

Mara Rescio – Luigi Walt

“There Is Nothing Unclean”: Jesus and Paul against the Politics of Purity?

The present contribution is part of an on-going research project, whose main assumptions and first results have already been discussed in the last two SBL International Meetings¹. Our primary goal is to re-examine the problem of continuity or discontinuity between Jesus and Paul, starting from a broad investigation of their relationship with the Jewish Law. What is at issue, for us, is not merely the problem of Paul as a follower of Jesus, but also the real position of both Jesus and Paul in the cultural context of first-century Judaism: what kind of Jews were Jesus and Paul? What was the impact of their personal religious experiences on their own way of being Jewish? And to what extent was the apostle’s Jewishness influenced by Jesus’ words and deeds?

In this article, we will focus especially on Jesus’ and Paul’s concrete attitudes towards ritual purity and dietary laws, as central aspects of Israel’s politics and piety. Our questions, in this regard, are essentially two. Firstly, is it really possible to reconstruct Jesus’ position on purity and purity rules? Still today, many scholars start from the words that early Christian sources attribute to Jesus. But the problem is that these sources do not give a univocal position, for the texts are both few and difficult to reconcile with each other. As commonly known, it is only the Gospel of Mark that reports Jesus’ famous words that seem to abolish the food laws of Leviticus 11: “There is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile” (Mark

¹ M. Rescio and L. Walt, “There Is Nothing Unclean: Jesus and Paul against the Politics of Purity?”, Society of Biblical Literature International Meeting, London (2011, July 6); “Sabbath in Perspective: A Glimpse into Jesus’ and Paul’s Practice of Life”, Society of Biblical Literature International Meeting, Amsterdam (2012, July 23).

7:15)². This saying, however, is conveyed in the context of a dispute concerning simply the question of “washing hands” before a meal, and its radical formulation, which sets Jesus in open conflict with the Jewish Law of his time, is often interpreted as a personal contribution of the evangelist himself. In addition, the radical character of Mark’s version appears strongly attenuated in the parallel passages of Matt 15:11 and Gos. Thom. 14:5: how can we determine which one – if any – of these sources goes back to the historical Jesus?

Secondly, is it possible to critically establish why Paul, in his letter to the Romans, states that he “knows” and is “persuaded in the Lord Jesus” that “there is nothing unclean in itself” (Rom 14:14)? The many points of convergence with Jesus’ words in Mark 7:15 have already been widely noted: like the Markan Jesus, Paul does not only reject the idea of ritual contamination by contact, but also excludes all possibility that there exist types of food intrinsically “unclean”. According to some scholars, Paul’s statement would be a deliberate allusion to the Jesus tradition. Others strongly oppose this hypothesis, referring instead to a brilliant and personal insight on the part of the apostle (and thus contemplating a possible dependence of Mark on Paul). Which interpretation is correct? And what kind of arguments can we use to readdress this problem?

I. A RADICAL LIFESTYLE: JESUS AND PAUL AS WANDERING JEWS

Up to now, the comparison between Jesus and Paul has been limited to two basic options: the former focusses on their “words” (Jesus’ teachings, on the one hand, and that of Paul, on the other)³, while the latter starts from their “deeds” (that is, from the analysis of the basic facts of their life)⁴. In our opinion, however, the dichotomy between these two options is not necessary, and could be fruitfully overcome with a strong

² For the biblical quotations, we will always follow the New Revised Standard Version (with some occasional modifications).

³ Since the times of A. Resch (1904), scholarship has often tended to view the relationship between Jesus and Paul in terms of Paul’s familiarity with the teaching of Jesus, so far as it can be reconstructed on the basis of supposed allusions in his letters: see, most recently, S. Kim 1993; J.D.G. Dunn 1994; D. Wenham 1995; F. Neyrink 1996; M. Zimmermann and R. Zimmermann 1996; F. Siegert 1998; H.W. Hollander 2000; E.K.C. Wong 2001; M. Labahn 2011, 1936-1951; and P. Pokorny 2011. For our purposes, it is striking to notice how the five major topics of Jesus’ legal teaching (as generally identified by scholars, e.g. by J.P. Meier 2009) all appear in Paul’s letters: divorce, oaths, the Sabbath, purity rules, and the various love commandments. In some cases, the apostle explicitly appeals to the words of Jesus, while in others he seems to allude to traditional materials shared by him and his audience; for a general survey, see now Walt 2013 (in press).

⁴ Within this perspective, J. Murphy O’Connor (2007) has even attempted to sketch out the biographies of Jesus and Paul on the model of Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives*.

interdisciplinary effort – focussing not on the simple *words* or *actions* of Jesus and Paul, but rather on the total range of their activities. In this direction, we believe that a socio-anthropological examination of Jesus’ and Paul’s “practice of life” would be of the greatest interest.

Following A. Destro and M. Pesce (2008), by “practice of life” we mean the strategies and skills that each person takes up as the basis of his/her everyday life, the techniques underpinning his/her existence and livelihood, and the logical assumptions driving his/her actions and forms of contact with people and institutions. Behind this perspective, one can clearly find the concept of *habitus* elaborated by P. Bourdieu, as a “system of schemes for generating and perceiving practices” (1993, 87). According to the French scholar, the *habitus* is the way in which people act and react to day-to-day activities and events, within a social context or cultural field⁵: the practice of life of a sedentary peasant, for example, is quite different from that of a merchant who must travel to buy and sell. Practice of life, then, does not consist in single events, but in stable modes of action.

From this point of view, if an individual’s way of thinking cannot be considered separately from his/her way of acting, even the religious conceptions and ideas of Jesus and Paul cannot be considered in isolation from their actual practice of life. “The true message of Jesus” – as Destro and Pesce pointed out – “is the message transmitted by his way of living, by the way in which he positioned himself in the world. [...] An utterance such as ‘Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head’ (Luke 9:58) has very little significance if it remains outside the real meaning of the practice of Jesus’ life, if it is not understood in the light of the fact that he was a man who had abandoned home, goods, and work” (2008, 6; transl. B. McNeil).

A similar remark might be made even for Paul. Suffice it to consider, for example, what the apostle writes in 1 Cor 4:10-12:

We are fools for the sake of Christ, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honour, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we [i.e. the apostles] are hungry and thirsty, we are naked and beaten and wandering, and we grow weary from the work of our own hands...

In these lines, Paul describes the labours of the apostles as an eschatological “spectacle in the eyes of the world, of angels, and of humanity”

⁵ See also P. Bourdieu 1990, p. 54: “The *habitus*, a product of history, produces individual and collective practices. [...] It ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the ‘correctness’ of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms”.

(1 Cor 4:9). These words offer a vivid representation of the concrete life of an itinerant preacher, and they probably hide an allusion to a Jesus' saying that we find reported in the Gospel of Matthew (25:34-36):

Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.

Here, Jesus promises the inheritance of the kingdom to those who will have treated even the "least" of his "brothers" as if he were Jesus himself: giving him food, drink, and clothes; welcoming, visiting, and taking care of him. The place of these "brothers" of Jesus is now occupied, in Paul, by the apostles, who are described as hungry, thirsty, naked, beaten and wandering. The sequence of actions in Jesus' saying and the parallel catalogue of apostolic afflictions in Paul are virtually the same (with the sole exception of Paul's final mention of manual work). The apostle, therefore, seems to use these words of Jesus according to their original meaning, within the missionary framework of the early followers of Jesus, and with direct reference to the itinerant preachers of the gospel⁶. In this sense, Paul's re-use of Jesus' words appears as the result of a "mnemonic" as well as a "mimetic" continuity⁷.

From these rapid observations, it is possible to recognize one important point of convergence between Jesus and Paul, and that is their choice to adopt an itinerant lifestyle⁸. For both, their choice is intimately connected to a particular prophetic call, received through a personal experience of contact with the "supernatural": for Jesus, the key fact is the embodiment of the Spirit at his baptism, followed by his embracing of a radical lifestyle (as proposed by John the Baptist) and an increasingly clear perception of his personal prophetic mission; for Paul, instead, it is the sudden revelation of the Risen Jesus, leading him to abandon his Pharisaic "zeal" and become Jesus' supporter and apostle. In both cases, we are addressing a sort of "conversion", not in terms of a passage from one religious system to another, but as a transition (within the same religious system) from a particular way of being Jewish to a different one⁹.

⁶ It is only in the later tradition that these words were interpreted as a generic call to neighbour's love: see for example the Pseudo-Clementine Letter to James: "Give food to the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, [...]" (*Ps.-Clem. Hom.* 9:4).

⁷ The distinction derives from J.D. Crossan 1997, 24.

⁸ On this point, see again Destro and Pesce (2008, 46-50), who suggest to distinguish "itinerancy" from other types of mobility (such as travelling, pilgrimage, and nomadism).

⁹ On the baptism of Jesus (and his relationship with John the Baptist), see J.P.W. Hollenbach 1979; Murphy O'Connor 1990; E. Lupieri 1991, 72-90; Webb 1994, 223-229; D.S. Dapaah

In fact, the continual mobility of Jesus and Paul constitutes the essential background for understanding their respective viewpoints, even when dealing with the differences between them. First of all, of course, we have to consider their different upbringing. Jesus, as a village-born man, mainly visits the small towns of Galilee, and his avoidance of big cities and urban environments seems to be part of a precise missionary strategy¹⁰. On the contrary Paul, as a Greek-speaking urbanite, focusses above all on main centres of economic and political importance, with a strategy that some critics have defined as “centripetal mission”¹¹: the apostle “travelled to a certain town, made himself a living there, and used the social network available to him to attract new believers and spread the gospel. After a new congregation had been formed, he went on to the next town” (L.J. Lietaert Peerbolte 2003, 233).

Thus we are able to identify two different patterns of itinerant life: a “radical” one, regarding Jesus (itinerancy is a symbolic representation of the religious challenge of the “kingdom”), and a “functional” one, attributable to Paul (itinerancy is a sort of virtue of necessity, the most effective means for proclaiming the gospel)¹². In both cases, however, their itinerant activity is all but an individual affair. Our sources never portray Jesus as a solitary preacher: the Gospel of Mark, for instance, describes Jesus as moving and living together with a number of followers, a mixed group which probably included several women¹³. Even Paul never acts alone, but his *modus operandi* implies a more well-defined, and much less provocative, combination of a few itinerant co-workers (two or three persons at once) and a larger network of stable and local supporters¹⁴. Neither Jesus nor Paul, however, shows any sign of wanting to have a stable abode: they are both on the move from place to place, taking up temporary abode in the various places they visit.

A second difference emerges from their attitude towards working. Actually, both Jesus and Paul seem to be familiar with manual work: the first as an artisan (Mark 6:3 and parr.); the second, probably, as a tentmaker (Acts 18:3). But their relationship with sources of material livelihood is not the same: Jesus abandons everything and entirely entrusts himself to the hospitality of those he meets, commanding his disciples to do the same (Mark 6:8-11; cf. Matt 10:9-14 and Luke 9:3-5);

2005; Dunn 2010, 23-37; and K. Backhaus 2011, 1782-1785. On Paul’s “conversion”, see the magisterial work of A.F. Segal (1990); see also Pesce (2011).

¹⁰ See Meier 1991, 283-284 and 350-352; E.P. Sanders 1993, 104; J.A. Overman 1997; S. Freyne 2004, 144-145; and P. Richardson 2006.

¹¹ Thus W.-H. Ollrog (1979). On Paul’s missionary strategy, see also R. Riesner 1994; L.J. Lietaert Peerbolte 2003; E.J. Schnabel 2008; and K. Magda 2009.

¹² This is rightly underlined by Crossan 1994, 128-131.

¹³ On this point, see Rescio 2012, 90-100.

¹⁴ See G. Theissen’s distinction between “itinerant charismatics” and “community organizers” (1974).

Paul, in explicit contradiction of Jesus' orders (cf. 1 Cor 9:14), continues to maintain himself with his former occupation (as we have seen in the above-mentioned passage of 1 Cor 4:10-12; cf. also 1 Thess 2:9). This difference is hardly an insignificant one. As sharply underlined by Destro and Pesce, Jesus' itinerant activity "did not form part of the expected daily rhythm of the household, and his preaching clashed with the timetables of work. Along the road, Jesus called people from their work to follow him: there was a collision between two trajectories, two practices, two conceptions of time. While he was in people's houses, he did not interrupt his preaching and his action: he continued to teach, turning upside down the rhythm and customs of the household" (2008, 54-55; transl. B. McNeil). Paul, on the contrary, seems to have generally adapted his preaching to the rhythm of work and household affairs¹⁵. Working activity, from this point of view, granted him not only the possibility of self-sufficiency and social mobility, but also a wide access to the structured settings of urban life.

A last important difference lies in their perception of "boundaries". On the one hand, Jesus confines his preaching to the land of Israel (with some occasional exceptions: cf. Mark 7:24-31 and par.)¹⁶: according to Matthew, he even forbids his disciples to venture into Gentile territory, and refers to his mission as being exclusively addressed to the "lost sheep of Israel" (Matt 10:5-6; 15:21-28). On the other hand, Paul extends his mission to the Gentile world, even if he doesn't seem unaware of the original limit posed by Jesus (Gal 4:4-5; Rom 15:8). In order to justify his mission, indeed, the apostle does not invoke a teaching of the earthly Jesus, but appeals to the authority of the Risen Lord (Gal 1:15-16; cf. Acts 26:14-18).

In sum, a different "mental map" seems to distinguish Jesus and Paul in terms of the limits and purposes of their itinerant activities, and this can be seen, to some extent, as a result of their exposure to different conditions and social conditionings. But how can their itinerant lifestyles have influenced their concrete attitudes towards the purity laws?

II. PURITY IN QUESTION: SOME REMARKS

Undoubtedly, purity was one of the most debated issues in Second Temple Judaism. The concept of "purity"¹⁷ is proverbially hard to de-

¹⁵ Cf. e.g. 1 Thess 2:9; 1 Cor 4:12; 15:5-9; 2 Cor 11:9; Phil 4:11-16; cf. also the important addition of the *Codex Bezae* to Acts 19:9. On this point, see R.F. Hock 1980; W.A. Meeks 1983.

¹⁶ On the geopolitical and mythological borders of the Holy Land, see R. Havrelock 2007. But what were the boundaries of Israel, in the mind of Jesus?

¹⁷ As well as its opposite, "impurity" (related to pollution and defilement), with the binary opposition between "pure" and "impure", or "clean" and "unclean".

fine, and this explains why so many scholars tend to shy from a broad definition. For our purposes, we assume that “purity” is the process of ordering and classifying a sociocultural system, through a wide range of values, norms and practices, in contrast to “pollution”, which “stands for the violation of the classification system, its lines and boundaries” (J.H. Neyrey 1986, 92). Such a process implies the classification of specific persons, objects, places and times as “clean” or “unclean”, and it plays a central role in the identity construction and self-understanding of many religious and social groups.

At the time of Jesus and Paul, purity rules were fundamental identity markers. They functioned as parts of a wider politics of purity: different concerns over purity could have led different groups to different perceptions of Israel’s social boundaries, not only from an external point of view (for example, regarding the separation of Israel from other nations, stated by Lev 20:24-26), but also from an internal one (regarding the separation of a specific group from the rest of the people, the different grades of membership within a group, the rivalry between groups, etc.).

Needless to say, it would be impossible to address the question in detail. Following J.D.G. Dunn (2002, 451-452), two simple remarks will suffice here. The first regards the relationship between ritual impurity and sin, which is often – and wrongly – taken for granted. As E.P. Sanders repeatedly observed, impurity cannot be identified with sin. Nevertheless, purity is closely related to “holiness”. What is required to Israel, according to the Scripture, is to maintain its contact with God’s holiness (Num 19:20), and that is a task absolutely impossible in a state of impurity¹⁸. The second observation emerges as a consequence, and concerns the intimate connection between purity and the Temple. Since God promised to demonstrate His presence in the Holy of Holies, namely in the inner room of the Jewish Temple (cf., e.g., Exod 25:22), Israel had to be pure in order to guard the holiness of that space. Not surprisingly, then, purity restrictions were stricter the closer one was to the Temple: only pure priests were allowed to enter the sanctuary.

¹⁸ Dunn, in particular, draws attention to the passages of Isa 6:7; *1 En.* 5:4; and *Pss. Sol.* 8:12-13. For further discussion, see also Sanders 1992, 182-183. Combining the arguments of J. Klawans (2000) and C.E. Hayes (2002), Meier (2009) has recently suggested to identify four heuristic categories of “impurity”: a) *Ritual impurity*, that is a temporary status, often unavoidable, which derives from the natural cycle of human life (birth, sexual activity, disease, death) and which can be removed by ritual purification (usually, ablutions); b) *Moral impurity*, which derives from grave sins (like murder, incest, and idolatry) and which cannot be removed by ordinary ritual actions; c) *Genealogical impurity*, which derives from sexual interactions with Gentiles (intermarriage); d) *Food impurity*, a category that fluctuates between ritual and moral impurity, referring to special food prohibitions such as those listed by the book of Leviticus. The hybrid character of this last category has been widely recognized, as well as the difficulty of treating it from an anthropological perspective (see the divergent explanations offered by M. Douglas in 1966 and 2001).

Levites were charged to maintain its purity and security, and common people had their own prescribed areas for worship. However, as properly stressed by H. Harrington, “even when not going to the sanctuary, [the people of] Israel had to maintain a certain level of purity in their homes, including, for example, bathing after sexual intercourse and menstruation, because of the presence of God among them” (2007, 8-9; see also J.C. Poirier 2003).

Recent archaeological excavations provide a strong confirmation for this point: the preoccupation for purity was a common affair in first-century Palestine, equally widespread in Judea and Galilee, to such a degree that some scholars speak of an “expansionist purity practice in Second Temple Judaism” (T. Kazen 2002, 72). In this respect, J.L. Reed has underlined how “the archaeological artifacts found in Galilean domestic space are remarkably similar to those of Judea”, and how they share the “four typical indicators of Jewish religious identity” (2002, 44; see also S.S. Miller 2010). These findings include, indeed, bones profiles that lack pork (reflecting Jewish dietary laws), stepped plastered pools (*miqvaoth*, for ritual immersions)¹⁹, secondary burial with ossuaries in *loculi* tombs (providing evidence of special burial practices), and chalk or soft limestone vessels (that is, “stone” vessels, considered impervious to ritual impurity)²⁰. With regard to these last ones, which are of particular interest for us, archaeologists report the existence of over 16 workshops devoted to their specific production, located throughout Judea, lower Galilee, and Gaulanitis²¹: this reveals an increasing demand of stone vessels at the turn of the Common Era, despite the lack of a general consensus about the circumstances in which such recipients were actually used²².

All these data call into question the previously accepted idea that in first-century Judaism hyper-concern over purity was a distinctive

¹⁹ On the difficulty of identifying some of these pools as *miqvaoth*, see B.G. Wright 1997; see also the discussion between H. Eshel 2000, E.M. Meyers 2000, and R. Reich 2002; and the recent contributions by S.S. Miller 2007 and Y. Adler 2008.

²⁰ As evidenced by the Mishnaic literature (cf. *m. Kelim* 10:1; *'Ohal.* 5:5; *Parah* 6:5). Further discussion in E. Regev 2000.

²¹ This is reported by A.M. Berlin (2005, 430): “Six were large manufactories located outside city or town walls in the caves from which the stone was directly quarried. Five of these six were in the environs of Jerusalem: near the Golden Gate, at Mt. Scopus, Hizma, Jebel Mukabar, and Tell el-Fûl. The sixth cave workshop was at Reina just north of Nazareth in the lower Galilee. In addition to these larger operations, there were also ‘household’ workshops, whose locales are inferred by the presence of small waste debris such as cup cores”. Such household workshops would have been located in Judea (Horvat Zimri, Tell el-Fûl, Bethany, Ramat Rahel near Jerusalem, and Jerusalem itself), lower Galilee (Sepphoris, Capernaum, Nabratein, and Bethlehem-in-the-Galilee), and Gaulanitis (Gamla). For a comprehensive treatment, see R. Deines 1993 and Y. Magen 2002 (map of Galilee on p. 161). For a re-evaluation of the archaeological discoveries, see also D. Amit and Y. Adler 2010.

²² See Gibson 2003, 302-303.

feature of some radical groups, such as the Essenes and/or the Qumranites (often labelled as “purity sects”)²³. We can also go beyond the polemics between Sanders and J. Neusner on the role of the Pharisees as promoters of a “priestly purity code”²⁴, and recognize that ritual purity was a central preoccupation for many Jews, even for those who did not belong to a particular “sect”²⁵. Jesus himself could have shared such a concern, and it is extremely hard to imagine that he never took a position of his own²⁶.

III. MARK 7:15: NOT AN IMPERATIVE, BUT A PUZZLING SENTENCE

In this perspective, Mark 7:1-23 has always been considered as the key passage for understanding Jesus’ attitude towards the rules of purity. Apart from this passage (and its parallels), there are very few pieces of evidence for reconstructing Jesus’ position, and none of them presents the same force or impact²⁷. The Markan pericope can be conveniently divided into seven sequences²⁸:

Introduction (vv. 1-2): 1. Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, 2. they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them.

Explanatory parenthesis (vv. 3-4): 3. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; 4. and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.

²³ See at least G. Stemberger 1991; P. Sacchi 2007, 169-233; Harrington 2007; I.C. Werrett 2007.
²⁴ See Neusner 1973; Sanders 1990, 131-254, and 1993, 431-440; Neusner 1992. For a critical discussion, see S.M. Bryan 2002, 130-141.

²⁵ See esp. D.A. Fiensy 2007, 171-173, who discusses several cases from Josephus and other texts.

²⁶ See the three basic arguments mentioned by Fiensy (2007, 177-179): a) Jesus frequented the Temple; b) Jesus ate with Pharisees; c) Jesus seems meticulous about “legal minutiae”. For the first and third of these points, see for example E. Lupieri 2011 (on Mark 11:11-26).

²⁷ This is the case, for example, of P.Oxy 840, a piece of parchment which contains fragments of an unknown Gospel. The text reports a purity dispute between Jesus and a Pharisaic priest, set in the Temple. Although it seems to presuppose a post-70 perspective (see F. Bovon 2000; M. Pesce 2004, 620-623; and M.J. Kruger 2005), T. Kazen argues that its reference to the distinction between “inward” and “outward” purity could reflect a reliable “memory of Jesus”, since it is consistent with “the picture of Jesus that we have found in almost every other strand of the Jesus tradition” (2002, 260).

²⁸ For a detailed analysis of the whole passage, see, among the many, J. Lambrecht 1977; R. Booth 1986; E. Cuvillier 1992; B. Chilton 1997; J. Svartvik 2000; J.G. Crossley 2004, 183-205; Fiensy 2007, 180-186; Meier 2009, 352-405; F. Avemarie 2010, 263-275. On v. 15, see esp. H. Räisänen 1982; Dunn 1985; B. Lindars 1988; W.R.G. Loader 1997, 71-79, and 1998; Y. Furstenberg 2008. For a social-science reading, see also Neyrey 1986 and 1988; B.J. Malina 1988; J.J. Pilch 1988; G. Salyer 1993; C. Focant 1996.

Opponents' question (v. 5): 5. So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?"

Jesus' first answer – Isaiah reply (vv. 6-8): 6. He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; 7. in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.' 8. You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition."

Jesus' second answer – Qorban reply (vv. 9-13): 9. Then he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition! 10. For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must surely die.' 11. But you say that if anyone tells father or mother, 'Whatever support you might have had from me is *qorban*' (that is, an offering to God) – 12. then you no longer permit doing anything for a father or mother, 13. thus making void the word of God through your tradition that you have handed on. And you do many things like this."

Jesus' public teaching – Purity reply (vv. 14-15): 14. Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand: 15. there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile."²⁹

Private explanation to the disciples (vv. 17-23): 17. When he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about the parable. 18. He said to them, "Then do you also fail to understand? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile, 19. since it enters, not the heart but the stomach, and goes out into the sewer?" (Thus making all foods clean.) 20. And he said, "It is what comes out of a person that defiles. 21. For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, 22. adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. 23. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

The first two verses provide a short introduction, presenting the opponents of Jesus – Pharisees and scribes coming from Jerusalem³⁰ – and the actual origin of the dispute: some of Jesus' disciples "were eating with defiled hands (κοινῶς χερσίν)³¹, that is, without washing them (ἀνίπτους)". According to the Law, a body could become impure simply by entering into contact with something impure (contact by hand or with another part of the body). As we know from the book of Exodus

²⁹ Many manuscripts add v. 16: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear;" a scribal gloss (B.M. Metzger 1971, 94-95) that reinforces the hypothesis of a parallel with Mark 4 (see below, n. 40).

³⁰ It is worthy to notice that a scribal group, coming from Jerusalem, appears also in Mark 3:22. This particular suggests "a reinforcement of the local opposition [i.e., the group of Pharisees] by a delegation from the capital" (R.T. France 2002, 280). In Matthew, by contrast, we find only a single group of Pharisees and scribes, both coming from Jerusalem (cf. Matt 15:1). Mark's scribes, however, were probably also Pharisees, since they shared the same halakhic view (cf. Mark 2:6: "the scribes of the Pharisees").

³¹ Literally, "with common hands". For the usage of κοινός ("common") in Jewish Greek, to denote ritual impurity, see esp. Booth 1986, 118-121.

(30:17-21), priests were obliged to wash their hands and feet to preserve their purity, performing this type of ablution prior to officiating rites at the altar: it is likely, then, that the extension of this obligation to “lay people” could be derived by analogy with this priestly practice. This is, for example, the well-known hypothesis proposed by Neusner (1974) with special regard to the Pharisees³². Conversely, according to J.C. Poirier (1996), the Pharisaic practice of hand-washing should be read in the light of Diaspora customs of ritual ablution before prayer and learning activities (cf. *Let. Arist.* 305-306; cf. also *Jub.* 21:16). Both these assumptions, however, have recently been criticized by Y. Furstenberg (2008), who has argued for a link with the Graeco-Roman practice of washing hands before partaking in meals. Be that as it may, the washing of hands before meals was a typical “supererogatory” gesture, not deriving from the Torah³³: the gesture served simply to protect pure and permitted food (and then the eater) from any kind of ritual contamination³⁴.

According to Mark, the Pharisees saw only *some* (τίνες) of Jesus’ disciples eating with defiled hands. Thus we have two options:

- a) only *some* disciples refused to wash their hands before eating, while *all* the others did wash them;
- b) *all* of the disciples refused to wash their hands before eating, but only *some* of them were present at the meal.

In our opinion, the only plausible hypothesis is the second: it is unlikely that those who observed such ritual hand-washing would have normally accepted to share a meal with non-observers of the practice³⁵. This implies that even Jesus, as leader of the group, did not adopt the practice: actually, in the Gospel of Luke (11:37-41), it was Jesus himself the direct target of a similar reproof³⁶. We are evidently dealing with a

³² A similar view is defended by Sanders (1990, 229), who assumes that the original priestly practice of washing hands before touching holy foodstuff (*kodesh*) was later expanded to include a) heave-offerings (*terumah*) consumed by priests in their own homes, and then b) unconsecrated food (*hullin*) eaten by Pharisees at their own Sabbath and festival meals.

³³ Regarding lay people, the only reference to the obligation of hand-washing – separately from the rest of the body – is attested in Lev 15:11: this passage, however, refers only to affected people, in order to prevent the risk of defiling others by touch.

³⁴ On the various legal debates related to hand-washing and the defiling power of hands through the medium of liquid, see at least Booth 1986, 173-187; Sanders 1990, 228-231; Ch. Milikowsky 2000; and Crossley 2008, 12-16.

³⁵ See Booth 1986, 120.

³⁶ Anyway, Luke 11:37-41 cannot be considered as a parallel – in the stricter sense of the term – of Mark 7:1-23: Jesus’ replies in Luke, in fact, have nothing to do with Mark 7:15. While the first reply (Luke 11:39: contrast between the inside and outside of the cup) is most probably derived from Q (cf. Matt 23:25; a similar saying also occurs in Gos. Thom. 89), the second reply (Luke 11:40-41: alms-giving as a means of purification) seems to be taken from Luke’s special materials. The two episodes, however, share some similar elements: a) the rebuke of the Pharisees for refusing ritual ablutions before eating (in Mark, hand-washing; in Luke, bodily immersion:

dispute between two rival Jewish groups. In any case, in neither Mark nor in Matthew's parallel does the context suggest that the argument concerns the respect of rules on food (namely, the impure animals listed by Leviticus 11).

The following verses (7:3-4) contain an explanatory parenthesis, apparently directed to Gentile readers. The text states that "all the Jews do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands [...]". This statement recalls a famous passage of the *Sybilline Oracles* (3:591-594), where the act of washing hands is presented as a distinctive ethnic trait of the Jews. As in Mark 7:3, it appears in combination with traditions of the elders/fathers³⁷. However, the text of the *Oracles* refers to the gesture of washing hands before prayer, and is therefore within a strictly religious context. In our case, by contrast, the reference is to a practice adopted in the everyday context of meals.

Mark's broad-brush account serves to foresee the question that the opponents are about to pose to Jesus, concerning the behaviour of his companions:

Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands? (Mark 7:5)

Despite its indirect character, the question posed to Jesus appears as an out-and-out act of accusation, given that the master is held responsible for the conduct of his disciples³⁸. This is evident from the reaction of Jesus, who immediately turns the charge against his adversaries, with a twofold reply (vv. 6-8 and vv. 9-13) focussing on a polemical distinction between "the human precepts" and "the commandment of God". In the view of most exegetes, both these answers – the "Isaiah reply" and the "Qorban reply" – were not part of the original dispute, but were, rather, added subsequently³⁹. From our viewpoint, the question can remain open, since it is enough to observe how, up to this moment, Mark's Jesus reveals himself to be fully adherent to the written Torah.

At this point of the text, Mark inserts the saying on the pure and impure, which is the only answer actually pertinent to the issue raised by Pharisees and scribes:

There is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile. (Mark 7:15)

cf. Mark 7:3-4, where the two actions are put in contrast); b) Jesus' defence of inner purity; c) the reference to the cleaning of the cups.

³⁷ As noted by C. Colpe and K. Berger (1987, *ad* Mark 7:3).

³⁸ See D. Daube 1972, against Sanders' general assumption (1985, 264) and Meier's choice (2009, 368) to start his investigation on the historical Jesus from v. 6 (since Jesus, in vv. 1-5, does not speak nor acts!).

³⁹ However, this does not exclude the possibility that they go back to the historical Jesus. For an evaluation, see Meier 2009, 369ff.

What adds particular relevance to Jesus' reply to the issue in that – before speaking – he summons the crowd to gather around him. What has hitherto been a private discussion between Jesus and his opponents opened up to include the crowd. Jesus raises publicly a much more fundamental issue of purity, which goes far beyond the limited question of hand-washing. With the introduction of the crowd (at v. 14) and the subsequent change of scene (at v. 17), the evangelist follows his pattern of public pronouncement and esoteric explanation, already used for Jesus' parabolic discourse (Mark 4:1-34)⁴⁰. It is not for nothing, then, that the teaching on defilement is called as a “parable” (7:17: παραβολή, in the sense of enigmatic sentence).

For this reason, its meaning is later on explained by Jesus to his group of disciples alone, far away from the crowd. We can recognize two types of explanation (both probably deriving from early Church tradition): a medical one (vv. 18-19), and an ethical one (vv. 20-23). Problems arise mainly from the first one: it is not clear whether the final expression “making all foods clean” should be understood as a redactional gloss or as an integral part of Jesus' statement. The problem is created by the present participle καθαρίζον (“making clean”), which some late manuscripts correct in καθαρίζον, linking it to the neuter accusative ἀφεδρῶνα (“sewer”), and thus implying that, for Jesus, the purification of foods takes place through the natural process of digestion⁴¹. The first reading, however, is better attested, and it is generally taken to refer to Jesus, who, through his pronouncement, is “making clean” *all* foods. In this way, the core meaning of Jesus' parabolic saying, according to Mark, would imply nothing but the abolishment of dietary laws⁴².

⁴⁰ See M.A. Beavis 1989, esp. 93: “Mark 7 contains vocabulary reminiscent of the parable chapter: Jesus enjoins the crowd with the phrase ἀκούσατε μου καὶ συνίετε (7:14; cf. 4:9.23); the teaching on defilement is called as a parable (παραβολή: 7:17); Jesus accuses the disciples to being as uncomprehending as ‘those outside’ (7:18; cf. 4:11-12). [...] There is also a subtler similarity of themes: 4:11-12 is about ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’, and 7:17-23 contrasts the ‘internal’ (‘what comes out of a person’) and the ‘external’ (‘what goes into a person’). Both passages make the ‘internal’/‘insiders’ more important than the ‘external’/‘outsiders’”.

⁴¹ Attested only by late witnesses (such as Y K U Π 1582^c 157 τ), this reading is defended by Malina 1988, esp. 22-23. For a critical discussion, see D.J. Rudolph 2002.

⁴² Crossley rejects this reading as intrinsically misleading, since it would be inconsistent with the whole image of the Markan Jesus (who is always adherent to the written Torah). According to Crossley, Mark's comment in v. 19b does not mean that *all foods* are clean (and then permitted to eat), but rather that *all foods permitted to eat by the Torah* are clean. In Crossley's understanding, what is implied here is a simple denial of the importance of hand-washing: neither Jesus nor Mark has ever thought that all foods were pure (see Crossley 2004, 183-205; 2008). This explication, however, does not account for the fact that the evangelist qualified Jesus' statement as a “parable”, and places his comment of v. 19 in a clear context of esoteric teaching (see also Svartvik 2000, who underlines how Mark places the purity dispute within a narrative section that focusses on Jesus' traveling in a Gentile territory). All this supports the hypothesis of a much more radical and provocative meaning for Jesus' saying (as well as for Markan interpretation).

Now we must ask the question: should the saying be interpreted independently from the context of the hand-washing dispute? Against the opinion of H. Räisänen (1982), and along the lines traced by Dunn (1985) and R. Booth (1986), we are convinced that the saying constitutes an appropriate answer to the question posed by Jesus' opponents, and cannot be understood in isolation. In Jesus' time, especially in the Palestinian environment, it is highly likely that religious groups such as the Pharisees would have posed a question of this type⁴³, given the contemporary tendency to an expansionist inclination of purity concerns⁴⁴. Following Sanders, however, one could argue it is not credible "that scribes and Pharisees made a special trip to Galilee from Jerusalem to inspect Jesus' disciples' hands" (1985, 265). Nevertheless, their presence on the scene is not as improbable as it might first appear. On the one hand, there is nothing in our text to support the conclusion of a *single* group of persons coming from Jerusalem: on the contrary, Mark's wording in v. 7:2 seems to display the presence of two distinct groups, a local one, composed by the Pharisees, and a foreign one, formed by a Jerusalem delegation of scribes⁴⁵. On the other hand, Pharisees were likely to be interested in monitoring the legal conduct of rival groups. The objection reported by Mark might also be seen as a result of rumours and gossips: the sudden arrival of a stranger itinerant preacher, not recognized by any institution, could always create havoc in a peasant milieu – especially if he presented an unusual message and moved around with a conspicuous number of followers⁴⁶. Within such a highly competitive scenario, it is equally plausible that Jesus, as a leader of a religious group, would not have side-stepped the issues raised by other groups.

But which was the original formulation of Jesus' reply, that of Mark, or that of its parallels? As reported in Mark, Jesus' answer revolves around an inside/outside opposition, and is presented in a different formulation from Matt 15:11, with its insistence on the opposition between

⁴³ On the historical plausibility of the Markan hand-washing debate, three basic arguments are provided by Crossley: "Mark explicitly discusses [...] a practice clearly found in later rabbinical literature. The gospel evidence should therefore be regarded as decisive for a first-century date for hand-washing before ordinary meals. It would be a remarkable coincidence if Mark had invented or misunderstood a Jewish custom only for it to appear in later Jewish literature. Another strong argument [...] is the existence of the parallel in Matthew 15, which if anything has a greater emphasis on this practice by adding a further attack to his Markan source (Mt. 15.20). It is highly unlikely that Matthew would alter Mk. 7.19 to explicitly attack hand-washing before eating ordinary food if such a practice did not exist. [...] Another New Testament reference [...] is Jn. 2.6 where the 'six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification' were surely used for hand-washing" (2004, 184).

⁴⁴ See our discussion above. In this perspective, there is no need to identify the opponents of Jesus with a restricted group of Pharisees, such as the *Haberim* (as argued by Booth 1986, 189-203). On the problematic relationship between Pharisees and *Haberim*, see Fiensy 2007, 170, n. 426; see also Furstenberg 2008, 199-200, who discussed the supposed *Haberim* interest on the purity of hands.

⁴⁵ See above, n. 30.

⁴⁶ On this aspect, see also Destro and Pesce 2008, 52-53.

“what goes into the mouth” and “what comes out of the mouth”⁴⁷. In a similar form, the saying occurs also in Gos. Thom. 14:5, albeit in a different context⁴⁸.

<i>Mark 7:15</i>	<i>Matt 15:11</i>	<i>Gos. Thom. 14:5</i>
There is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.	It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.	For what goes into your mouth will not make you unclean. Rather, what comes out of your mouth will make you unclean.

The main difference between the two versions – that of Mark, on the one side, and that of Matthew and Thomas, on the other – lies in the fact that, in the former, the sentence assumes an absolute value, on account of the pronoun οὐδέν (“nothing”). In our opinion, it is very probable that it is Mark who conveys the formulation of the sentence closest to the original one: the variants of Matthew, both in the formulation of the saying and in the composition of the dispute, reflect a wish to attenuate the force of a teaching perceived as being too radical. By contrast, the Markan explanatory “going in” (ἐισπορευόμενον εἰς) and “coming out” (ἐκπορευόμενα), which can be seen as traditional (or redactional) additions⁴⁹, move in the opposite direction: their aim is precisely that of encouraging an interpretation of the saying in terms of rules about food. Without these integrations, the saying appears as a challenging comparison of ritual purity and ethical purity⁵⁰.

Faced with a specific question, Jesus does not respond with a specific answer, preferring to enounce a principle of a general character. In this case, it is a principle implying a relativisation of contamination from the outside (that deriving from contacts with sources of impurity), in favour of the *greater* seriousness of contamination from within (that deriving from the human heart and its evil intentions). The meaning of the saying, probably, should not be accepted in the absolute sense, but in a relative sense: the “nothing...”/“but...” antithesis need not be under-

⁴⁷ The same opposition appears in Jesus’ explanation: cf. Mark 7:18-23 and Matt 15:17-20.

⁴⁸ This seems to support the hypothesis of a dependence on Matthew, even though the possibility of Thomas’ independence cannot be excluded. This last opinion, for example, appears more satisfactory to H. Koester 1990, 111-112. See also Crossan 1983, 253-254; and, more recently, A.D. DeConick 2007, 90-92.

⁴⁹ According to Paschen (1970, 173-177), followed by Lambrecht (1977, 46-48 and 59-60), these directional aspects were absent in the “original” formulation of the saying (based only on the opposition between “inside” and “outside”). In the same direction also Booth (1986, 67-71), who, however, assumes that the directional aspect (“coming out”, ἐκπορευόμενα) must be maintained for the second limb of the saying, both for syntactical and contextual reasons.

⁵⁰ Cf. Mark 7:18-19. From this point of view, Mark’s opposition between “inside” and “outside” seems to be more plausible than Matthew’s one between “into the mouth” and “out of the mouth” (cf. Q/Luke 11:39; Matt 23:25; and P.Oxy 840, l. 36).

stood as an “either”/“or”, but rather with the force of “more important than”, a form of dialectical negation of Semitic cast (“things outside a person do not defile *as much* as things from inside”)⁵¹.

As for the saying’s authenticity, this can be demonstrated on the basis of at least three fundamental criteria:

a) *the criterion of style*: the Greek text of Mark reveals several Semitic traits, such as the use of antithetic parallelism and of the term *κοινός* (even if the presence of Semitisms could merely point to a Palestinian origin);

b) *the criterion of multiple attestation*: the motif of the question is encountered in the Lukan special materials (Luke 11:38), while the motif of the answer is present in both the Q strand of tradition (Luke 11:39 // Matt 23:25) and the Pauline corpus (Rom 14:14);

c) *the criterion of coherence*: the saying is consistent with the general tenor of Jesus’ teaching reported in the Gospels, showing us a Jesus who normally acts in full respect of the Law⁵², but proposes a radical interpretation of it, especially when considerations of an ethical order enter into play (as in the case, for example, of the Sabbath)⁵³. What we can find in our saying, thus, is not an abrogation of the dietary laws, but rather a provocative plea for moral purity, that for Jesus is more important than ritual purity. The basis of this conception is already evident in prophetic literature (e.g. Hosea and Isaiah), and there is no lack of points of contact with the conceptions of Jewish groups contemporary to Jesus (Qumran, John the Baptist), who see sin, intended as the transgression of God’s will, as the greatest source of impurity. From this point of view, arguing that our saying does not respect the criterion of discontinuity actually plays in favour of its authenticity.

However, the saying’s authenticity can be confirmed on the basis of a further, decisive criterion, that of Jesus’ practice of life. As the adage goes, sometimes an action is worth a thousand words: alongside Jesus’ common life with a mixed group of disciples, there is also his choice of an itinerant mission, with all the problems of purity connected with it. In this respect, we can distinguish two types of problems: those emerging from in-group relations, and those emerging from out-group relations. The fact of moving around as a group, for periods of a certain length,

⁵¹ Meier (2009, 419) does not consider the argument of a Semitic construction as particularly cogent. However, it is precisely the Markan context that confirms the argument: if our reconstruction is correct, it is quite obvious that Jesus could not have made such a statement in an absolute sense. Nevertheless, given its paradoxical nature, even in absolute terms the statement could not be interpreted as an imperative.

⁵² In this regard, Mark’s reference to Jesus’ *ζρόσπεδον* (“tassel”, in Hebrew *tsitsit*: Mark 6:56; cf. Matt 14:36), significantly mentioned before a discussion on purity, reinforces the picture of a Jesus totally adherent to the commandments of the Torah (cf. Num 15:38-41).

⁵³ See esp. the puzzling saying of Mark 2:27-28 and parr.

undoubtedly raises problems relating to male and female sexual sphere (for men, impurity due to the emission of seminal liquids during sleep; for women, menstrual cycles); on the other side, Jesus' practice of open commensality implies the contact with tax collectors and sinners (cf. Mark 2:14-17; Matt 11:19 // Luke 7:34; Luke 15:1; 19:2-7), and his healing activities require the contact with the sick, even with lepers or women with irregular menstrual bleedings (cf. Mark 1:41; 5:25-34; Matt 11:5 // Luke 7:22; Luke 17:11-19); last but not least, the contact with graves and dead bodies also speak of Jesus' attitude towards what was considered the worst form of impurity, the one deriving from corpses (cf., for example, Mark 5:1-20.35-42; Luke 7:11-17; John 11:43-44). In all of these cases, Jesus' attitude remains the same: everything is subordinate to his claim to know and interpret directly the will of God, and ultimately to his mission to proclaim and inaugurate the "kingdom" of God.

Rather than revealing a substantial indifference to purity matters (see the seminal work of Kazen 2002), Jesus seems to be interested to promote his own position, showing the precise intent to dismiss any politics of separation *within* Israel's boundaries. This is consistent with the image he most frequently uses to describe the kingdom, that of a "banquet" (as in the parable of Matt 22:1-14; Luke 14:16-24; Gos. Thom. 64) to which *all* Israel is called to participate, without internal distinctions. In this perspective, since food restrictions and eating behaviours are always meaningful ways to mark social boundaries, Jesus' reaction against hand-washing before meals acquires a very special significance, putting into practice the heart of his message.

IV. ROM 14:14: HOW TO STRENGTHEN THE WEAK BY WEAKENING THE STRONG

However, the main objection to the authenticity of Mark 7:15 is based on an argument that we certainly cannot ignore. It concerns the missing *Wirkungsgeschichte* of this particular saying, underlined by many scholars: "If Jesus had spoken so clearly and unequivocally as Mark 7:15 claims ('nothing from outside can render a man unclean'), how could Peter and the Jerusalem believers have been so hostile to the thought of eating something unclean (Acts 10:14; 11:3)? How could the confrontation (between Peter and Paul) at Antioch on the same issue of ritual purity and food laws have been carried through without a single reference to such an important teaching of Jesus (Gal 2:11-18)?" (Dunn 1985, 255-256). It is a valid argument, but only up to a certain point. If everything we have said so far is correct, the saying in Mark does not directly represent a clear stance with regard to rules on food. Consequently, it is rather obvious that no one could refer to it to uphold

the abrogation of the laws of Leviticus⁵⁴. Furthermore, it is certainly no mere chance that Mark sets the explanation within an esoteric context, as though to justify its incomplete comprehension on the part of the early Church. From this point of view, as noted by G. Theissen and A. Merz (1999, 452), the silence of the tradition is perfectly understandable: our saying does not formulate an imperative, but an enigmatic sentence open to different practical consequences, and in this way explains the controversy on clean and unclean food.

The latter consideration brings back into play the possibility that Paul, in the letter to the Romans, had in mind precisely these words of Jesus. Let us briefly reconsider the “incriminated” verse of Rom 14:14:

I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean.

At first sight, the affinities between the Pauline formulation and Mark 7:15 are surprising: a) in both cases we are dealing with an absolute statement, introduced by the pronoun οὐδέν (“nothing”); b) both Mark and Paul, moreover, employ the term “unclean”, the former through the verb form κοινῶ, the latter through the adjective κοινός; c) finally, both passages deal with the same problem: whether food, something coming from outside into a person, can make a person unclean. Similarities do not stop there, however. A few verses later, in Rom 14:20, the apostle writes:

Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God.
Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for you to make others fall by what you eat.

Paul’s statement, “Everything is clean” (in Greek, πάντα μὲν καθαρὰ), combined with the previous mention of “food” (βρώμα), almost literally reproduces the redactional terminology of Mark 7:19, “making all foods clean” (καθαρίζων πάντα τὰ βρώματα), which, as we have seen, the evangelist sets within a context of esoteric teaching. Both the apostle and the evangelist, therefore, seem to interpret and use the same sentence of Jesus in a similar way, applying it to the problem of food laws⁵⁵.

⁵⁴ In this direction, M. Kister (2001, 145-154) rightly pointed out that in first-century Judaism Jesus’ statement would never have been understood as an attack on Jewish dietary laws.

⁵⁵ The Pauline expression reminds also of the πάντα καθαρὰ in Luke 11:41. According to Kazen, “If any significant saying about ‘everything is clean’ could be imagined as originating with Jesus himself, a context similar to that in Luke 11:37-41 is the most likely one. In this context the phrase gains a relative sense as an argument for justice (inner purity) as more important than immersion (outer purity), and the point of the saying fits well into a purity discussion during the first century CE. [...] Such a context could explain the presence of the expression in different strands of tradition, while at the same time it could explain the comparative lack of *Wirkungsgeschichte*, since the expression was part of a saying which originally had nothing to do with food laws” (2002, 230).

This hypothesis is confirmed by the particular introductory formula adopted by Paul in Rom 14:14, which probably implies a quotation of Jesus' words. There are three elements to consider with regard to this case: the two verbs "to know" and "to be persuaded", and the expression "in the Lord Jesus". As far as the latter is concerned, we immediately notice how it differs from the usual phraseology adopted by Paul, who often employs the more simple "in the Lord" (ἐν κυρίῳ). The addition of Jesus' proper name could therefore constitute a subtle reference to the earthly Jesus⁵⁶. Not by chance, the same combination of terms – "Lord" and "Jesus" – appears in one of the few explicit references to the words of Jesus present in Paul's letters, that is in 1 Cor 11:23, when the apostle reports the tradition of the Last Supper:

For I received from the Lord (ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου) what I also handed on to you,
that the Lord Jesus (ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς) on the night when he was delivered up...

Here, the bringing together of the name "Jesus" and the term "Lord" has the precise function of introducing the reference to a concrete episode in Jesus' life (cf. also 1 Thess 2:15; 2 Cor 4:14; 11:31). At any rate, it should be borne in mind that the use of the term "Lord", along with other titles (foremost among them "Christ"), does not in itself imply an exclusive reference to the Risen or Heavenly Jesus⁵⁷. In 1 Thess 4:2, for example, Paul clearly writes about having received and handed over to the church of Thessalonica a set of "rules" coming from the "Lord"⁵⁸. The same term "Lord" is also employed to introduce Jesus' instructions on the subject of divorce (1 Cor 7:10-11) and support of itinerant preach-

⁵⁶ See M. Thompson 1991, 194.

⁵⁷ See L.E. Keck (1989, 446): "An incomplete overview shows the wide range of Paul's usage apart from Romans (and apart from non-christological uses of *kyrios* in Rom 14:4; 1 Cor 7:10; Gal 4:1). (a) *Kyrios* can be used of both biological and religious relationships ('brothers of the Lord' [1 Cor 9:5; Gal 1:19] and 'brother in the Lord' [Phil 1:14]). (b) 'The Lord' can refer both to the person who once lived and now lives a resurrected life, as is clear from the eucharistic passages: not only did Paul receive a tradition 'from the Lord' (1 Cor 11:23), but he writes of the cup and the table of the Lord (1 Cor 10:21) and of the 'body and blood of the Lord' which the Corinthians can now profane (1 Cor 11:27). So too, where we might refer to Jesus, Paul can refer to 'the Lord': the rulers crucified 'the Lord of glory' (1 Cor 2:8); Christians at the table proclaim 'the Lord's death' (1 Cor 11:26); God 'raised the Lord' (1 Cor 6:14). (c) The parousia will be the coming of the Lord (1 Cor 4:5 [1 Thess 4:16]). (d) 'The Lord' is the subject of verbs referring to present activity: he says (1 Cor 7:12), gives (1 Cor 7:17), commands (1 Cor 7:25; 9:14), judges (1 Cor 11:32). (e) 'The Lord' can also be the object of verbs of human action: test (1 Cor 10:22), love (1 Cor 16:22), entreat (2 Cor 12:8), please (2 Cor 5:8-9). (f) Especially flexible is the phrase 'in the Lord': it characterizes people (1 Cor 4:17; 9:1, 2; 1 Thess 5:12; Phlm 16) and things they do: marry (1 Cor 7:39), work on behalf of the gospel (1 Cor 15:58), boast (2 Cor 10:17), be persuaded (Gal 5:10; Phil 2:24), rejoice (Phil 3:1; 4:4, 10), think (Phil 4:2), stand steadfast (Phil 4:1; 1 Thess 3:8), extend hospitality (Phil 1:29). (g) Paul can speak 'according to the Lord' (2 Cor 11:17) as well as 'in the Lord's word' (1 Thess 4:15)".

⁵⁸ On this point, see Walt 2013 (in press), 86ss.

ers (1 Cor 9:14). In all of these cases, Paul's actual statements suggest his intention to report given traditions⁵⁹.

We are left with the question of the two verbs. Unfortunately, the combination οἶδα καὶ πέπεισμαι remains unparalleled in the authentic letters of Paul (the sole attestation is in 2 Tim 1:12). Neither does scrutiny of Paul's use of certain verbs turn out to be of much help. The only remaining option is that of examining the expression in its immediate context: namely, the conflict between the "strong" and the "weak", which in Rome drastically differs from that raised in Corinth⁶⁰. In Rome, the "weak" were distinct from the "strong" in their respect of certain "days" (probably the Sabbath and other Jewish festivals), and of certain food-restrictions (abstention from meat and wine and a diet based on vegetables alone: cf. Rom 14:1.21). Both these practices allow us to identify them as Jews or Judaizing followers of Jesus⁶¹.

Moreover, Paul is writing to a community that he does not know personally, and which he proposes to visit very soon: given the situation, it would have been entirely irrational for him to appeal to personal experiences of revelation, or traditions that his audience could not know. Therefore, the apostle "takes for granted that both the 'weak' and 'strong' will acknowledge some justification for his assertion [that there is nothing unclean in itself], even though the 'weak' obviously do not agree with it" (Thompson 1991, 196). In dealing with this issue, Paul knows that he shares the ideas of the "strong", and he also knows that the "strong" know it, but he is moving in the direction of their reconciliation with the "weak". In this sense, the first verb he uses, "to know", evidently alludes to a specific and certain knowledge, whose source can be none other than a saying of Jesus⁶²; by contrast, the second verb, "to be persuaded", refers to a conviction derived from faith, and sets Paul's

⁵⁹ See, among many, D.L. Dungan 1971; E.E. Ellis 1982; Kim 1993, 474-475; Pesce 2004, 502-504 (*contra* Neiryneck 1996, 158).

⁶⁰ See W.L. Willis 1985, 92-96; P. Lampe 2003, 72-74. Further discussion in Segal 1990, 224-253; N. Elliott 1999; M. Reasoner 1999; Ph.F. Esler 2003, 339-344; C.L. Toney 2008, 49-90. On the conflict in Corinth, see esp. J.D. Fotopoulos 2003.

⁶¹ See Dunn 1988, 800; Segal 1990, 233; C.K. Barrett 1993, 238-239; D.J. Moo, 831; R. Jewett 2007, 858ss.; and R. Schwartz 2011, 293-294. A diet of vegetables and water is attributed to the prophet Daniel and his companions, exiles at the court of Nebuchadnezzar, to avoid any contamination (cf. Dan 1:8.12), while we are told by Josephus that a group of priests, led captive to Rome in the presence of Nero, "supported themselves with figs and nuts", i.e. with only vegetables (*Vita* 3:14).

⁶² The use of the first singular person does not weaken the hypothesis, as argued by D.R. Schwartz (2011, 296), and cannot be compared with the various passages in which Paul refers to shared traditions using the first plural person (1 Cor 8:4; Rom 3:19; 7:14). Moreover, the verb οἶδα does not necessarily refer to a revealed knowledge (as in 1 Cor 2:11-12; 13:2; 2 Cor 12:2-3): in this case, in fact, it is simply a generic term, whose context does not imply the use of a "technical" language.

outlook in line with that of the “strong”, forestalling any objection on their part⁶³.

Such a distinction serves to make two points clear: a) on the one side, none among the weak will ever be able to invoke the authority of Jesus against the opinion of Paul and of the “strong”: Paul’s language clearly reveals such a deep conviction; b) on the other side, none among the “strong” will ever be able to invoke the authority of Paul to justify their contempt for the “weak”: Paul knows that there is no direct teaching of Jesus against food laws, and is fully aware that his, like that of the “strong”, is merely a secondary interpretation (even if, from his viewpoint, it is the only one able to convey the true meaning of Jesus’ words). Definitively, as argued by M. Thompson, “if Paul is anticipating an appeal by the ‘strong’ to the dominical tradition, his response to that tradition is consistent with that shown elsewhere in 1 Corinthians. He accepts the authority and truth of the saying, but he corrects its use, in order to lead his readers into the way of Christ – walking in love” (1991, 199). The recognition that “there is nothing unclean in itself”, while deriving from the interpretation of the saying of Jesus, could not enter into conflict with the overall meaning of his message, which for Paul was embodied in the commandment of love.

V. CONCLUSIONS

From this analysis we should be able to draw some conclusions. First of all, Jesus’ position on the problem of purity, at least in its essential traits, can be reconstructed in a clear and coherent way. In the original formulation of the saying reported by Mark 7:15, Jesus does not directly confront the question of pure and impure foods, but instead enunciates a general principle. The introduction of this principle serves to shift the centre of attention from the problem of ritual purity, and thus from *external* sources of contamination, to the problem of moral purity, and therefore to *internal* sources of contamination. The former are not abolished (in fact, Jesus and his first disciples continue to eat only foods permitted by the Law), but, rather, they are relativised, in favour of what *really* counts within Jesus’ religious vision. His position is perfectly coherent with what we know of his practice of life. From the various considerations adduced above, it is clear that the weight given to Jesus’ words inevitably depends on their force *within a particular context* – on the one hand the Jewish context of Jesus’ own mission, on the other the different contexts of his followers. If we consider the first

⁶³ The perfect tense of *πέπεισμαι*, according to Thompson, “might point to a settled conviction as to how the teaching of Jesus should be interpreted” (1991, 195, n. 5).

context, the Markan saying appears no more radical than certain others: the intention is provocative and paradoxical, as in the famous sentence: “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead” (Matt 8:22; cf. Luke 9:60). Here, Jesus is not commanding his disciples to abandon the Jewish custom of burying the dead (or, even less, the fourth commandment), but is urging them to reflect upon the higher and more pressing needs of the “kingdom”. Jesus’ Jewish listeners would have understood his words exactly in this way, and there is no reason to believe that Jesus, having limited his preaching to the land of Israel, had any intention of going beyond it.

By contrast, such a problem arises in connection with Paul. We have seen that his position on the purity of foods derives from Jesus, or rather from his interpretation of Jesus’ words. Unlike the Peter of the Acts (10:10-16), Paul does not need a special revelation on God’s part to understand that “everything is clean”. His argument is underpinned by the idea – perhaps shared by Jesus – that the world, since it belongs to God, cannot contain anything that is intrinsically impure. As for Jesus, for Paul too, impurity is identified above all with an internal state of persons, one marked by the absence of the divine: within this perspective, it is only the distance from God that makes something “impure”. The distinction between “pure” (that is, “holy”) and “impure” is thus transferred onto the social plane, in which those internal to the ἐκκλησία, the followers of Jesus, are qualified as “holy”, while those outside it are “impure” (cf. 1 Thess 4:7; 1 Cor 7:14; Rom 6:19). This in no way prejudices the possibility of contact between the pure and impure: as Jesus declares, he has not come for the healthy, but for the sick, so Paul addresses the Gentiles, and certainly does not refuse to share a table with them. The root of his attitude lies in the reversal brought about by Jesus, whereby it is not contact with the “sick” that “contaminates”, but it is contact with “health” that “restores”. The politics of purity, from passive and defensive, thus becomes active and offensive.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Adler Y., 2008, “Second Temple Period Ritual Baths Adjacent to Agricultural Installations: The Archaeological Evidence in Light of the Halakic Sources”, in *Journal of Jewish Studies* 59/1, 62-72.
- Amit D., Adler Y., 2010, “The Observance of Ritual Purity after 70 c.e.: A Reevaluation of the Evidence in Light of Recent Archaeological Discoveries”, in Weiss Z., Irshai O., Magnes J., Schwartz S. (eds.), *“Follow the Wise”: Studies in Jewish History and Culture in Honor of Lee I. Levine*, Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns.

- Avemarie F., 2010, "Jesus and Purity", in Bieringer R., García Martínez F., Pollefeyt D., Tomson P.J. (eds.), *The New Testament and Rabbinic Literature*, Leiden, Brill, 255-279.
- Backhaus K., 2011, "Echoes from the Wilderness: The Historical John the Baptist", in Porter S.E., Holmén T. (eds.), *The Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, vol. II, Leiden – Boston, Brill, 1747-1785.
- Barrett C.K., 1993, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Peabody, Hendrickson (rev. ed.).
- Beavis M.A., 1989, *Mark's Audience: The Literary and Social Setting of Mark 4.11-12*, Sheffield, JSOT Press.
- Berlin A.M., 2005, "Jewish Life before the Revolt: The Archaeological Evidence", in *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 36/4, 417-470.
- Booth R., 1986, *Jesus and the Laws of Purity: Tradition History and Legal History in Mark 7*, Sheffield, JSOT Press.
- Bourdieu P., 1990, *The Logic of Practice*, transl. by R. Nice, Stanford, Stanford University Press (or. 1980, *Le sens pratique*, Paris, Éditions de Minuit).
- Bourdieu P., 1993, *Sociology in Question*, transl. by R. Nice, London, SAGE Publications (or. 1984, *Questions de sociologie*, Paris, Éditions de Minuit).
- Bovon F., 2000, "Fragment Oxyrhynchus 840, Fragment of a Lost Gospel, Witness of and Early Christian Controversy Over Purity", in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119, 705-728.
- Bryan S.M., 2002, *Jesus and Israel's Traditions of Judgement and Restoration*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Chilton B., 1997, "A Generative Exegesis of Mark 7:1-23", in Chilton B., Evans C.A. (eds.), *Jesus in Context: Temple, Purity, and Restoration*, Leiden, Brill, 297-317.
- Colpe C., Berger K., 1987, *Religionsgeschichtliches Textbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Crossan J.D., 1983, *In Fragments: The Aphorisms of Jesus*, San Francisco, Harper & Row.
- Crossan J.D., 1994, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*, San Francisco, Harper & Row.
- Crossan J.D., 1997, "Itinerants and Householders in the Earliest Jesus Movement", in Arnal W.E., Desjardins M. (eds.), *Whose Historical Jesus?*, Waterloo (Ontario), Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 5-24.
- Crossley J.G., 2004, *The Date of Mark's Gospel: Insight from the Law in Earliest Christianity*, London, T&T Clark.
- Crossley J.G., 2008, "Mark 7.1-23: Revisiting the Question of 'All Foods Clean'", in Tait M., Oakes P. (eds.), *Torah in the New Testament: Papers Delivered at the Manchester-Lausanne Seminar of June 2008*, London – New York, T&T Clark International, 8-20.

- Cuvillier E., 1992, "Tradition et rédaction en Marc 7:1-23", in *Novum Testamentum* 34, 169-192.
- Dapaah D.S., 2005, *The Relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth: A Critical Study*, Lanham, University Press of America.
- DeConick A.D., 2007, *The Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, London – New York, T&T Clark.
- Daube D., 1972, "Responsibilities of Master and Disciples in the Gospels", in *New Testament Studies* 19, 1-15.
- Deines R., 1993, *Jüdische Steingefäße und pharisäische Frömmigkeit: Ein archäologisch-historischer Beitrag zum Verständnis von Joh 2,6 und der jüdischen Reinheitshalacha zur Zeit Jesu*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck.
- Destro A., Pesce M., 2008, *L'uomo Gesù. Giorni, luoghi, incontri di una vita*, Milano, Mondadori (eng. transl. by B. McNeil, *Encounters with Jesus: The Man in His Place and Time*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2012).
- Douglas M., 1966, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, London, Routledge.
- Douglas M., 2001, *Leviticus as Literature*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Dungan D.L., 1971, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul: The Use of the Synoptic Tradition in the Regulation of Early Church Life*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press.
- Dunn J.D.G., 1985, "Jesus and Ritual Purity: A Study on the Tradition History of Mark 7:15", in Gantoy R. (éd.), *À cause de l'Évangile. Études sur les synoptiques et les Actes offertes au P. Jacques Dupont O.S.B. à l'occasion de son 70^e anniversaire*, Paris, Cerf, 251-276.
- Dunn J.D.G., 1988, *Romans 9–16*, Dallas, Word Books.
- Dunn J.D.G., 1994, "Jesus Tradition in Paul", in Chilton B., Evans C.A. (eds.), *Studying the Historical Jesus. Evaluation of the State of Current Research*, Leiden, Brill, 155-178.
- Dunn J.D.G., 2002, "Jesus and Purity: An Ongoing Debate", in *New Testament Studies* 48/4, 449-467.
- Dunn J.D.G., 2010, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-Examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today*, London, SCM Press (2nd ed.).
- Elliott N., 1999, "Ascetism among the 'Weak' and the 'Strong' in Romans 14-15", in Vaage L.E., Wimbush W.L. (eds.), *Ascetism and the New Testament*, New York, Routledge, 231-251.
- Ellis E.E., 1982, "Traditions in 1 Corinthians", in *New Testament Studies* 32, 481-501.
- Eshel H., 2000, "The Pools of Sepphoris: Ritual Baths or Bathtubs? They're Not Ritual Baths", in *Biblical Archaeology Review* 26/4, 42-45.

- Esler Ph.F., 2003, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press.
- Fiensy D.A., 2007, *Jesus the Galilean: Soundings in a First Century Life*, Piscataway, Gorgias Press.
- Focant C., 1996, "Le rapport à la loi dans l'évangile de Marc", in *Revue théologique de Louvain* 27, 281-308.
- Fotopoulos J., 2003, *Food Offered to Idols in Roman Corinth: A Social-Rhetorical Reconsideration of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck.
- Freyne S., 2004, *Jesus, a Jewish Galilean: A New Reading of the Jesus Story*, London – New York, T&T Clark International.
- Furstenberg Y., 2008, "Defilement Penetrating the Body: A New Understanding of Contamination in Mark 7.15", in *New Testament Studies* 54, 176-200.
- Gibson S., 2003, "Stone Vessels of the Early Roman Period from Jerusalem and Palestine: A Reassessment", in Bottini G.C., Di Segni L., Chrupcafa L.D. (eds.), *One Land, Many Cultures: Archaeological Studies in Honour of Stanislaw Loffreda OFM.*, Jerusalem, Franciscan Printing Press, 287-308.
- Harrington H., 2007, *The Purity Texts*, London – New York, T&T Clark International.
- Hayes C.E., 2002, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Havrelock R., 2007, "The Two Maps of Israel's Land", in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 126/4, 649-667.
- Hock R.F., 1980, *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press.
- Hollander H.W., 2000, "The Words of Jesus: From Oral Traditions to Written Records in Paul and Q", in *Novum Testamentum* 42, 340-357.
- Hollenbach J.P.W., 1979, "Social Aspects of John the Baptizer's Preaching Mission in the Context of Palestinian Judaism", in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.19.1, 850-875.
- Jewett R., 2007, *Romans: A Commentary*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press.
- Kazen T., 2002, *Jesus and Purity Halakhah: Was Jesus Indifferent to Impurity?*, Stockholm, Almqvist & Wiksell.
- Keck L.E., 1989, "Jesus' in Romans", in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108/3, 443-460.
- Kim S., 1993, "Jesus, sayings of", in Hawthorne G.F., Martin R.P., Reid D.G. (eds.), *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, Downers Grove – Leicester, Intervarsity, 474-492.
- Kister M., 2001, "Law, Morality, and Rhetoric in Some Sayings of Jesus", in Kugel J.L. (ed.), *Studies in Ancient Midrash*, Cambridge, Harvard University Center for Jewish Studies.

- Klawans J., 2000, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Koester H., 1990, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development*, Harrisburg, Trinity Press International.
- Kruger M.J., 2005, *The Gospel of the Savior: An Analysis of P.Oxy. 840 and Its Place in the Gospel Traditions of Early Christianity*, Leiden, Brill.
- Lambrecht J., 1977, "Jesus and the Law: An Investigation of Mark 7:1-23", *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 53, pp. 24-82.
- Labahn M., 2011, "The Non-Synoptic Jesus: An Introduction to John, Paul, Thomas and Other Outsiders of the Jesus Quest", in Porter S.E., Holmén T. (eds.), *The Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, vol. III, Leiden – Boston, Brill, 1933-1996.
- Lampe P., 2003, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christian at Rome in the First Two Centuries*, transl. by M. Steinhauser, ed. by M.D. Johnson, Minneapolis, Fortress Press (or. 1989, *Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten. Untersuchungen zur Sozialgeschichte*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck).
- Lietart Peerbolte L.J., 2003, *Paul the Missionary*, Leuven, Peeters.
- Lindars B., 1988, "All Foods Clean: Thoughts on Jesus and the Law", in Lindars B. (ed.), *Law and Religion: Essays on the Place of the Law in Israel and Early Christianity*, Cambridge, Clarke, 61-71.
- Loader W.R.G., 1997, *Jesus' Attitude Towards the Law: A Study of the Gospels*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck.
- Loader W.R.G., 1998, "Mark 7:1-23 and the Historical Jesus", in *Colloquium* 30/2, 123-151.
- Loader W.R.G., 2011, "Jesus and the Law", in Porter S.E., Holmén T. (eds.), *The Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, vol. III, Leiden – Boston, Brill, 2745-2771.
- Lupieri E., 1991, *Giovanni e Gesù. Storia di un antagonismo*, Milano, Mondadori (ried. 2013, Roma, Carocci).
- Lupieri E., 2011, "Fragments of the Historical Jesus? A Reading of Mark 11,11-[26]", in *Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi* 28/1, 289-311.
- Magda K., 2009, *Paul's Territoriality and Mission Strategy: Searching for the Geographical Awareness Paradigm Behind Romans*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck.
- Magen Y., 2002, *The Stone Vessel Industry in the Second Temple Period: Excavations at Hizma and the Jerusalem Temple Mount*, ed. L. Tsfania, Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society.
- Malina B.J., 1988, "A Conflict Approach to Mark 7", in *Forum* 4/3, 3-30.
- Meeks W.A., 1983, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, New Haven – London, Yale University Press.
- Meier J.P., 1991, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, vol. I, *The Roots of the Problem and the Person*, New York, Doubleday.

- Meier J.P., 2009, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, vol. IV, *Law and Love*, New Haven, Yale University Press.
- Metzger B.M., 1971, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, London – New York, United Bible Societies.
- Meyers E.M., 2000, “The Pools of Sepphoris: Ritual Baths or Bathtubs? Yes, They Are”, in *Biblical Archaeology Review* 26/4, 46-49, 60-61.
- Milikowsky Ch., 2000, “Reflections on Hand-Washing, Hand Purity and Holy Scripture in Rabbinic Literature”, in Poorthuis M.J.H.M., Schwartz J. (eds.), *Purity and Holiness: The Heritage of Leviticus*, Leiden, Brill, 149-162.
- Miller S.S., 2007, “Stepped Pools and the Non-Existent Monolithic ‘Miqveh’”, in Edwards D., McCollough T. (eds.), *The Archaeology of Difference: Gender, Ethnicity, Class and the “Other” in Antiquity. Studies in Honor of Eric M. Meyers*, Boston, The American Schools of Oriental Research, 215-234.
- Miller S.S., 2010, “Stepped Pools, Stone Vessels, and other Identity Markers of ‘Complex Common Judaism’”, in *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 41/2, 214-243.
- Moo D., 1996, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans.
- Murphy O’Connor J., 1990, “John the Baptist and Jesus: History and Hypotheses”, in *New Testament Studies* 36, 359-374.
- Murphy O’Connor J., 2007, *Jesus and Paul: Parallel Lives*, Collegeville, Liturgical Press.
- Neiryneck F., 1996, “The Sayings of Jesus in 1 Corinthians”, in Bieringer R. (ed.), *The Corinthian Correspondence*, Leuven, Leuven University Press, 141-176.
- Neusner J., 1973, *From Politics to Piety: The Emergence of Pharisaic Judaism*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall.
- Neusner J., 1974, *History of the Mishnaic Law of Purities*, Leiden, Brill.
- Neusner J., 1992, “Mr. Sanders’s Pharisees and Mine”, in *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 2, 143-169.
- Neyrey J.H., 1986, “The Idea of Purity in Mark’s Gospel”, in *Semeia* 35, 91-124.
- Neyrey J.H., 1988, “A Symbolic Approach to Mark 7”, in *Forum* 4/3, 63-91.
- Ollrog W.-H., 1979, *Paulus und seine Mitarbeiter*, Neukirchen, Neukirchen Verlag.
- Overman J.A., 1997, “Jesus of Galilee and the Historical Peasant”, in Edwards D.E., McCollough C.T. (eds.), *Archaeology and Galilee*, Atlanta, Scholars Press, 67-73.
- Pesce M., 2004, *Le parole dimenticate di Gesù*, Milano, Fondazione Lorenzo Valla – Mondadori.
- Pesce M., 2011, “La conversione di Paolo: il mutamento della recente interpretazione”, in Chili G. (a cura di), *Per la Conversione di A.*

- Manzoni (1810-2010). Il tema della conversione fra l'Antico e il Moderno*, Bologna, Fondazione del Monte, 43-56.
- Pilch J.J., 1988, "A Structural Functional Analysis of Mark 7", in *Forum* 4/3, 31-62.
- Poirier J.C., 1996, "Why Did the Pharisees Wash Their Hands?", in *Journal of Jewish Studies* 47/2, 217-233.
- Poirier J.C., 2003, "Purity beyond the Temple in the Second Temple Era", in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 122, 247-265.
- Pokorny P., 2011, "Words of Jesus in Paul: On the Theology and Praxis of the Jesus Tradition", in Porter S.E., Holmén T. (eds.), *The Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, vol. IV, Leiden – Boston, Brill, 3437-3467.
- Räsänen H., 1982, "Jesus and Food Laws: Reflections on Mark 7.15", in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 16, 79-100.
- Reasoner M., 1999, *The Strong and the Weak: Romans 14.1-15.13 in Context*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Reed J.L., 2002, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus: A Re-examination of the Evidence*, Harrisburg, Trinity Press International.
- Regev E., 2000, "Pure Individualism: The Idea of Non-Priestly Purity in Ancient Judaism", in *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods* 31/2, 176-202.
- Reich R., 2002, "They Are Ritual Baths: Immerse Yourself in the On-going Sepphoris Mikveh Debate", in *Biblical Archaeology Review* 28/2, 50-55.
- Resch A., 1904, *Der Paulinismus und die Logia Jesu in ihrem gegenseitigen Verhältnis untersucht*, Leipzig, J.C. Hinrichs.
- Rescio M., 2012, *La famiglia alternativa di Gesù. Discepolato e strategie di trasformazione sociale nel Vangelo di Marco*, Brescia, Morcelliana.
- Richardson P., 2006, "Khirbet Qana (and Other Villages) as a Context for Jesus", in Charlesworth J.H. (ed.), *Jesus and Archaeology*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 120-144.
- Riesner R., 1994, *Die Frühzeit des Apostels Paulus. Studien zur Chronologie, Missionsstrategie und Theologie*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck.
- Rudolph D.J., 2002, "Jesus and the Food Laws: A Reassessment of Mark 7:19b", in *The Evangelical Quarterly* 74/4, 291-311.
- Sacchi P., 2007, *Sacro/profano, impuro/puro nella Bibbia e dintorni*, Brescia, Morcelliana.
- Salyer G., 1994, "Rhetoric, Purity, and Play: Aspects of Mark 7:1-23", in *Semeia* 64, 139-170.
- Sanders E.P., 1985, *Jesus and Judaism*, London, SCM Press.
- Sanders E.P., 1990, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: Five Studies*, London, SCM Press.
- Sanders E.P., 1992, *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE – 66 CE*, London, SCM Press.

- Sanders E.P., 1993, *The Historical Figure of Jesus*, London, Penguin.
- Schnabel E.J., 2008, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press.
- Schwartz D.R., 2011, "Someone Who Considers Something To Be Impure – For Him It Is Impure (Rom 14:14): Good Manners or Law?", in Casey T.G., Taylor J. (eds.), *Paul's Jewish Matrix*, Roma, Gregorian & Biblical Press.
- Segal A.F., 1990, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee*, New Haven – London, Yale University Press.
- Siebert F., 1998, "Jésus et Paul. Une relation contestée", in Marguerat D., Norelli E., Poffet J.-M. (éds.), *Jésus de Nazareth. Nouvelles approches d'une énigme?*, Genève, Labor et Fides, 439-457.
- Stemberger G., 1991, *Pharisäer, Sadduzäer, Essener*, Stuttgart, Katholisches Bibelwerk.
- Svartvik J., 2000, *Mark and Mission: Mk 7:1-23 in Its Narrative and Historical Contexts*, Stockholm, Almqvist & Wiksell.
- Theissen G., 1974, "Soziale Schichtung in der korinthischen Gemeinde. Ein Beitrag zur Soziologie des hellenistischen Urchristentums", in *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 65, 232-272.
- Theissen G., Merz A., 1999, *Il Gesù storico. Un manuale*, Brescia, Queriniana (*Der historische Jesus: ein Lehrbuch*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999²).
- Thompson M., 1991, *Clothed with Christ: The Example and Teaching of Jesus in Romans 12,1–15,13*, Sheffield, JSOT Press.
- Toney C.L., 2008, *Paul's Inclusive Ethic: Resolving Community Conflicts and Promoting Mission in Romans 14–15*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck.
- Walt L., 2013, *Paolo e le parole di Gesù. Frammenti di un insegnamento orale*, Brescia, Morcelliana (in press).
- Webb R.L., 1994, "John the Baptist and His Relationship to Jesus", in Chilton B., Evans C.A. (eds.), *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluation of the State of the Current Research*, Leiden, Brill, 179-229.
- Wenham D., 1995, *Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity?*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans.
- Werrett I.C., 2007, *Ritual Purity and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Leiden, Brill.
- Willis W.L., 1985, *Idol Meat in Corinth: The Pauline Argument in I Corinthians 8 And 10*, Chico, Scholar Press.
- Wong E.K.C., 2001, "The De-radicalization of Jesus' Ethical Sayings in Romans", in *Novum Testamentum* 43, 245-263.
- Wright B.G., 1997, "Jewish Ritual Baths – Interpreting the Digs and the Texts: Some Issues in the Social History of Second Temple Judaism", in Silberman N.A., Small D. (eds.), *The Archaeology of Israel: Constructing the Past, Interpreting the Present*, Sheffield, JSOT Press, 190-214.

Zimmermann M., Zimmermann R., 1996, "Zitation, Kontradiktion oder Applikation? Die Jesuslogien in 1Kor 7,10f. und 9,14: Traditionsgeschichtliche Verankerung und paulinische Interpretation", in *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 87, 83-100.

Mara Rescio
Faculté Autonome de Théologie Protestante
Université de Genève
Rue de Candolle 5, Uni Bastions
CH-1211 Genève 4
Mara.Rescio@unige.ch

Luigi Walt
Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici
Università degli Studi di Udine
via Mazzini 3
IT-33100 Udine
luigi.walt@gmail.com