

viene studiata anzitutto in sé, per poi focalizzarsi sull'uso di $\pi\omicron\upsilon$. Ogni paragrafo dei capitoli II-IV è, di fatto, un saggio di esegesi giovannea ben bilanciata e correttamente argomentata. L'apporto dei testi analizzati alla teologia giovannea non deriva, pertanto, semplicemente dal significato che l'avverbio assume di volta in volta, quanto piuttosto dall'insieme del brano al cui interno si trova anche l'avverbio $\pi\omicron\upsilon$. La natura profondamente unificata del testo del QV al livello della sua redazione finale risulta confermata da questo studio.

Ci sia consentito segnalare alcuni aspetti di debolezza, senza nulla togliere alla qualità complessiva di questa indagine. L'identificazione (frequentemente riproposta) dei tre capitoli centrali in termini di tesi, antitesi e sintesi non ci sembra propriamente dimostrata e non risulta convincente. Dal punto di vista dello stile il testo contiene molte ripetizioni: una coraggiosa opera di prosciugamento gli avrebbe giovato. La forte istanza sistematica e sistematizzatrice (che diventa a volte attualizzante/esistenziale) è indubbiamente confacente a un dottorato in *teologia* biblica: in alcune parti del lavoro (soprattutto nelle sintesi parziali e in quelle complessive), però, ci sembra che essa abbia preso un po' la mano all'A.

Maurizio Marcheselli – Facoltà Teologica dell'Emilia-Romagna – P.le Giuseppe Bacchelli, 4 – I-40136 Bologna

Teresa MORGAN, *Being “in Christ” in the Letters of Paul: Saved through Christ and in his Hands* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 449; Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2020). X + 321 pp. ISBN: 978-3-16-159885-2. € 129,00

In this thorough monograph, Teresa Morgan, professor of Graeco-Roman History at the University of Oxford, offers a fresh interpretation of Paul's well known formula *in Christ*. She proposes that on the one hand Paul uses the expression *instrumentally* to describe what God has done, is doing and will do “through” Christ. On the other hand, Paul uses the expression to describe the believers' privileged position *in the hands of Christ*, in what Morgan calls an *encheiristic* meaning. Being *en Christō*, the believers live in Christ's power, are under his authority and enjoy his care. This life in Christ's hands is the this-worldly anticipation of the new creation envisaged for the end of the age. The existence of believers *in Christ's hands* provides the communities of believers with distinctive structures and defines their new life in the assurance of eschatological salvation. Both of these uses are closely linked to each other: “The link between these meanings, in the larger framework of Paul's thinking, is above all causal and narrative. It is because of what God has done through Christ that it has become

possible for those who put their trust in God and Christ to be brought to right-standing with God, to enter a new life, and to live in the present time “in Christ’s hands”, under Christ’s power, authority, and protection. It is by living in Christ’s hands in the present time that the faithful are strengthened and empowered to remain in right-standing with God until Christ’s return. It is insofar as they remain in Christ’s hands until Christ’s return that they can hope eventually to be saved” (90).

Morgan sets out with the discussion of *en* with the dative in Adolf Deissmann’s problematic understanding which has dominated the discussion for decades (1–17, *Die neutestamentliche Formel “in Christo Jesu” of 1892*). The survey of research also includes other mystical or participatory understandings of the formula. Her conclusion with regard to past research is sobering: “Studies of Paul’s *en Christo* language have tended to focus on what he meant by it: what was in his mind. We should also, however, take into account what Paul’s listeners and interlocutors might have made of the phrase. Paul was wrestling with large concepts: the meaning of the new life which he believed he, and all Christ’s confessors, had been given; the meaning of their new relationship with God and the Lord Jesus Christ; the nature of their new community and new hope. But he was also trying to communicate with the people he preached to, most of whom cannot have been thinking anything like as hard as he was about these ideas, in terms which they would understand and want to accept. The idea that a phrase which is so common in Paul’s letters and so central to his thought requires an enormous volume of modern scholarship to interpret it, and, at the end of all our exploring, remains elusive, leaves a nagging doubt in the mind. Can Paul the preacher have intended *en Christo* to mean something so complicated; so obscure?” (11).

After that she argues in detail how *en* with the dative can and does carry an *encheiristic* meaning (14–23). She notes that past linguistic research on *en* with the dative has noted a relatively common understanding in the extended locative meaning which in English is rendered as “in the hands of”. This is a common metaphor in a number of languages, including Greek. “The use of the image ‘in the hands of’ to describe this meaning of *en* reflects its internal complexity, which can encompass the idea that something or someone is ‘in the power of’, ‘under the authority of’, is ‘the responsibility of’ something or someone else, and more” (14). Morgan notes that Greek, including New Testament *koine*, often uses hands as an image of power and agency: “*Encheirein* means to ‘take [something] in hand’, encompassing a sense of taking control and taking responsibility, while *encheiresthai*, to be ‘handed’ something, is a standard way of saying that one has been entrusted with something. A person’s ‘hand’ often stands for their power and authority”. Therefore “Using the metaphor ‘in the hands of’ as a translation of ‘*en*’ meaning ‘in the power of’, ‘under the authority of’, ‘the responsibility of’ and so on ... fits well with the way Greek itself uses ‘hand’ imagery elsewhere” (14–15). After her survey of *en* with the dative in Greek literature, the LXX and elsewhere in the New Testament, Morgan concludes that “Grammatically, the *encheiristic* use of *en* is one of the many extended forms of the locative, but one which is characteristically used to describe a type of relationship with a range of specific content. It is the re-

lationality of this usage and its content which make it an especially vivid and fertile expression for Paul as he seeks to communicate his vision of salvation to his listeners” (90). *En* “is a grammatically regular Greek phrase widely used through time, including in *Koine* and in the Septuagint. In the Septuagint, it appears several times in the form *en kyrio*, which Paul also uses. It would not have been difficult for Paul’s audiences, Jewish or gentile, to understand. It is used of relationships of power and dependence which often also involve responsibility and even care, trust, and hope, but which do not take all power away from the subaltern partner (and, in the Septuagint, give the subaltern partner strength). It is often used in crisis situations which also offer those involved new opportunities” (22). Morgan argues that her new interpretation of Paul’s *en Christō* language is well within the bounds of everyday Greek. This understanding is “complex but coherent; which makes sense of the passages which have been seen as most difficult to interpret; which both seeks to capture the distinctiveness of Paul’s thinking and would have been linguistically comprehensible to first-century listeners; one which both fits well with some existing interpretations of Paul’s theology and adds something to them. This interpretation draws in part on a meaning of *en* with the dative which is well attested in Greek, in a range of dialects, including *koine*, throughout antiquity, but which, to my knowledge, has never been explored as a meaning of *en Christō* language in Paul” (11).

The bulk of the volume consists of detailed analyses of Paul’s use of the *en Christō* formula in his greetings (25–40), in 1 Thessalonians and 2 Corinthians (41–62; with regard to 2 Cor 5:17, Morgan concludes: “For the faithful, in Paul’s vision, to be in Christ’s hands, in his power, under his protection, under his protection, and in his care, is regenerative, transformative, and all-encompassing. It is to be a new creation”, 62), in Galatians, Philippians, Philemon and Romans (63–101, including further scriptural roots of being in Christ’s hands, 96–101). Next, Morgan relates the *en Christō* formula to other Pauline concepts such as belonging to God and Christ; to exist in *en pistei* or *en pneumati*; God, Christ and the spirit in the faithful; and baptism *eis Christon* (103–126). Further related Pauline concepts are Paul’s notion of the faithful as one body or members of a body; his understanding of *koinonia*, the account of the institution of the Lord’s Supper; his language of being “with Christ” (*syn*) and of likeness *homoioōma* to Christ (127–159). Morgan further examines the life of the believers in community in Christ’s hands as Paul’s expression of God’s empire (161–201; Christ between resurrection and salvation, images of life and work in the present time, Paul at work in the present time – a excellent description of how Paul describes his own role in the new society which he portrays as existing under Christ’s authority and protection; for his own ministry Paul uses language associated with Roman provincial governors and local magistrates – and the relationship of *ekklesia* and empire). A final chapter describes life in the community of the believers in Christ’s hands (203–242).

Morgan presents a persuasive case for an *encheiristic* understanding of Paul’s “in Christ” formulae. She demonstrates that it is not only grammatically possible and likely, but also makes sense of much of Paul’s ecclesiology and understanding of

his own role in the community and communities of those who have the privilege of living in Christ's hands in the present age. The volume is further proof that there is much value in questioning the seemingly assured results of grammatical and linguistic research (here the common participatory understanding of Paul's formula) and the scholarly consensus based on it to see what other options are available and need to be evaluated whether they better explain the evidence.

Christoph Stenschke – Biblisch-Theologische Akademie Wiedenstein and Department of Biblical and Ancient Studies – University of South Africa – P O Box 392, Pretoria, 0003 Republic of South Africa

Francesco BARGELLINI, *Vanto idolatrico in Paolo. Il rapporto tra cuore ostinato, idolaria e vanto nella letteratura paolina* (Dissertatio. Series Mediolanensis 27; Edizioni Glossa, Milano 2020). xxii + 353 pp. ISBN 978-88-7105-444-5. € 41,00

Il titolo e il sottotitolo dello studio di Francesco Bargellini, indicano chiaramente di cosa si va a trattare. E lungo tutto il volume la chiarezza dell'intento dell'autore è bene esplicitata.

Si tratta di valutare le diverse e numerose occorrenze nella letteratura paolina sul "vanto" e come possano essere interpretate. Naturalmente Bargellini non è il primo a cimentarsi nella questione come dimostra la bibliografia citata sul tema (276-278) e le pagine del capitolo introduttivo che recensiscono le varie posizioni a riguardo nella esegesi moderna (3-26).

La novità di questo studio risiede in una ipotesi di lavoro che tenga conto anche delle impasse che l'esegesi paolina mostra in alcune sue interpretazioni del vanto e che toccano il paradigma stesso di lettura dei testi di Paolo.

Il primo capitolo del volume si attarda a compiere una ragionata rassegna delle varie interpretazioni del "vanto" in Paolo, soprattutto quando si tratta del vanto dei Giudei o di Israele. I diversi paradigmi descritti dall'autore (vanto psicologico; vanto antropocentrico, vanto culturale, vanto etnico-nazionale; il vanto retorico; il vanto storico-sociale e il vanto teologico) lo mettono in dialogo con le principali linee interpretative non solo del vanto, ma anche della letteratura paolina in genere. L'autore quindi si mette nella posizione di valutare anche le caratteristiche, attraverso la rassegna sul vanto, e anche i limiti delle linee interpretative della *Old* e della *New Perspective*. Il risultato è un tentativo di integrazione delle varie prospettive in una ipotesi di lavoro che possa essere verificata. Tale ipotesi di lavoro (40-42) prende le mosse da un principale assunto ricavato dal dialogo con le varie istanze interpretative presentate: in questione nel vanto è "l'ambiguità del rapporto dell'«uomo religioso» con Dio e con