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The Urth list — 5 messages, 4 voices, 02 Dec 1998

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Alice Turner — 02 Dec 1998, 19:04

From: Nigel Price <NigelPrice1 at compuserve.com>

Wombat, a.k.a. Kevin Maroney, wrote:

John 19:30 cum ergo accepisset Iesus acetum dixit consummatum est et inclinato capite tradidit spiritum

("And when Jesus had received the vinegar, he said "It is finished" and bowed his head and gave up his spirit.")

Yeah, bummer isn't it? Definitely "consummatum est" ("it is accomplished") rather than "terminus est" in the Vulgate. I still haven't found my copy

...

And, of course, I looked at John 19.30 and found "consummatum est", which just about put the tin lid on a bad day, much of the afternoon of which I

Fear not, friend Nigel--your position is salvageable. I have it on good authority that Jesus' grasp of Latin was pretty weak. In fact, he hardly used it at all, preferring the local patois (Hebrew? Aramaic? Dang, my seminary days were wasted, I fear. No, the Sergeant doth not jest--he really spent a year in seminary, during which he learned nothing.)

Of course, we all know that the words of Jesus as recorded in the Latin Vulgate are themselves a translation--actually, a translation of a translation, since the New Testament was first recorded in Greek...which Jesus probably didn't speak either.

Actually, according to something I read somewhere lately (don't you love that?--such a perfect Usenet reference), perhaps an article in The Atlantic, Jesus may well have spoken some or even a fair amount of Greek, from the evidence that the next town over from Nazareth (the name of which escapes me, naturally) was a highly Hellenicized trading town---before you pounce to point out that the occupation was Roman, not Greek, the author made the point that the lingua franca was at that time Greek (you take my meaning--the English of today, heh, heh).

On the other hand, it's unlikely that he went around spouting Greek at wedding parties, on top of Mounts and on the cross.

I think it's reasonable to suggest that "terminus est" may be translated into English as "it is finished", and that Wolfe was aware of this. I've always been partial to that translation of the sword's name (and I've said so before).

I also. But then I've always been partial to the Sarge.

-alga

George M. Terry — 02 Dec 1998, 16:25 · follows Alice Turner

Hello,

this is my first post to the list--this is the first time I actually have had anything meaningful to contribute to any discussion.

Alga wrote:

Jesus may well have spoken some or even a fair amount of Greek, from the evidence that the next town over from Nazareth (the name of which escapes me, naturally) was a highly Hellenicized trading town---before you pounce to point out that the occupation was Roman, not Greek, the author made the point that the lingua franca was at that time Greek (you take my meaning--the English of today, heh, heh).

The town in question was Sephoris. It was a fairly large (relative to the other places in the area like Nazareth, only five miles away) town, and was apparently on some trade road. Lots of construction went on there in the early part of the first century CE, including a large amphitheater. If Jesus were a carpenter (or craftsman of some description--I believe the Greek NT uses the word 'teknon') he would of probably needed some Greek to gain employment in this city and communicate. And truly the language of the Roman Empire was Greek for the common people. Latin was used administratively. Even early church services in Rome were held in Greek.

That's all.

George Terry

Kevin J. Maroney — 02 Dec 1998, 20:21 · follows George M. Terry

At 07:04 PM 12/2/98 -0500, alga wrote:

Jesus may well have spoken some or even a fair amount of Greek, from the evidence that the next town over from Nazareth (the name of which escapes me, naturally) was a highly Hellenicized trading town---before you pounce to point out that the occupation was Roman, not Greek, the author made the point that the lingua franca was at that time Greek (you take my meaning--the English of today, heh, heh).

Capernaum and Sepphoris were two fairly large newly-built, heavily Hellenized towns within walking distance of Nazareth. Neither is mentioned at all in the Gospels or in Acts, from which some scholars (notably but not solely John Dominic Crossan) have concluded that Jesus and the movement he headed during his life did not address themselves at the Greeks and Romans in Judea.

If Jesus was a tekton (craftsman, usually translated "carpenter") before he became a teacher/prophet/revolutionary, he probably did speak at least enough Greek to do business in those cities.

On the other hand, it's unlikely that he went around spouting Greek at wedding parties, on top of Mounts and on the cross.

Right. Based on the scanty evidence, he certainly spoke Aramaic as his primary language, and probably spoke Aramaic to his flock. The Gospel of Mark is littered with Aramaic statements which Mark then helpfully translates into Greek.

Jesus probably never spoke Latin, though.

(For reasons that are unclear to me, I've been reading a lot of early-New-Testament scholarship over the last year-and-a-half. I highly recommend John Crossan's recent The Birth of Christianity as one of the best scholarly works I've *ever* read--incredibly well-researched, wide-ranging, funny, just flat-out brilliant. You will never look at Christianity the same way again.)

Has anyone here mentioned the scene in Acts 17:23 cf where Paul lectures the Greeks on the true nature of the "Unknown God" to whom they have altars?

[22] So Paul, standing in the middle of the Are-op'agus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. [23] For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. [24] The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by man, [25] nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all men life and breath and everything. [26] And he made from one every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitation, [27] that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel after him and find him. Yet he is not far from each one of us, [28] for 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring.'

The relevance to The Book of the Long Sun should be, I think, obvious.

Wombat, a.k.a. Kevin Maroney kmaroney at crossover.com Kitchen Staff Supervisor, New York Review of Science Fiction <http://ebbs.english.vt.edu/olp/nyrsf/nyrsf.html>

Michael Straight — 03 Dec 1998, 10:18 · follows Kevin J. Maroney

On Wed, 2 Dec 1998, Kevin J. Maroney wrote:

(For reasons that are unclear to me, I've been reading a lot of early-New-Testament scholarship over the last year-and-a-half. I highly recommend John Crossan's recent The Birth of Christianity as one of the best scholarly works I've *ever* read--incredibly well-researched, wide-ranging, funny, just flat-out brilliant. You will never look at Christianity the same way again.)

I haven't read Crossan, but I've read some fairly compelling critiques of his work which might interest you.

N.T. Wright's Jesus and the Victory of God argues that Crossan et. al. misread Jesus and the early church by abstracting them too much from the context of first century Judaism. There's a good review of it here:

<http://www.ozemail.com.au/~gsmunro/wright.html>

Wright is very readable and also happens to be the best speaker I've ever heard. I've never heard anyone who takes questions, really listens to them, and responds in such a thoughtful, eloquent way, genuinely answering the question, not just going off on some subject inspired by it. If you can ever find tapes of his lectures, they are wonderful.

Catholic scholar Luke Timothy Johnson's book The Real Jesus also has some interesting critiques of Crossan et. al. The subtitle, "The Misguided Quest for the Historical and the Truth of

the Traditional Gospels" tells you a lot about where he's coming from, but I think some of his points about the limits of historical inquiry are telling.

It's time for me to read some of Crossan's side of things, though. Thanks for the recommendation.

-Rostrum

Kevin J. Maroney — 03 Dec 1998, 11:06 · follows Michael Straight

At 10:18 AM 12/3/98 -0500, Rostrum wrote:

N.T. Wright's Jesus and the Victory of God argues that Crossan et. al. misread Jesus and the early church by abstracting them too much from the context of first century Judaism. There's a good review of it here:

<http://www.ozemail.com.au/~gsmunro/wright.html>

I'll check him out. The review doesn't give me much sense of his position or his criticism of Crossan, but I certainly need to read some other authors. Crossan fits my own prejudices well, though, which is certainly one of the reasons I like him.

I will point out that Crossan himself does not seem to subscribe to the worst excess of The Jesus Seminar, but has sometimes been treated as if he does. Burton Mack, another leading Jesus Seminar scholar, is much more virulently anti-miracle, anti-faith than is Crossan--Mack seems to be angry at every one of the authors of the New Testament.

Some of Crossan's views seem explicitly idiosyncratic, but he's also very good about identifying those--for instance, his insistence in Who Killed Jesus? that the crucifixion/resurrection narrative in The Gospel of Peter actually **predates** the canonical gospels is clearly a minority opinion, but he argues for it quite well.

Anyway, it's fun stuff.

Wombat, a.k.a. Kevin Maroney kmарoney@crossover.com Kitchen Staff Supervisor, New York Review of Science Fiction <http://ebbs.english.vt.edu/olp/nyrsf/nyrsf.html>