance of MkG. In the first part of this chapter (pp. 29-39), Winn proposes the traditional Roman provenance of MkG after the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem (post-70). Afterwards, the author identifies an anti-temple Markan motif (Mk 11-13) used as a tool to disarm Flavian propaganda which was made after the destruction of the Temple. In the second part of chapter I (pp. 39-49) a reconstruction is offered of the historical context in Rome in the years immediately after Rome’s victory over Jerusalem, commenting above all on the impact of the new Flavian dynasty and its propaganda about Rome and particularly on the Christians living in Rome.

Once the historical setting has been settled, we move on to Chapter II (*Mark’s Christological Titles*, pp. 51-68) to read the Markan narrative from a particular point of view: the Christological titles. From the beginning of the book, and especially in this chapter, are found two of Winn’s axioms. On the one hand, Mark’s Christology cannot be reduced to an assessment of MkG’s use of titles because it is a narrative Christology; and on the other hand, the meaning and the significance of Mark’s Christological titles must consider the historical understanding of the first-century readers. Based on what it has just been said, each Markan Christological title (Christ/Messiah, Son of God, Son of Man, Son of David and Lord) is presented; the author proposes how the first-century readers could have understood each title and then he narrows the possible meanings in light of Mark’s text. In the last page of the chapter, Winn states what the Markan Jesus’s Identity is (*each title conveys Jesus’s identity as God’s final eschatological agent and ruler*, p. 68) and concludes that just two of all the titles might be understood in the Roman imperial context of Flavian propaganda: Messiah and Son of God.

From Chapter III to Chapter VII Winn’s assessment of Mark’s Christology with his historical-narrative method is applied. Each chapter is structured in two parts. Firstly, the Markan narrative itself is addressed and then, secondly, is interpreted from the perspective of post-70 Roman Christians living under the shadow of Flavian propaganda.

In Chapter III (*The Powerful Jesus of Mark 1-8*, pp. 69-88), the Galilean ministry is scrutinized to bring to light one of two MkG’s Christological poles: the powerful Jesus. Winn pursues an attentive reading of Mark 1:1 and shows that Mark sets here the agenda for the entire Gospel providing the reader the very lens for reading the narrative. Next, he continues reading MkG arguing that Jesus is identified as God’s appointed eschatological ruler through the scene between John the Baptist and Jesus.

And then, the author dives into the Galilean ministry narrative where Jesus is presented as a powerful healer and exorcist, the one who has also power over nature and the one who offers supernatural provision of food. In the last part of Chapter III, the author reads each of the Markan Jesus's features against Roman political ideology, concluding that Mark wants to identify Jesus as the true Christ and true Son of God against the propagandistic claims of Vespasian.

Chapter IV (*The Suffering Jesus of Mark 8:22-10:52*, pp. 89-117) is similarly structured: a narrative analysis followed by a historical reading. According to Winn, in this Mark's central section, the other MkG's Christological pole, the suffering Jesus, begins to take shape and will finally end in the Passion Narrative. Winn's attention in this chapter shifts between the study of the imperial Roman *Recusatio* strategy and its application to Mk 10:42-45 which is considered as the crucial bridge between the two poles of Mark Christology (the powerful Jesus and the suffering Jesus).

A reader would expect to cross the bridge to go straightway toward the study of the Jesus's ministry in Jerusalem and the Passion Narrative. However, Winn brings the flow of the argumentation to a halt in Chapter V (*A Roman Reading of Mark's so-called Secrecy Motif*, pp. 119-130) in which the author deals with one of the main Markan Christological pieces (secrecy motif) making a Roman interpretation of it. To do so, he follows the work of David F. Watson *Honor among Christians: The Cultural Key to the Messianic Secret* where the Messianic Secret is read through the lens of the first-century honor-shame value system. According to Winn, Watson's interpretation must be completed with the Roman political ideology (or strategy) of the *Recusatio*. As a result, the traditional interpretation of the Markan secrecy based on the concealment of Jesus's identity, is no longer sustainable and it should be understood in terms of resisting honor. Such interpretation is coherent with the reconstructions of Mark's historical setting.

Winn's narrative reading of the whole MkG as response to Flavian Propaganda turns in the last 30 pages of the book to consider Mk 11-16. In Chapter VI (*Jesus and the Temple*, pp. 131-150), the author first presents narratologically the development of the anti-temple motif in Mk 11:1-13:2 and then he reads the motif under the Roman imperial ideology, specifically, Flavian Propaganda in the last three pages of the chapter. This imperial reading allows Winn to confirm his post-70 date of MkG, to dismantle the Flavian Propaganda (the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple is not thanks to the great power of Rome but rather to the judgment of God over the corrupt Temple) and, finally, to propose a replacement of the destroyed Temple with a new one (Mark's reading community).

Finally, Chapter VII (*Jesus in Mark's Passion Narrative*, pp.151-162) deals with Jesus's suffering. Unlike his previous chapters, Winn does not make a commentary of a particular episode relevant to his purposes, but rather sketches a general theological picture of the Passion Narrative correcting his previous proposal of interpretation (p. 152). Winn's main argument to evince the fitting together of Mark's Christological pieces is the use of Psalm 22 as a prophetic fulfillment of the suffering righteous one and also as Jesus's future vindication by God through the Resurrection. Confirming this interpretation, Winn reads the two supernatural signs at Jesus's death (the darkness at the sixth hour and the tearing temple veil) and the Crucifixion as indications of being before a figure of great importance and power. Thus Mark is

able to continue to hold together both Jesus's greatness and his shameful suffering and death. In the last part of this chapter, the author presents a couple of pages treating the main purpose of this book: the reading of Jesus' passion as a Roman triumph. Jesus's death is an act of extreme benefaction for his people and embodies the political ideals of Mark's readers.

Winn's book comes to an end with a good conclusion (pp. 163-164) and with an Appendix (*Yahweh Christology in Mark's Gospel*, pp.165-168) which tries to be like a 'justification' for not going into the debate about low or high Christology.

*Some critical observations about the content:*

1) Winn's reconstruction of Mark's historical setting is weak because it falls into the vicious circle of Biblical scholars: he reconstructs the historical setting on the data drawn from MkG itself. Winn proclaims at the very beginning of the book (p. 2) that he wants to propose a new way of assembling the Christological pieces of MkG through the glue of Mark's particular historical context. However, what he does is not a historical study. If the author wants to reconstruct a historical setting as cornerstone of his theory, he should have gone through the study of material evidence which makes plausible a hypothesis. The only material reference in the book is found in footnote 23 on p. 37 which makes reference to an article of 28 pages about the Letter to the Hebrews!

2) I am unable to understand who belonged to the 'Christian Gentiles' of Rome. Are they Jews? Pagans? Jews and Pagans? What it seems is that they should have a Jewish knowledge, namely the God of Israel. If not, Winn's theory falls apart. My question is: Is Dr. Winn convinced that Christians in Rome were Jewish?

3) Would Christians in Rome have made relationship between two representatives of different social levels, I mean, a marginal Jew and the Flavians Emperors?

*Some bibliographical observations:*

1) Unfortunately, there is a lack of knowledge of secondary bibliography which means a poverty of perspectives and opinions from other languages, mainly lack of French and Spanish. The author lists only nine works in German (mainly commentaries) and just one article in French. There are ten pages of bibliography in total!

2) Winn just knows Bultmann when speaking about 'divine man' (pp. 23-24). There was exegesis before Bultmann: Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios. A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus* (1913).

3) It is striking that when Winn is considering the title Son of God (pp. 53-54) in a Greco-Roman context, he does not quote an important 'English' study of recent times: Michael Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World. Divine Sonship in Its Social and Political Context*.

4) I think one important work to be considered in Chapter I (Reconstructing Mark's historical setting) is Willi Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist: Studies on the Redaction History of the Gospel* published in 1956 in German and translated in 1979 into English.

*Conclusion*

When one finishes reading the book a mix of flavors remains in one's mouth.

First, a bitter taste. 1) The book is sometimes repetitive in its presentations. Some of the summaries of the content could be abbreviated. 2) The book is also disproportionate. The greater part of each chapter is spent making the presentation of the topic and then, in the last three or four pages of each chapter, he presents the Roman political reading of one particular scene. The only exception is Chapter IV which, I think, is the most interesting one. 3) Some of Winn's proposals are well presented, but they need to be demonstrated. When you finish the book you are left with a sweet taste in your mouth.

When finishing the book, one is left with a sweet taste in one's mouth: one learns several things through it, it is an easy book to read, the author has good rhetorical abilities to keep the reader interested and one gets some insights for research. Winn's books is neither a waste of time nor of money.

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Matthew E. GORDLEY, **New Testament Christological Hymns: Exploring Texts, Contexts, and Significance**. Downers Grove IL, Inter Varsity Press, 2018, 15,2 × 22,8 cm, 263 p., ISBN 978-0-8308-8002-7.

The book has six chapters devoted to the investigation of Christological hymns in the New Testament. From the first to the second chapters, the author spells out the area of concern of his investigation and explores the background, cultures and traditions of hymnody that might have had an influence on the New Testament hymns. His concern is not to argue for the identification of pre-existing materials in the New Testament hymns, but to recognize hymnic features in some of the passages suspected to be Christological hymns. At the beginning, he notes this challenge: the difficulty of identifying and taking for granted these two distinct issues, i.e. hymnic features in a passage and the identification of pre-existing materials as being linked to the hymnic features.

Matthew Gordley (MG) notes the efforts of scholarship that have challenged the presence of pre-existing formula or materials in the Christological hymns in the New Testament, explaining that the features that have been identified as criteria for detecting pre-existing materials are speculative, hence, the methodology used is problematic. He seems to accept this position even though he is not laudable in his expression, but holds that the presence of these features do "not necessarily lead to the conclusion that these texts were pre-existing materials" (p. 219). These features or criteria include introductory formula, special beginning, contextual dislocations, uniqueness of language, stylistic abnormalities, special beginning, participles and relative clauses, multiple attestations, etc. The New Testament hymns, as presented in the passages where they are found, are sometimes not complete but fragments and references in which only a part seems to be represented.