

Rafael Aguirre (ed.), *De Jerusalén a Roma. La marginalidad del cristianismo de los orígenes* (Estella-Navarra, Ed. Verbo Divino 2021). 272 pp. 15 x 23 cm. ISBN 978-84-9073-675-3.

This book belongs to a project that began to emerge a little over a decade ago with the publication of another multi-author work dedicated to the historical origins of Christianity (*Así empezó el cristianismo*, Estella - Spain 2010). This first publication was followed years later by a second one that complemented this historical view with a study on the life and beliefs of the first Christians (*Así vivían los primeros cristianos*, Estella -Spain 2017). All three books contain studies by scholars who are members of the Seminar on the Origins of Christianity, some of whom have been collaborating for more than twenty years now. Although this third book deals with a more specific question, its approach and perspective align with the preceding ones.

The book as a whole and its individual studies take as their starting point a basic historical fact: the marginality of Christian groups within Roman society in the first two centuries. However, its aim is not only to describe or analy-

se this state of marginality but also to identify the attitudes, strategies, and projects used by the first followers of Jesus to confront this situation. The first Christian texts bear witness to these reactions, but in order to identify them and understand their meaning and scope, it is necessary to have an adequate explanatory framework. For this reason, each study attempts to incorporate these clues using social-scientific approaches. The result is an interdisciplinary work that combines textual and historical analysis with appropriate social models.

The book consists of a brief introduction and nine chapters, eight of which contain studies that have been arranged chronologically, and a concluding chapter of a very different nature, co-authored by the eight authors. The introduction provides some overall context on this particular field of study and a brief summary of the chapters that follow.

The first chapter (Carmen Bernabé, “El reinado de Dios y su propuesta desde la marginalidad creativa”) draws on a theoretical model developed in studies on the construction of space, which speak of a “third space”, that is, an imagined space in which an alternative vision is elaborated, often from a marginal situation. Jesus’ proposal of God’s kingdom and the practices that make it present can be understood as a third space that proposes a different way of seeing reality. The thesis is argued by presenting some aspects of the construction of space in Herodian Galilee and showing how Jesus’ practices, carried out from a marginal standpoint, represent an alternative proposal. This chapter provides “the anchoring of the category of marginality in the initial moment of the Jesus movement” (p. 20).

The second study (Carlos Gil, “La ciudadanía del cielo. Una propuesta marginal en Filipenses”) begins, like the preceding one, by explaining the theoretical model used to interpret the proposal in Philippians. The presentation of the model is quite detailed, and subsequent studies will refer to it when discussing the “third space” or “space of representation” and its relation to marginality. The “citizenship of heaven” referred to by Paul in Philippians can be understood, according to the author, as this third space constructed from a marginal situation, a space of representation that proposes the practice of alternative values and which is, ultimately, a Pauline translation of the category “kingdom of God”.

The third study (Estela Aldave, “Mi reino no es de este mundo’ (Jn 18, 36). Marginalidad en el cuarto evangelio”) resorts to a different model to explain the Johannine saying: that of performed marginality, which makes a different way of life possible. This category, which is close to but different from the third space used by previous studies, is enriched with other keys such as popular memory or counter-memory. After showing that it is reasonable to apply this model to John’s narrative, the author sets to analyse in detail the scene of Jesus’ appearance before Pilate. This scene, which is much more elaborate in John than in the Synoptics, reveals a situation of marginality from which the evangelist proposes a counter-memory and an alternative life proposal to Christ’s believers.

The fourth study (Rafael Aguirre, “La piedra rechazada”) focuses on rejected stone saying, which occurs in several early Christian texts and traditions. The

very fact that different groups used this image reveals a widespread awareness of marginality. The model used in this study to understand it underlines the fact that the marginalised individual or group belongs to two worlds simultaneously, a situation that can be experienced involuntarily (forced marginality) or voluntarily (resistant marginality). This theoretical tapestry provides the background for analysing the texts dealing with the rejected stone, especially Mk 12:1-10 and 1Pet 2:4-10, which reflect an active treatment of marginality. Then, referring to these texts, the author presents a series of considerations on early Christianity and its relevance for today.

The fifth study (Sergio Rosell, "El Apocalipsis: visión de un mundo nuevo") deals with a work that displays a kind of voluntary marginality. The study begins with a brief description that identifies behind this book a group of self-marginalised intellectuals who, as reflected in the letters to the seven churches, react to the "Roman seduction", i.e. the accommodation to an unjust system. Revelation's strategy involves defining the marginal as central by rearranging space: the heavenly throne, rather than Rome; time: the resurrection of Jesus, rather than the imperial calendar; and symbolism: Jewish symbols, as opposed to Roman ones. Although sometimes there has been a temptation to turn the marginal proposal of the Apocalypse into a central one (millenarianism), what this book contains is a radical proposal to build an alternative world.

The sixth study (David Álvarez, "El cristianismo romano según 1 Clemente") moves beyond the canonical writings to analyze a second-generation text. Although 1Clem was addressed to Christians in Corinth, one can easily identify behind it the situation of a Roman community trying to build a political identity in the city. This chapter also differs from the preceding ones, for it focuses on the vision and project of a group that assumes the established order and tries to find its place within it. Therefore, the stance of the group behind 1Clem is clearly opposed to that of the communities of the Apocalypse. The contrast between the two positions corroborates that marginality can be faced in different ways.

The seventh study (Fernando Rivas, "Marginación en Ignacio de Antioquía") addresses the issue of marginalisation from a peculiar perspective. The letters sent by the Syrian bishop to various communities on his way to Rome are searched but not to define the communities' situation within the empire, where they were marginal. On the contrary, acknowledging the new situation of Christianity at the beginning of the second century (incorporation of Gentiles, numerical growth, a plurality of groups, etc.), this study focuses on the situation of marginal groups (Judaizers and Docetists) within what would eventually become "the great Church". Moreover, these groups, and thus the phenomenon of marginalisation, is not studied from the standpoint of the marginalised group, but from that of the dominant group, i.e. from Ignatius' point of view, identifying the strategies he developed to minimise the impact these groups were having on mainstream Christianity.

The last study (Elisa Estévez, "El trabajo y el dinero en las comunidades marginales de los orígenes") has a broader scope, as it presents a panoramic

view of how Christians dealt with work and money from the second to the fourth generation (70-190 AD). The Letter of Diognetus provides the initial focus for studying these practices that propose a new (hybrid) way of being in the world to construct an alternative (different) way of life within society. The study's central and most extensive part deals with the attitude of the first Christians towards work: its positive assessment, the rejection of specific jobs, the opportunity it offered to spread the gospel, etc. In this domain, as in that of money and riches, which Christians used to practice love by helping those in need, it becomes clear how these marginalised communities found a creative way of being in the world without belonging to it.

The final chapter, as the title makes clear ("Reflexiones sobre el cristianismo del presente a partir del estudio crítico de sus orígenes") departs from the arena of previous studies (historical and contextual study of the early Christian texts) to ask whether these studies have any relevance for the present. Therefore, its horizon is hermeneutical and invites the readers to confront themselves not with what ancient texts say but with what they speak of, thus promoting a creative dialogue with them. The authors state that these final reflections "are not an arbitrary appendix, but can be seen as internal demands of the preceding studies" (p. 240). The studies referred to are those included in this book and those in the two books mentioned above. Therefore, this chapter is a lengthy pause for reflection about some (not all) issues previously addressed. Some readers may be surprised to find this hermeneutical conclusion. Some might even think it is out of place. However, many others will undoubtedly find in this concluding chapter an extra value recognising the relevance that studies on the origins of Christianity can have for today.

The book reflects a team effort, evidenced by the repeated cross-references between the chapters. It reveals a collective reflection in the background but not an attempt to offer a unique answer to the question posed. The studies are plural in their subject (a sentence, a book, an author, a period), in their focus (different models to explain marginality) and in their approach (different strategies, marginality within Christianity). As a whole, the work offers a thought-provoking and timely reflection on a question early Christianity had to face, and which is being raised more and more vividly by Christians in the churches of the so-called first world.

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Scacewater, Todd A. (ed.), *Discourse Analysis of the New Testament Writings* (Dallas: Fontes Press 2020), 772 pp. 15.5x23.5 cm. ISBN 978-1-948048-43-9.

As most readers will be aware, discourse analysis (DA) has flourished in recent decades of biblical scholarship. Though sometimes viewed with skepti-