

ROMAN BARTNICKI, *Ewangelie synoptyczne. Geneza i interpretacja*, wyd. trzecie uzupełnione, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego, Warszawa 2003, pages 530 (rec.).

The book of R. Bartnicki, rector and professor of Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego in Warsaw, Poland, and member of Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas, consists of nineteen chapters, preceded by the preface to the third edition of this work and by the introduction. Matthew, Mark and Luke, the first three Gospels in the canon, are called in exegesis ‘the Synoptic Gospels’. This is because of similarities (identical words, grammatical constructions, verb tenses, word order, etc.) and dissimilarities among them. The name is due to the Greek word *synopsis*, which signifies ‘the look at the object as whole’ or ‘common point of view’. There is almost no doubt that between Matthew, Mark and Luke literary relationship or literary dependence exists. The author notices that his book doesn’t contain the material usually present in the introductions to Matthew, Mark and Luke; the work rather presents the process of scientific investigations concerning the three Gospels. In the first chapter (pages 21-44), Prof. R. Bartnicki characterises the origin of the Synoptic Gospels in the light of the tradition of Ancient Church and presents the opinions of Papias, Ireneus, Clemens of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius of Cesarea and Augustin. In the following chapter (pages 45-62), he puts special attention to the patristic and medieval trials to resolve so-called synoptic problem, i.e. the question about literary dependence between these three documents. Then he shows the view of Reformation thinkers on the relationship between the Gospels, presents the origin of *Formgeschichte*, and talks about some opinions of the catholic exegesis until the time of publication of *Divino afflante Spiritu* (1943). It seems that the synoptic problem received little attention until the beginning of XXth century. The third chapter (pages 63-84) consists in studium of historical investigations concerning the synoptic question, since the time of Enlightenment until the first half of XXth century. The reader can find here interesting explanations of what is *Urevangeliumshypothese*, *Traditionshypothese*, *Diegesenhypothese*, *Benutzungshypothese* and *Zweiquellentheorie*. The following chapters (IV-VII; pages 85-149) present in detailed way, form-and redaction criticism. Form criticism (*Formgeschichte*) may be defined as historical, literary and theological methodology for analyzing the forms used in the Synoptic Gospels. During the eighteenth century some investigators applied this method to other books of the Bible. The author describes briefly the origin of this kind of methodology and main thesis of its founders and others writers (Gunkel, Schmidt, Bultmann, Dibelius, Smithals). This part of the book talks also about the reception

of this method in biblical sciences until nowadays. Without doubt, form criticism remains a central discipline in Synoptic Gospels' studies. It is still one of the most important methods in NT investigations, even if it has its limitations.

The second important study of the synoptic gospels is redaction criticism. This method concentrates on the theological emphases, specific purposes of the evangelists and on *Sitz im Leben* out of which they wrote their works. Prof. R. Bartnicki gives a detailed introduction into the origin of this discipline, putting special attention to the works of its pioneers (Bornkamm, Conzelmann, Marxen, Trilling). There is nothing strange or surprising that most redaction criticism studies of NT involved Synoptic Gospels, because this method is interested in explaining how evangelists used their sources, what is their (evangelists) contributions to the material they choose, and how this contribution may meet the needs of the community. Redaction criticism has its limitations; they are presented in the chapter entitled "Redaktionsgeschichte in defence? (pages 153-164)"

In chapter VIII (pages 165-184) we find a presentation of the official documents of the Church concerning origin and interpretation of the Gospels. The author characterises *Divino afflante Spiritu* (1943), *De historica Evangeliorum veritate* (1964) and *Dei Verbum* (1965). Among the questions presented in this part of the book we can find: literary genres, hermeneutic principles of the interpretation of the Gospels and three stages of Gospel formation (the public activity of Jesus of Nazareth, the apostolic preaching about Jesus, the written Gospels). Very interesting are the specific (by authors) presentations of the criteria of *ipsissima verba et facta Jesu* (pages 185-226). Among the opinions described we can find the point of view of such famous scholars as Käsemann, Martini, McArthur, Trilling, de la Potterie, Jeremias, Bultmann or Latourelle. Then in a synthetic way main criteria are presented. The following chapter (X; pages 227-262) concerns the oral tradition. There are some scholars who think that there is the possibility of understanding the Synoptic Gospels without assuming the literary dependence between them. Some of these scholars maintain that the data in the first three Gospels can be explained just as the differences among eyewitnesses. In the scientific investigations of Synoptics, structuralism and semiotics are also important (chapter XI; pages 263-284). Structuralism is the theory about the way in which the meaning is perceived through the literary structure of the Gospels. Semiotics may be defined as the scientific study of the relationship of language and other signs to their meanings. Prof. R. Bartnicki presents the contribution in this area of such scholars as Redermakers, Standaert and Jullien de Pomerol, and characterizes the contemporary German, French and American approach to the biblical text. Then, in chapters XII-XV (pages 285-342), other approaches to

the Synoptics are presented: narrative criticism (called also narratology or narratological criticism), rhetorical analysis, socio-historical interpretation (sociologically oriented exegesis) and feministic interpretation. Very interesting and in some way new in the Polish biblical background is the last one. A feminist hermeneutics is the theoretical exploration of biblical interpretation in the interest of woman. It is based on the rejection of androcentric and patriarchal character of the Bible. It tends also to underline the role of woman in the biblical history of salvation.

The following chapter (pages 343-360) treats on so called *Wirkungsgeschichte*; this term may be understood as the history of text reception. Preaching the good news, faith, life of prayer, liturgy - all this is the answer of God's people to His Word written in the Bible. In every period of human history this Word was accepted, interpreted and accommodated in different way by the believers. *Wirkungsgeschichte* try to reconstruct this way and to establish the principles of biblical interpretations accepted during the history of Christianity. Chapter XVII (pages 361-400) presents in a synthetic way, modern solutions of the synoptic question. Prof. R. Bartnicki divides the solutions into five groups: theories accepting many sources (Streeter, Knox, Devresse, Gaboury, Boismard, Rolland); theories assuming the priority of Mark and rejecting the existence of Q; theories assuming the priority of Matthew and rejecting the existence of Q (some of them accept the aramaic *Urevangelim*: Vannutelli, Cerfaux, Vaganay, Benoit, Lowe and Flusser, Tresmontant; others indicate the Greek version of Matthew: Butler, Farmer and Orchard, Dungan, Stoldt); hypothesis of oral tradition; two-source theory and its modifications. In the next part of his book (pages 401-418), the author presents the document of Commissio Biblica *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, published on 100 anniversary of *Providentissimus Deus* (1893) and 50 anniversary of *Divino afflante Spiritu* (1943). Description of this document is preceded by the short history of Commissio Biblica (founded in 1902). The last chapter (XIX; pages 419-484) is devoted to the so-called 'third quest', i.e. the modern trials to reach the stage of historical mission of Jesus. The first stage consisted in investigation of historical Jesus in XIXth century and was the reaction to the thesis of Kähler, who, in his book *Der sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche, biblische Christus*, had rejected the possibility of reaching *ipsissima verba et facta Jesu*. The investigations of this question in XXth century, since Bultmann and Gnilka, are assumed in exegesis as the second stage of this problem. Since the 1980's, scholars speak about the 'third quest' for the historical Jesus (the term is delivered from the work of Wright, published in 1988). A reader of Prof. R. Bartnicki's book may find here an accurate review of publications concerning the historical Jesus, edited since 1967 (S. Ben-

Chorin, *Bruder Jesus*) until now (A.J. Skowronek, *Kim był Jezus z Nazaretu? Refleksje u progu XXI wieku*). Prof. Bartnicki competently introduces the contemporary reader into the most important literary and theological looks at the person of Jesus. This last chapter of the presented book is added to the third edition and really enriches its content, giving the new light on the question of the historical Jesus.

The book *Ewangelie synoptyczne* is intended for Polish language readers, therefore it is very important that along with the presentations of the American, German, English, French, Italian and Spanish scholars, Polish names are also present. The language of the entire work is competent, scientific and communicative as well. From an editorial standpoint the work of Prof. R. Bartnicki was carefully prepared. It is featured with the list of abbreviations (pages 487-493) and chosen bibliography for each chapter (pages 495-530). With great joy we can welcome to Polish biblical libraries this excellent book of Prof. R. Bartnicki; the book which doesn't omit any of the important issues concerning the Synoptic Gospels and is really helpful in studies on the fascinating history of their origin and interpretation. Polish students and biblical scholars receive a very useful tool for their research and investigations; they receive an excellent compendium of modern knowledge concerning the first three Gospels.

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