

traditions do extend into the pre-70 period. That is a small objection to what is otherwise an excellent monograph.

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*Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as  
Eyewitness Testimony*

Richard Bauckham

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SUMMARY

In this volume Richard Bauckham argues for the influence of eyewitnesses as propagators and controllers of the Jesus tradition. He detects in the Gospels specific traits that he believes indicate the presence of eyewitness testimony and argues for a moderate form of the Scandinavian approach regarding the transmission of the Jesus tradition. The volume pays a great deal of attention to eyewitness testimony in relation to the Gospel of John and the impact this has upon questions of authorship as they relate to the Fourth Gospel. In the end, Bauckham advocates that what the Gospels present to us is neither the Jesus of history, nor the Christ of faith, but the 'Jesus of testimony'. This is an important and valuable study that all students of the Gospels should read.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In diesem Band argumentiert Richard Bauckham für den Einfluss von Augenzeugen als Verbreiter und Sammler der Jesustradition. Er entdeckt in den Evangelien bestimmte Züge, die seiner Ansicht nach die Gegenwart von Augenzeugen-Aussagen anzeigen und er argumentiert für eine moderate Form des skandinavischen Ansatzes zur Überlieferung der Jesustradition. Der Band widmet einen Großteil seiner Aufmerksamkeit den Augenzeugen-Aussagen im Johannesevangelium und deren Einfluss auf die Fragen der Autorenschaft des vierten Evangeliums. Schlussendlich vertritt Bauckham die Ansicht, die Evangelien präsentierten uns weder den Jesus der Geschichte noch den Christus des Glaubens, sondern den „Jesus der Zeugenaussagen“. Dies ist eine wichtige und wertvolle Arbeit, die alle Studenten der Evangelien lesen sollten.

RÉSUMÉ

Richard Bauckham défend la thèse d'une influence décisive des témoins oculaires qui ont répandu et contrôlé la tradition concernant Jésus. Il détecte dans les Évangiles des traits spécifiques qui indiquent à son avis qu'on a affaire au témoignage de témoins oculaires et il défend une forme modérée de l'approche scandinave quant à la transmission de la tradition concernant Jésus. Il accorde beaucoup d'attention au témoignage de témoins oculaires en relation avec l'Évangile de Jean et montre quelles en sont les implications pour la question de l'auteur de cet Évangile.

Finalement, Bauckham soutient que les Évangiles ne nous présentent ni le Jésus de l'histoire, ni le Christ de la foi, mais le « Jésus auquel il est rendu témoignage ». C'est là une étude importante et de valeur que tout étudiant des Évangiles devrait lire.

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In the opening chapter Bauckham notes the debates about the relationship between the historical Jesus and the Gospels. While historians may reject the Evangelist's presentation of Jesus as selective and subjective the same can be true of the construction of Jesus made by the historian. The way to circumvent the history vs. theology divide is to understand the Gospels as 'testimony'. In contrast to older former critical approaches that postulated an anonymous oral tradition distant from Jesus as the procrustean bed of the Gospel tradition, Bauckham urges that we take seriously the claim that the Gospels rest on the testimony of eyewitnesses.

In chapter two Bauckham gives his analysis of the fragments from Papias and its elucidates the role of eyewitnesses in the tradition. In the prologue to Papias' *Expositions of the Logia of the Lord* (reminiscent of Lk. 1.1-2), Bauckham proposes that Papias during his life had encountered witnesses to Jesus in Aristion and the elder John. Moreover, the account gives credence to the view that the words and deeds of Jesus were attached to specific named eyewitnesses rather than anonymous communal tradition. Papias' preference for the "living and surviving voice" reflects a school of historiography that emphasized the need to either be an eyewitness of events or have access to eyewitness accounts (e.g. Galen, Polybius, Lucian of Samosata). What is more, the fact that Papias writes when eyewitnesses and their disciples were still living means that he is referring to "oral history" rather than "oral tradition".

There is an examination of the named figures in the Gospel tradition in chapter three. Bauckham believes that many of these persons are named because they were eyewitnesses and thus originators and guarantors of their traditions. Against Bultmann and others, Bauckham points out that the tendency of the tradition was not to add names in order to increase detail, but rather, to subtract them. He cites the example of the women at the cross and tomb, Simon of Cyrene and his sons, and recipients of healings as evidence for this phenomenon. At the end Bauckham also intimates resurrecting the criterion of vividness as an indication of eyewitness testimony. Finally, Bauckham lists the named and unnamed figures in the Gospels in a series of tables.

Chapter 4 engages in a study of Jewish names in Palestine. Building on the work of Tal Ilan, Bauckham looks at the most well attested names from extant Palestinian sources. He notes the popularity of names associated with the Hasmonean dynasty and how people with similar names were differentiated. The named persons in the Gospels largely corresponds with lists of personal names from other Jewish sources and so indicates the



authenticity of personal names in the Gospels.

Discussion of the twelve is brought up in chapter 5 and there Bauckham argues the twelve were the 'authoritative transmitters of the sayings of Jesus and authoritative eyewitnesses of the events of Jesus' history' (96). He does not find the different names in the lists insurmountable and argues for the identification of Thaddaeus and Judas of James, but rejects the identification of Levi with Matthew. Attention is also paid to the various epithets of the apostles which were designed to distinguish members of the twelve from each other.

In chapter six, Bauckham argues that the list of the Twelve in the Synoptics functions to nominate the list of official eyewitnesses who formulated and promulgated the Jesus tradition. He detects a literary device called eyewitness *inclusio* in Mark, Luke and John and this is analogous to other biographical works by Lucian and Porphry which employ a similar device.

Bauckham then turns to discussion of the Petrine perspective of the Gospel of Mark (chapter seven), where he argues that in addition to the *inclusio* of eyewitness testimony there is also evidence that the narrative is drawn from Peter's perspective. To that end he argues that the plural-to-singular narrative device where plural verbs without an explicit subject is used to describe the movements of Jesus and the disciples followed by a singular verb or pronoun that refers to Jesus alone. Also, the point-of-view or focalization introduces a Petrine perspective into the story. Peter is not merely a representative of the disciples and a foil for their failure, but his teaching or testimony stands behind the Marcan text.

In chapter eight Bauckham, building on the work of Gerd Theissen, argues that many of the anonymous witnesses in Mark's Gospel are part of a strategy of 'protective anonymity'. Mark's tradition stems from a Jerusalem source that sought to keep certain names anonymous (e.g. the women who anointed Jesus, the disciple who struck the High Priest's servant) in order to protect their identity.

The focus of chapter nine is Papias' remarks about Mark and Matthew. Bauckham attempts to defend the thesis of a Petrine origin for Mark. Mark translated the chreia of Peter and the lack of 'order' that Papias found in Mark's Gospel was a lack of aesthetic arrangement in comparison to Matthew and John.

In chapter ten Bauckham evaluates different proposals to the transmission of the oral tradition beneath the Gospels. This includes a devastating critique of form criticism, a sympathetic examination of the Scandinavian approach, and some brief remarks on Kenneth Bailey's mediating view on 'informal controlled oral tradition'. Despite the popularity of the latter model with James Dunn and N.T. Wright, Bauckham notes that Bailey's model still fails to take into adequate account the existence of eyewitnesses as sources and authenticators of the tradition.

Chapter eleven concerns the transmission of Jesus traditions. Bauckham looks for signs of the transmission

process in the Pauline letters and argues that it was essentially an isolated tradition which was not shaped, by and large, by community needs or a community setting. The tradition was controlled through memorization which was a standard feature of Jewish and Hellenistic education. The use of writing materials to preserve and pass on the tradition cannot be discounted either.

The subject of anonymous tradition or eyewitness testimony is taken up in chapter twelve and Bauckham argues that nowhere in the Gospels are stories attributed to a community but feature around named individuals. In his understanding, the Jesus tradition is largely the product of the memory of individuals passed on to a community rather than a feature of communal memory. The Gospels themselves were composed to maintain the accessibility of eyewitness testimony beyond the lifetime of the original eyewitnesses. Chapter thirteen is very much an extension of this section by looking at concepts of memory in psychology. Bauckham notes the general reliability of recollective memory and how it parallels the Gospels in many instances by the type and detail of items recalled.

Chapters fourteen to seventeen examine eyewitness testimony as it relates to the Gospel of John. Bauckham argues for the integrity of John 21 which in his view is not an epilogue added later. This is followed by a substantive argument that the 'we' of Jn 21:24 is the 'we of authoritative testimony'. He refutes the charge that the Beloved Disciple is exclusively a narrative, rhetorical, or theological construct embodying the witness motif of the Fourth Gospel. Bauckham discusses the testimony of Papias and the Muratorian canon that the Fourth Gospel was written by John the Elder and not John son of Zebedean.

In the final chapter, Bauckham presents the 'Jesus of Testimony'. He then sets out to analyze the epistemological, historical, and theological significance of testimony as it relates to history and Christian theology. This is an erudite and excellent treatment of the role of eyewitnesses in shaping the Jesus tradition. If Bauckham is right (and in most cases I would have to say 'yes') then the whole form critical enterprise can be relegated to the 'defunct' category. In some cases, I think Bauckham's points need to be adjusted or contested. For example, concerning the control and dissemination of the Jesus tradition, I think eyewitnesses and Christian communities both played a role and one should not over-emphasize the importance of community and eyewitnesses in shaping and preserving the tradition. Bauckham's reference to 'protective anonymity' sounds a little like a Christian form of the witness protection program which I have reservations about. While vividness in description might be consistent with eyewitness testimony, vividness can also be apparent in purely fictional works. These are minor objections, however, on the whole the work is brilliant.

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