

Pascal GENIN, *Le testament du tombeau vide. Disparition, enlèvement ou résurrection ? (Donner raison – Théologie, 73)*. Bruxelles-Paris, Éditions jésuites Lessius, 2019, 14,4 × 20,5 cm, 306 p., ISBN 978-2-87299-374-1

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développée ouvre des voies novatrices en démontrant la fécondité de la mise en relation de récits bibliques avec des récits contemporains sur une même thématique.

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Pascal GENIN, **Le testament du tombeau vide. Disparition, enlèvement ou résurrection?** (Donner raison – Théologie, 73). Bruxelles-Paris, Éditions jésuites Lessius, 2019, 14,4 × 20,5 cm, 306 p., ISBN 978-2-87299-374-1.

This tripartite monograph – historical, exegetical and dogmatic – from its three subtitles (disappearance, theft and resurrection), makes evident what is both at stake and defended in it. The author (henceforth, PG), in a general “introduction,” presents his hypothesis and thesis. PG hypothesizes rhetorically, whether it is worth the effort, in the third millennium, to still be preoccupied with the question of the “empty tomb” because of the new interests in the subject (p. 9)? The thesis of his monograph leaves no one in doubt as to the answer he provides to the problematic: “this monograph [...] [treats] essentially the resurrection of Jesus from a historical perspective” (p. 15), with a suggestion that the “exaltation” of Jesus is integral to the resurrection story (p. 96). There is a sub-thesis, though: “The intention of this study is to show the extraordinary originality of Jesus’ resurrection narrative in accordance with the gospels.” (p. 11) There is also a “sub-hypothesis”: “the ignorance of the resurrection in the Old Testament [...] . This hypothesis [of ignorance] guides this study and proposes an interpretative key for reading the resurrection narrative in the New Testament” (p. 91); the hermeneutic “key”, for PG, is that of “rupture” between the two Testaments on the question of the “resurrection” (pp. 91-92, 138).

PG contends the claim of “disappearances” and “theft” of corpses (pp. 148, 150, 151-153) in non-Christian religions vis-à-vis the resurrection saga, and how that impinges on the biblical argument about the meaning of the “empty tomb” (pp. 17-92); then, towards the end of the monograph, he investigates archeological discoveries that confound the denial of the empty tomb claims (pp. 219-287). The question of the “theft” of the corpse of Christ and its relevance for the proof of the resurrection of Christ occupies the exegetical perspective of the monograph (pp. 93-185). The final part of the monograph, the dogmatic perspective, reconstructs the Roman Catholic stand on the “empty tomb” (p. 187-218). With this overview of the architecture of the monograph, let us delve deeper to unravel some of the treasures of the monograph.

After the “introduction,” PG begins his monograph with a historical account in two stages: first, an exposé on the bones of contention on the semantics of the “empty tomb” (p. 17-92) and, second, he articulates a historico-archeological rebuttals to the problematics outlined (pp. 219-287). PG argues that the religions that predated Christianity present reality in a three-fold manner: the world of human beings, the world of the dead and the world of the gods or God (p. 22). The list of the religious phenomena PG explores include Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Canaanite, Jewish, Greek

and Roman (pp. 17-67). *Grosso modo*, people do not pay attention to the differences that exist among these religious beliefs, which accounts for the blurring of the uniqueness that should be accorded to Christianity, he asserts.

According to PG, comparative religious phenomena, not excluding Judeo-Christian proximity, is akin to historical confusion in the differences among world religions because of the fallacy of generalization with which the interpretation of the “empty tomb” is suffused (p. 92). He considers this fact (confusion) and the dawn of modernism and enlightenment hermeneutical turns (pp. 147, 149, 159, 164) as the first problem regarding the debate on the “empty tomb,” besides the intra-biblical one of Matthew’s gospel (pp. 115-116): Christianity viewed from other religious beliefs, rather than being evaluated on her merit. This is where the questions of “disappearance” and “theft/enlèvement,” two of the subtitles to PG’s monograph, become crucial concepts. Since most world religions talk about the immortality of the soul, as well as “disappearance” as the mode of transfer of the immortal soul to the world of the dead (pp. 27-29, 36-37) or in rare cases the world of the gods (pp. 18-19, 21, 22-23, 39-41, 43), the extrapolation is made to interpret the “empty tomb” saga in consonance with the reality immanent in other world religions.

Genin isolates two arguments – immortality of the soul and the descent of souls to the world of the dead – from non-Christian religions to demonstrate how the situation of Jesus, from the reality of the “empty tomb”, is different and unique. He contends that Jesus’ resurrection does not equate either with the pre-Christian “descent to the world of the dead” or “immortality of the soul” because Jesus returns to his body after three days (p. 141); by the same token, he argues, it is not the immortality of the soul that is at issue (p. 21-22, 24, 32-33, 44, 47, 49, 54, 57, etc), but the resurrection because it deals with Jesus being both body and soul again, after his resurrection. At this juncture, PG correlates “disappearance” with “theft/enlèvement,” two subtitles of his monograph, and uses the biblical themes of the “empty tomb” and Jesus’ “appearances” to his disciples and apostles as silver bullets to neutralize them both (pp. 99, 102, 117, 125).

The “appearances” of Jesus, for PG, makes the following arguments: 1) Jesus resurrected from the dead into his former body (pp. 95, 133-134) and continues his existence body and soul (pp. 214, 217); 2) Christian anthropology is different from other anthropological perspectives because of an eventual “resurrection of the body,” in imitation of Christ’s (pp. 211); 3) the tomb of Jesus remains empty because the buried body rejoins the soul that used to inhabit it – resurrection – Jesus’ body was never stolen (pp. 212-213); 4) the historical value of the “empty tomb” precedes the faith and proclamation of the resurrection, and the inability of anyone to point to the cadaver of Jesus in any tomb substantiates the historical factuality of the “empty tomb,” then and now (pp. 215-216); 5) the “empty tomb” grounds the Christian faith on factual history and not on myths and legends (pp. 105-112); and, 6) the resurrection and the empty tomb are inseparable dogmas inscribed in the Creed, partly, as “he and was buried, on the third day he rose again” (p. 147).

The exegetical section of PG’s monograph regroups what exegetes say about the empty tomb, Jesus’ appearances and the meaning of the resurrection: he did no exegesis of his own. His assemblage presents linguistic and hermeneutical arguments. For example, he clearly makes the case that “resurrection,” qualified and signified by

two Greek verbs *anistemi* and *egeirô* are uniquely biblical terms, in contradistinction the Classical Greek term *anabiosis* which means “reanimation”: the difference in terminology or the “invention” of two verbs to qualify the resurrection is already a proof that a similar category was alien in contemporary Greek religion (pp. 94-96).

The historical arguments PG adduces could be grouped into two: chronology and archeology. The dates provided by the authors of the gospels and the *realia* that are dateable in the gospels and Paul situate the gospels’ narratives and Paul’s testimonies in historical and factual time frame. Moreover, the extra-biblical historical (Greek, Jewish, Roman, Christian and pagan historians’) corroborations and debates on the empty tomb, from the first century up until today, further grounds the historical reliability of the empty tomb saga. As regards archeology, PG anchors his arguments on two kinds of scientific research: the locus of the Holy Sepulcher and the Shroud of Turin (pp. 231-187). The fact that archeologists have been able to locate the tomb of Jesus, which still remains empty and established the antiquity of Jesus’ burial cloth/handkerchief – the Shroud of Turin – ground the factuality and historicity of the “death” and “empty tomb” of Jesus, and, by extension, the resurrection of Jesus.

Furthermore, PG argues that philosophers (e.g. Paul Ricœur, “Temps et récit” [p. 163, footnote 51]) and historians (Henri Marrou, “De la connaissance historique” [p. 163, footnote 51]) have demonstrated how wrong enlightenment and modernist presuppositions of history and certainty are. For example, the biblical debates about *formgeschichte*, the quest for the historical Jesus and demythologization are overtaken by new theories of history and archeological discoveries, like the Qumran discoveries shed new lights on hitherto nebulous exegetical topics championed by Albert Schweitzer (p. 162-164), Rudolf Bultmann (p. 165-168) and others, denying the historical factuality of the empty tomb and the reliability of biblical narratives.

In general, PG admits that most of the challenges to the historical truth of the “empty tomb” come from non-Catholic circles, and the defenders of the “empty tomb” cut across Christian denominations and the academia. The initial attempts by pre-Constantine Roman emperors, especially Hadrian (p. 232-240), to obliterate the vestiges of Christian origins in Jerusalem and the locus of the tomb, which was reinforced by Fatimid Hakim’s (October 18, 1009) destruction of the Holy Sepulcher (p. 244-245), are more anti-Christian, rather than an attempt at obliterating just the proofs of the resurrection of Jesus. The concerted attempts to restore, defend and promote pilgrimages to the tomb of Jesus in the Holy Land testify to the importance of the tomb of Jesus in the historicity of Christianity.

The weaknesses of PG’s monograph fall into two broad categories: confusing logic and abdication from engaging with exegetical niceties of the neotestamental *pericopai* that could elucidate the problematic at hand.

1)The disparate presentation of the thesis, sub-thesis, hypothesis, sub-hypothesis and arguments for and against the thesis of the monograph makes a coherent reading difficult. For example, the thesis stated on p. 15 categorically excludes any treatment of “Christian eschatology,” but three pages earlier, the opposite is claimed (p. 12) and argued for (pp. 110-115). Another point of confusion is the irreconcilability between the focus of the thesis on p. 15 and the intent of the sub-thesis on p. 11: the former is “historical,” while the latter is “theologico-exegetical”. Moreover, one fails to see a neat separation between the problems enunciated and solutions provided; on the

contrary, one needs to synthesize the whole monograph in order to regroup his thesis and antithesis. Instances are the rebuttals he adduces against each religious belief he explains – prior to saying what “resurrection” is or is not – and there is no place where he regroups and harmonizes them to make a coherent counter argument (pp. 21-22, 24, 32-33, 44, 47, 49, 54, 57, etc).

2) Had PG been familiar with the book of Michel Gourgues, “*Je le ressusciterai au dernier jour*”: *La singularité de l’espérance chrétienne*, his theological arguments would have been more enriched.

3) One fact remains indubitable: PG’s monograph is a treasure trove for research into the state of the question on the inquiry into the “empty tomb” debates. Also, it provides, at least, two research topics for exegetes: a) a research into the existence of a resurrection formula (p. 135) and, b) the reading of Mark’s resurrection saga *in tandem* with the passion predictions in the whole of Mark’s gospel (p. 110).

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Alexandre FREZZATO, **La résurrection de la chair selon saint Thomas d’Aquin. Identité et continuité de la personne humaine** (Cerf Patrimoines – Studia Friburgensia); préface de Gilles EMERY. Paris, Éditions du Cerf, 2021, 13,7 × 21,7 cm, 270 p., ISBN 978-2-20414-783-5.

Cet ouvrage nous présente la pensée de Thomas d’Aquin sur l’âme et le corps des ressuscités. Dans sa Préface, Gilles Emery, qui semble avoir été le directeur de thèse de Frezzato (voir les Remerciements, tout à la fin du livre), mentionne quelques appuis néotestamentaires et patristiques de la théologie de saint Thomas sur la résurrection. Il nous prévient que la ressource théorique principale d’Alexandre Frezzato vient de l’anthropologie (âme et corps) d’Aristote, utilisée par saint Thomas quoique modifiée d’une façon qui aurait bien surpris le philosophe péripatéticien.

Pour inviter à la lecture, Emery signale les quatre points suivants, qu’on trouvera dans la livre de Frezzato : premièrement, des fondements anthropologiques relevant de l’hylémorphisme ; deuxièmement, les apports d’Aristote et d’Averroès concernant la continuité et l’individuation du croyant ressuscité ; troisièmement, la corporéité de l’être humain ; et quatrièmement, les opérations des corps glorieux.

Dès son Introduction générale, l’auteur reconnaît que son étude se concentre sur la résurrection des justes et laisse pour un travail futur les dimensions ecclésiale et cosmique de la résurrection : « Notre propos se concentre en effet sur des questions liées à *l’identité et la continuité de la personne humaine individuelle entre la vie présente, la mort et la vie ressuscitée* » (p. 21 ; l’italique est de l’auteur, comme dans le cas d’autres citations reproduites dans cette recension).

Son étude se déploie en trois parties. La première considère l’identité « formelle » de la personne ressuscitée tandis que la deuxième porte sur son identité « matérielle ». C’est dire que la première partie considère la nature de l’âme rationnelle dans le composé humain, tandis que la deuxième porte sur l’hylémorphisme aristotélicien et