

ties and Jewish attitudes to Roman rule, and on early Jewish soteriology.

The chapter 'The communities around Paul: the *ekklesiai*' is devoted to the particular challenge of Paul of creating holy communities among the nations to whom he was sent. The editors provide parallels for various matters of holiness and impurity, (sexual) impurity among the nations, cases of sexual immorality in the churches, the Roman concern for social order and the challenges of community (giving up the past, social and purity-related tensions at the table, pleas for unity as one body).

A final chapter is devoted to Paul's legacy in apocryphal and pseudepigraphic sources. It covers Paul as the writer of letters (the *Letter to the Laodiceans*; 'Third Corinthians' in the *Acts of Paul*; Paul's correspondence with Seneca), Paul as philosopher and theologian, as an ascetic and as a compelling preacher and wonder-worker. Paul has also been seen as the opponent of the true faith, for example in Ebionite sources and the Clementine Recognitions. The last two sections gather sources on Paul the martyr and on the sword as the apostle's emblem in Christian iconography.

The editors provide succinct introductions to the texts and questions for reflection at the end in order to prompt the readers to see possible similarities and differences between Paul's letters and the roughly contemporaneous texts (7). All photographs are black and white, some are of poor quality. The volume closes with indexes of subjects, references to Scripture and references to other ancient sources. On several occasions, the differences between the Paul of the letters and the presentation of Paul in the Book of Acts appear exaggerated, compare S. E. Porter, *The Paul of Acts*, WUNT 115 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999).

Elliott and Reasoner have put together an excellent, handy resource for the study of Paul's life, letters and theology. They do not argue for a particular view of Paul, but have gathered 'documents and images from his world(s) that bear comparison with one or another aspect of his thought and practice' (6). This book is a highly commendable textbook for undergraduate and postgraduate courses on Paul, a practical reference tool and collection of sources for scholars and a helpful exegetical tool for interpreting Pauline literature. Its many illustrations from the ancient world can be used as illustrations in preaching from Paul's letters.

Christoph Stenschke
Wiedenest, Bergneustadt, Germany

Understanding the Social World of the New Testament

Dietmar Neufeld & Richard E. DeMaris (eds.)

London, New York: Routledge, 2010; 285 pp; pb.;
ISBN 978-0-415-77582-3; £20

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das Werk bringt seinen Lesern den kulturellen Kontext nahe, in dem das Neue Testament entstanden ist. Die Autoren sind davon überzeugt, dass die moderne Welt sich in vielem von der antiken Welt unterscheidet. Um diese Lücke zu schließen, stützen sie sich auf Paradigmen, die der kulturellen Anthropologie und Ethnographie entlehnt sind. Derartige Modelle werden verwendet, um uns zu einem besseren Verständnis von Wertesystemen zu verhelfen wie Identität, Familie und Verwandtschaft, geschlechtsspezifische Fragen, Reinheit, landschaftliche Gestaltung und Raumverständnis. Das Buch legt ebenfalls dar, wie das Neue Testament seine Umwelt herausfordert. Es stellt einen wichtigen Beitrag dar, allerdings sollten seine Voraussetzungen nicht unkritisch hingenommen werden; es bedarf der Ergänzung durch traditionelle Einführungen.

SUMMARY

This book introduces readers to the culture in which the NT was written. The contributors are convinced that the modern world differs much from the ancient world and they rely on models from cultural anthropology and ethnographical studies to bridge the gap. Such models are used to help us understand value systems such as identity, kinship, gender issues, purity, landscape and spatiality. The book also shows how the NT challenges its world. This is an important book but its presuppositions should not go unchallenged and it should be supplemented by traditional introductions.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage vise à présenter le monde culturel dans lequel le Nouveau Testament a vu le jour. Les divers auteurs tiennent pour acquis que le monde moderne est très différent du monde d'alors et ils tirent parti de modèles utilisés dans les études d'anthropologie culturelle et d'ethnographie pour établir des ponts entre les deux. Ces modèles sont mis en œuvre pour aider à comprendre les systèmes de valeurs, et notamment les conceptions entretenues sur l'identité, les liens de parenté, les rapports entre hommes et femmes, la pureté, la territorialité et l'organisation de l'espace. Ils tentent aussi de montrer en quoi le Nouveau Testament est critique de la société. C'est un ouvrage important, mais les présupposés des auteurs ne devraient pas être acceptés sans évaluation critique et l'ouvrage ne remplace pas les introductions plus traditionnelles.

* * * *

This book serves as a guide to readers unfamiliar with the world of ancient Mediterranean culture. Its essays

set out to develop interpretive models for understanding such values as collectivism, kinship, memory, eth-

nicity, and honor, and to demonstrate how to apply these models to the New Testament texts. (front-page)

To clarify the cultural values of the world in which the NT and ancient Christianity emerged, the book introduces the ancient Mediterranean's value system with the help of interpretive models developed by the social sciences. Most authors come from the United States, others from South Africa, Norway, England and Finland. Each essay closes with suggestions for further reading. All contributors are convinced that the modern world is very different from the ancient world and rely on models from cultural anthropology and ethnographical studies to bridge the gap.

The introduction contains an instructive case study of Acts 6-7, combined with brief introductions to the following essays. The essays are meant to be read jointly as their topics are inextricably interwoven so that they work together as a whole to illuminate the New Testament.

Part one addresses issues of identity: B.J. Malina on collectivism (individualists and collectivists, examples of reading texts with 'collectivistic lenses'); M.Y. MacDonald on kinship and family (New Testament household codes and the classical model of family organization, marriage, slaves and masters, parents and children); C. Osiek, J. Pouya on constructions of gender ('Questions about sexuality are always socially controversial.... we need to remember that they felt, thought, and spoke out of their own social context with its presuppositions and prejudices, and that we do the same', 55); A. Kirk on memory theory as applied to the Gospel Tradition (the nature of human memory, memory as symbolic representation, preservation of traditions and memory, Paul and the gospels as memory sites, Luke 10:38-42); D.C. Duling, 'Ethnicity and Paul's Letter to the Romans' (the language and theory of ethnicity, ethnic features in Paul's context such as kinship, myths of common ancestry, homeland, customs, language, shared historical memories, religion, phenotypical features and the significance of names, examples of 'ethnic reasoning' in Paul's early letters, ethnicity in Romans) and H. Moxnes on 'Landscape and Spatiality: Placing Jesus' (landscape and common identity, landscape and memory, Luke's landscape of Jesus, the moral landscape of village and wilderness, Jesus in the spatial centre of Luke's Gospel).

Part two treats patterns of interaction and social engagement: R.L. Rohrbaugh on honour (concern for both ascribed and acquired honour; behaviour based on the honour ranking of the participants; the honour of Jesus); P.F. Craffert on visions, spirit possession and sky journeys (defining altered states of consciousness and their constituting components; their significance for understanding the New Testament; reassigning biblical phenomena as human phenomena); J.J. Pilch on healing as political activity, Jesus' healing activity as treason, the power Jesus wielded; E.C. Stewart on social stratification and patronage (characteristics of patrons and clients, patronage systems, New Testament examples;

God understood as a patron, Jesus as a broker for God's benefaction in the synoptic gospels); A. Batten on brokerage (brokers, divine brokers as mediators of goods and services between believers and the heavenly realm, of which God and eventually Jesus, were the ultimate patrons, Jesus and other brokers in the New Testament, Paul and brokerage); P. Oakes on urban structures and patronage in Corinth (a patronage model of first-century urban layout and various types of city, Corinthian Christians and a patronage model of urban structure); D.A. Fiensy on economy and the NT (ancient economy as agrarian, aristocratic and as a peasant society; lower Galilee; Jesus did not criticise the system so much as the dominant partners of the system: the aristocrats); R.H. Williams on purity, anomalies and abominations (purity and impurity, social and physical bodies, Israelite and Judean purity rules, Mark 7:1-22) and R. Uro, 'Ritual and Christian Origins'. The volume closes with a detailed glossary, a bibliography and indexes.

This collection certainly achieves its aim and offers fresh perspectives for students and scholars alike. In particular, where the New Testament evidence or evidence from the ancient world is scant, it can be helpful to draw on some social-scientific models to help us fill the gaps and to appreciate better the little evidence that we do have. The essays show how the New Testament is moored in the values of the ancient Mediterranean world but they also demonstrate to what degree it challenges these values and poses clear alternatives to them. The latter issue could have been made clearer in some contributions.

Any assessment will depend on the extent to which readers share the presuppositions of the authors. Some would argue that the present volume should be supplemented with a more traditional survey of the New Testament world, drawing more on ancient literary or material sources and serious reading of representative primary sources, in particular early Jewish sources, as well as material remains. Given that this volume is aimed at students, the presuppositions of the approach employed here should have been argued in more detail and defended against valid criticism: why and how may we employ ethnographical studies of current, non-western, traditional cultures to understand the ancient Mediterranean world? In addition, this approach should be set in the larger perspectives of contemporary approaches to the scholarly study of the New Testament, in particular to the various forms of historical criticism which are also employed in this volume. Both points would deserve separate treatment.

*Christoph Stenschke
Wiedenest, Bergneustadt, Germany*