

realmente il momento di raccontare nei *natalicia* degli anni seguenti, cioè nei *carmm.* 15, 16, e 18, "l'epopea"⁵⁰ agiografica e taumaturgica di Felice, il suo martire e *patronus*.

Ma nello stesso tempo non possiamo ignorare che, nel comporre i *carmm.* 12-14, che in misura diversa ne sono la premessa dottrinale e celebrativa, Paolino s'è rifatto in maniera abbastanza allusiva all'*Ordo urbium illustrium*, che egli ripropone a più riprese in questi suoi scritti, conferendogli sempre una finalità celebrativa ed un taglio apertamente cristiano.⁵¹

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Book Reviews

Larry W. Hurtado

Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity

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Pp. xxii + 746.

Larry Hurtado's big new book, *Lord Jesus Christ*, takes as its prototype and anti-type Wilhelm Bousset's 1913 classic, *Kyrios Christos* (1-26). Hurtado promises to concentrate not on texts or on doctrines so much as on early Christian practices, specifically on those that attest to "devotion to Jesus." In so doing, he hopes to demonstrate the falseness of Bousset's view that elevated Christological claims measure the penetration of non-Jewish, specifically pagan Hellenistic ideas, into early Christian proclamation. On the contrary, urges Hurtado, devotion to Jesus as a very elevated figure traces back to the very earliest post-resurrection community in Jerusalem. Thus, it represents a spectacular mutation of Jewish monotheism ("Christian binitarianism"), but not a deviation from it; on this issue Paul and the earliest community were joined. And this tradition was most valued and best preserved by those streams of the Christian movement that we can now identify as proto-Orthodox.

To understand how Hurtado gets where he goes with his presentation of second-century Christianity (ch. 9, "Radical Diversity," and ch. 10, "Proto-Orthodox Devotion"), we need to grasp what he establishes in his preceding 518 pages. Hurtado begins with Jewish monotheism. Since ancient Jews, as "scrupulous" monotheists (his term), avoided worshipping any divine figures other than God, the earliest Christians (scrupulous Jewish monotheists themselves) by praying to and calling upon Jesus together with God embarked upon worship practices that were strikingly innovative. Hence Hurtado's "binitarian" coinage for this liturgical "novum": "The incorporation of Christ into the devotional pattern of early Christian groups has no real analogy in the Jewish tradition of the period" (31). Conclusion: these groups thereby claimed a unique and uniquely elevated status for Jesus extremely early on, well before anyone even thought of taking the good news to the Diaspora. Hurtado's definition of Jewish monotheism thus enables him to knock away one of the pillars of Bousset's argument. What chance of Gentile Hellenistic influences, if these practices (and, implicitly, Christological claims) originated in Judea in the very first months and years of the movement?

From this the rest falls into place. The early elevation of Jesus did not mean

50. Il termine, molto efficace, è usato da Luongo, *Specchio dell'agiografo*, 69. Sull'unità tematica dei tre carmi, cf. il recente lavoro di Margit Kampner, "Zur Einheit von Paulinus Nolanus, *carmen* 18*," *Wiener Studien* 116 (2003): 191-202.

51. Dello stretto legame spirituale stabilitosi tra Roma e Nola con l'attribuzione a quest'ultima dei *tituli secundus*, Paolino non avrebbe fatto alcun cenno nel *carm.* 26, in cui la "responsabilità" della difesa di Nola da un eventuale attacco dei barbari è da lui affidata interamente alla protezione di Felice, il santo patrono della città; cf. G. Guttilla, "S. Paolino e i barbari nei *Natalicia*," *Koineia* 13 (1989): 5-29; e idem, "Spunti di 'teologia politica' nei carmi di Paolino di Nola," *Impegno e Didagogo* 13 (1998-2000): 291-322, e in particolare 302-15. Al contrario esso sarebbe stato invece ricordato come qualcosa ancora operante nel *carm.* 21.4-12.

that these earliest Christians denied his full humanity. On the contrary, Pauline vocabulary and the fact that the earliest narratives of Jesus present him as an historical character point in the opposite direction: though Jesus was extremely, uniquely divine, he was also fully human. These texts' insistence on Jesus' Davidic lineage makes the same point. And while the question of Gentile members' status was initially snarled on the issue of Torah-observance, no one in the earliest movement questioned that their proclamation was in a straightforward way congruent with the essential message of the Jewish scriptures.

By the time we reach chapter 9 and Hurtado's discussion of "Radical Diversity," his categories are well established. Earliest Christianity was monotheist, incarnational, and congruent with rather than contrasting to Jewish scriptures. (His reference to these scriptures throughout as the "Old Testament" is confused and confusing because neither the category nor the concept "New Testament" was conceived until the mid-second century and then, as we shall see, by a "deviant.") Valentinus and Marcion, we are thus unsurprised to learn, represent "major innovations and rival interpretations . . . over against the comparatively more traditional preferences that marked proto-orthodox circles" (519).

Valentinians with their graduated pleromas and superfluity of divine figures were not as "serious" as their proto-orthodox counterparts about maintaining or protecting monotheism (529 and elsewhere). They "downplayed" the Old Testament and its narratives (530), they emphasized redemption from bodily existence as the index of salvation (47), and their Christology was docetic. This Docetism in turn accounts for their disinclination to be martyred (unlike the proto-orthodox 619–625). Marcion, like Valentinus, also deviated from proto-orthodoxy and was on that account expelled from the Roman church (549), setting up his own churches instead. He composed his New Testament canon from a larger body of available texts (553)—another deviation, since the fourfold Gospel was a norm already widespread ("catholic") and traditional ("apostolic," 578–88). In rejecting the Old Testament as a Christian text, Marcion indulged in "literalistic" interpretations that were in essence Jewish (555).

It will not surprise the readers of this journal to learn that of the three theologians typically compared for the mid-second century—Valentinus, Marcion, and Justin—only Justin really got things right. Justin's Christianity, proto-Orthodoxy, was "the dominant, mainstream version of Christianity at the time" (561; on Justin, see further 640–48). Hurtado ends with a short epilogue ("Thereafter," 649–53), wherein he nods briefly toward Irenaeus and Tertullian. This stopping-off place seems appropriate. Since Hurtado's preceding six hundred-some pages renders these third-century fathers' intra-Christian polemic as a description of first- and second-century historical reality, to have reviewed their work in any detail would have repeated—utterly needlessly—both his and their understanding of "true Christianity." In fact, Irenaeus' thumb-nail rule of faith in *adversus Haereses* 1.2–3 pretty much sums up the salient points of Hurtado's reconstruction.

A book of this weight and importance deserves a review essay. Constrained by

space as I am here, I shall have to offer instead some staccato observations. (1) "Scrupulous Jewish monotheism," as Hurtado envisages it, did not exist in antiquity. Ancient monotheism is about the imagined architecture of the numinous, not (certainly) its absolute population. The author knows this, but when he turns to describing ancient Christologies or later heretics, he seems to forget. For Valentinus and Marcion a lower god created the material universe (which is what lower gods in these systems do); this *kosmocrator*, they each said, was Jesus' opponent, the god of the Jews. For Justin also, a lower god created the material universe. (Justin has Trypho forthrightly refer to this entity as *heteros theos*: not "God," as a binitarian paraphrase might have it but "another god," *Dial.* 56.) The god through whom all things were made, says Justin, was the pre-incarnate Jesus; were Jews not such bad philosophers, they would recognize this *heteros theos* as the lead personality described in their scriptures (as the psalmist and prophets, he urges, had clearly done). These three contending Gentile Christians thus shared exactly the same theology; it was their mythologies that differed. In brief, "monotheism" in this period means "one High God on top," with other divine personalities ranged throughout the invisible and visible universe. Jews, Christians of all sorts, and many types of pagans were all in this sense—that is, the ancient sense—"monotheists." (See esp. the essays and material collected in *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, ed. P. Athanassiadi and M. Frede [Oxford 1999].)

(2) Similarly, Hurtado defines "genuinely monotheistic belief" as "denial of the efficacy or reality of any other deity" (30). There go all ancient monotheists, Jewish and otherwise. Putting aside all the Jewish inscriptions that mention and thus acknowledge other gods, we have the example of Paul himself. Lesser divinities tried to mess up the mission ("the god of this cosmos," 2 Cor 4.4). The divinities formerly worshiped by his Gentiles in Galatia are not gods by nature but *stoicheia*, mere cosmic light-weights unworthy of fear or worship (Gal 4.8–9. Note that Paul denies only their status, not their existence). "Indeed there are many gods and many lords," but his Gentiles should worship only the god of Israel through his son (1 Cor 8.5–6). These lower cosmic divinities will acknowledge the god of Israel themselves once Christ returns (1 Cor 15:24–27. Note, too, all the bending knees "in heaven and on earth and under the earth," Phil 2.10). Paul fails Hurtado's definition of a monotheist. Since Paul was a first-century Jew, this does not surprise me, but given the use that Hurtado makes of Paul otherwise, it should surprise him.

(3) In showcasing his construction of the sudden and early "explosion" of cultic practices (prayer, exclamation, exorcism in Jesus' name) developed by "scrupulously monotheistic Jews" around the figure of Jesus, Hurtado repeatedly claims that "there is simply no parallel for this in any other group in this period in the Jewish tradition" (143; cf. 31 cited *supra*, and frequently elsewhere). He is right, but that is because we have so little idea about ancient Jewish liturgical practices outside of the Temple. What happened in synagogues other than reading from the Law? Prayer? Probably, given that places for Jewish gatherings are referred to as *proseuchē*. But we have no clear idea of how Jews did what in their gatherings. What kind of synagogue liturgies marked the manumission

ceremonies whose commemorative inscriptions end by invoking the lower gods of pagan pantheons? What kind of acts of obedience did the (rabbinic?) adept perform when, touring the heavens, he bowed down before the Sun and called him "Lord" (*Kuriō, Sefer haRazim* 4.61–63)? How, exactly, did Jewish exorcisms proceed? We just do not know, but we would have to in order to draw the inferences that Hurtado does in constructing paleo-Christian "binitarianism." His arguments here necessarily place enormous weight on the very thin shoulders of a context reconstituted from an absence of evidence. *Caveat emptor*.

(4) I do not have before me the publications of Elaine Pagels that Hurtado cites when he argues that Valentinians were not much for martyrdom (624); thus, I cannot judge whether he caught her point. But the broader argument—that Docetists do not martyrs make—is demonstrably false, as a glimpse at Eusebius shows. Marcionites, no less docetic than Valentinians, voluntarily died in significant numbers. Eusebius's anonymous source is quite annoyed by this fact, finding it theologically inconsistent (as does Hurtado), but there they were (*HE* 5.16.21). Pionios burned next to a Marcionite martyr in Smyrna (*Acta Pion.* 21). And so on.

This argument from Docetism misconceives the issue. The point was not that "Christ was not really human," but that he did not "really" have flesh. This position reflects larger anthropological and cosmological principles, for the flesh of redeemed believers, martyred or otherwise, was also not "really" theirs: flesh remained in the realm below the moon, where it belonged, and the redeemed spirit, the true "self," ascended. (It took someone with the brilliance and the education of Origen to square this circle, asserting both a genuinely incarnational Christology and a truly pneumatic redemption of the "spiritual body" in *Peri archōn*.) Thus, albeit with soteriological expectations that differed from those of say, Ignatius or Tertullian, Docetist Christians also participated in this public form of "cultic devotion to Jesus," as Hurtado characterizes martyrdom. Accordingly, martyrdom as he seems to present it (facilitated by ignoring Marcionites) cannot stand as a particular marker of "proto-Orthodoxy."

(5) Just when Nicene Orthodoxy is finally, fully articulated, according to Hurtado's definition it fails as "monotheism." The same bishops hammering out the creeds, the same Christians filling the orthodox basilicas, also worshipped the divinity of the emperor. Since Constantine (and his *numen*) were now Christian, the imperial cult for Gentile Christians became both kosher and (for the prudent) *de rigueur*. Gone were the blood offerings, but everything else—the temples, the cult image of the emperor, the incense (a marker of divine presence), the priests, the proskynesis, the feast days, even (tacky as this seems) the gladiatorial contests all continued well after 312. (See, e.g., R. MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries* [Yale 1997], 34–39; G. W. Bowersock, "Polytheism and Monotheism in Arabia and the Three Palestines," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 51 [1997]: 1–10, and J. Elsner, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph* [Oxford 1998].) Because of the veneration shown the divine image, Jews were once again excused. Theodosius II issued orders on how to adore his *numen* (*CTh* 15.4.1, in 428 C.E.); inscriptions continued to refer to emperors as *divus, deus*, or (in the East) *theos*; fifth-century Christians in Constantine's eponymous capital bowed down to his statue and worshipped him *hos theōi*

(Philostorgius, *HE* GCS [1972], 28). Were these Christians not monotheists? Perhaps not by Hurtado's definition, but by the standards of Mediterranean antiquity of course they were. No one confused the emperor with the High God, but he was, clearly, still a uniquely divine figure in life and an exceedingly well-placed, divine, celestial patron of church and state after death.

My point in discussing these facts is to return by another direction to the unusability of Hurtado's austere and non-historical definition of "monotheism." The "scrupulous Jewish monotheists" required by his reconstruction make "unscrupulous" monotheists? unwitting polytheists? of too many (I think, of all) of the historical actors in his story. Divinity was on a gradient all throughout this period and before and long after—probably up until the Scientific Revolution. That may make "devotion to Jesus" seem less explosive or startling or revolutionary. Its oddness survives intact, I think, without the false impression created by defining monotheism as Hurtado does.

Larry Hurtado provides interesting reflections on the relation of Q to other gospel traditions (217–58). His thoughts on the ways that the fourth-century Coptic Nag Hammadi corpus may and may not relate to second-century Greek Valentinianism also bear pondering (533–39). While, unfortunately, he cites works of authors whose arguments he utterly fails to engage (to the detriment, I think, of his own), his tone in presenting that scholarship which he does engage, even when he dissents from it, is refreshingly respectful, collegial and even appreciative. I hope, then, the unenthusiasm of this review will register as disappointment rather than discourtesy. So much intelligence and hard work and scholarly acumen and sheer love for the topic so obviously went into the writing of *Lord Jesus Christ*. What a shame that in the end the image of ancient Christianity that it offers is so old and in so many unpleasant ways so very familiar.

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Evagrius of Pontus

The Greek Ascetic Corpus

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One of the great achievements of twentieth-century scholarship in patristics and monasticism was the recovery (still in progress) of the works of Evagrius Ponticus (ca. 345–399), arguably late antiquity's greatest theorist of the monastic life. Wilhelm Frankenberg, Irénée Hausherr, Joseph Muyldermans, Antoine and Clarie Guillaumont, Gabriel Bunge, and Paul Géhin restored to Evagrius works that had been attributed to other authors, uncovered and published the unexpurgated version of the *Kephalaia Gnōstika*, and edited and translated texts