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Esse Videatur Rhythm in the Greek New Testament *Gospels* and *Acts of the Apostles*

J. K. NEWMAN

A recent book¹ has raised again the important exegetical question of rhetoric and the Christian New Testament. But the topic of prose rhythm is advanced there only to be dismissed on the grounds that "evidence from inscriptions and papyri seems to indicate that long and short syllables were often not accurately and systematically differentiated in the pronunciation of koine Greek." Later, when the Lord's Prayer is found to display identifiable clausula endings, for the author this still does not make extensive analysis of New Testament prose rhythms of more than debatable value.

No doubt these difficulties exist. But evidently it was possible for writers of formal Hellenistic prose to pay attention to prose rhythms. One need look no further than Plutarch.² The difficulty seems to be that the authors of the New Testament, and of the Gospels in particular, are not regarded as capable of that degree of sophistication.³

Already so great a scholar as Eduard Norden presents a classic

¹ George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill and London 1984). Particular allusion is made here to pages 30 and 59.

² F. H. Sandbach, *Classical Quarterly* 33 (1939), pp. 194–203, with special reference to the work of A. W. de Groot.

³ Understanding is not helped by the blanket use of the term "koine Greek" for the often very subtle and complex language of the New Testament. It has about as much value to the literary historian as "Silver Latin" for anything post-Augustan.

example of this failure to read the evidence. In the first volume of his *Antike Kunstprosa*⁴ Norden supplies an analysis of the long Greek inscription discovered in 1890 and erected in the first century B.C. by King Antiochus of Commagene. He notes that there are 49 occurrences of cretic/trochaic combinations of which 19 are resolved into the *esse videatur* pattern. The inscription as a whole is for him "a dithyramb in prose," a fine illustration of the second Asian style described by Cicero.⁵

Elsewhere,⁶ Norden speaks approvingly of an article proposing that the documents of early Christianity should not be considered part of literary history because they do not make use of the forms of real literature. He supplies another long comparison of the synoptic Gospels with one another in an effort to show that Luke is a more conscious stylist than his peers. But even so he prefaces his remarks with the statement that "Die Evangelien stehen völlig abseits von der kunstmäßigen Literatur."

In fact, the Gospels are most carefully constructed examples of Greek dialogic literature, which is exactly the tradition evoked by Justin when he calls them *ἀπομνημονεύματα*.⁷ They and the Acts of the Apostles use, in telling contexts, the very rhythm that Norden regards as characteristic of the elaborate Asian style. St. Mark's version⁸, for example, of the Cry from the Cross (a quotation from Psalms 22) is: Ὁ Θεός μου ὁ Θεός μου, εἰς τί ἐγκατέλιπές με; (15:34). A comparison with Matthew 27:46 is instructive. St. John leads into the Last Word with πάντα τετέλεσται, (19:28). The Voice that interrupts St. Paul on the road to Damascus also uses the first paeon and spondee: Σαουλ Σαουλ, τί με διώκεις; (Acts 9:4; cf. 22:7; 26:14).

When Pilate is nettled by Christ's refusal to speak, Matthew makes him ask: Οὐδὲν ἀποκρίνη . . . ; (26:62). Like the Cry from the Cross in Mark, this is an important "dialogic" example. In the very next chapter of the same Gospel, the plan to let the brigand Barabbas go free while Jesus is put to death calls for a spondaic/trochaic admixture that duly culminates in an *esse videatur* clausula: ἵνα αἰτήσωνται τὸν Βαραββᾶν, τὸν δὲ Ἰησοῦν ἀπολέσωσιν (27:20). The contrast between the rhythms of the two long verbs, and the isocolic parallelism linking the proper names, is noteworthy.

⁴ Fifth edition, repr. Stuttgart 1958, pp. 140 ff.

⁵ *Brutus* 325: *verbis volucre atque incitatum, quali nunc est Asia tota, nec flumine solum orationis sed etiam exornato et facto genere verborum.*

⁶ *Op. cit.*, II, pp. 479 ff. The quotation is from p. 480.

⁷ Norden, p. 481.

⁸ The New Testament is cited throughout from the text prepared for the British and Foreign Bible Society by E. Nestle and G. D. Kilpatrick (repr. London 1962).

These initial examples from familiar passages suggest that, for the writers of the New Testament, the stereotyped clausula still had significant life. A list of further examples, which does not of course claim to be complete, repays study.

I. *Matthew*

6:19 and 20 βρῶσις ἀφανίξει, . . .

From the Sermon on the Mount. A nuance of irony and contempt, whose repetitions remind us of similar tricks in Ovid,⁹ for the man who amasses this world's goods? See the following instance.

6:24 τοῦ ἐτέρου καταφρονήσει

(Cf. Luke 16:13.) Also from the same context. "You cannot serve two masters."

6:30 οὐ πολλῶ μάλλον ὑμᾶς, ὀλιγόπιστοι;

(Cf. 8:26; 16:8.) A fourth example from chapter 6. Here certainly there is an ironic and impatient note in this "dialogic" question directed at those who doubt Providence. ὀλιγόπιστοι, of which the Rabbinical *ktn 'mnh* looks like a calque, is first attested in this passage. Compare Luke 12:28, below.

When this rhythm next occurs in Matthew, we are in the middle of a rebuke by Christ to the disbelieving cities:

11:20 ὅτι οὐ μετενόησαν

Cf. 11:21 πάλαι ἂν ἐν σάκκῳ καὶ σποδῶ μετενόησαν.

and Luke 10:13, in the same context, where the insertion of a participle leaves the rhythm intact: πάλαι ἂν ἐν σάκκῳ καὶ σποδῶ καθημένοι μετενόησαν.

Two chapters later, the end of the world and the Last Judgment are in view:

13:47 ἐκ παντὸς γένους συναγαγούση

Another note of ironic disgust and condemnation?

19:20 Ταῦτα πάντα ἐφύλαξα

⁹ E.g. *Metamorphoses* III. 353 (positive) and 355 (negative), exactly the pattern of this passage from the Sermon on the Mount.

If the hiatus is tolerable,¹⁰ the Rich Young Man here confidently (over-confidently?) asserts his own blameless conduct. With the rhythm may be compared οὗτος ὁ τελώνης (Luke 18:11), the prayer of the self-righteous man.

The effect of Pilate's Οὐδὲν ἀποκρίνη . . . ; (26:62), and of Ἰησοῦν ἀπολέσωσι (27:20) was already noted.

A last example from Matthew is furnished by

28:17 καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν προσεκύνησαν, οἱ δὲ ἐδίστασαν.

An emotional profession of faith by those who found themselves able to believe. Yet even this implies a dialogue. "Some were in two minds" (internal debate) and certainly Jesus is himself to speak shortly.

What is striking in all the examples adduced here from Matthew is the element of reproof and even savage satire found in them. At the end, the believers are balanced by the doubters. This pattern of meaning is not maintained by the other Gospels, but I suggest that it gives some indication of the primitive levels on which this rhythm draws.

II. Mark

3:4 ἀγαθὸν ποιῆσαι ἢ κακοποιῆσαι, ψυχὴν σῶσαι ἢ ἀποκτεῖναι; οἱ δὲ ἐσιώπων.

A tense confrontation, again therefore an intended dialogue, but one in which one of the parties refuses to participate. The passage gains in pathos from the realization of this refusal, betrayed by the rhythms. Contrast Pilate's Οὐδὲν ἀποκρίνη . . . ; where however Christ does at long last break his silence.

4:29 παρέστηκεν ὁ θερισμός.

Cf. παρέστηκεν ὁ τρυγητός (LXX Joel 3:13). The end of the world: cf. Matt. 13:47, already quoted.

8:24 ὡς δένδρα ὀρώ περιπατοῦντας.

The blind man begins to recover his sight. A moment of extreme emotional release, perhaps with some metamorphosing comedy in it.

¹⁰ And if it is not, the heroic clausula has its own history!

9:7 Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ Υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, . . .

The solemn revelation of Christ's divinity. Compare John 1:32 and 33, and 36, below.

10:32 καὶ ἦν προάγων αὐτοὺς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, καὶ ἐθαμβοῦντο, οἱ δὲ ἀκολουθοῦντες ἐφοβοῦντο.

Religious awe (*θάμβος*) and fear, the expression aided by homoeoteleuton and isocolon (10; 5; 11) as well as by the paeonic/trochaic rhythm.¹¹

12:27 οὐκ ἔστιν Θεὸς νεκρῶν ἀλλὰ ζώντων. πολὺ πλανᾶσθε.

Another tense confrontation: see 3:4, above. It is this emotion which perhaps allows us to ride over (or at least to attenuate in some way) the period after *ζώντων*. Contrast Matthew 22:29, where *πλανᾶσθε* is used in the same scene, but no attempt is made to exploit the paeonic rhythm.

12:44 ὅλον τὸν βίον αὐτῆς.

The climax of the pathetic story of the Widow's Mite. Contrast the handling of the same story in Luke 21:4.

13:11 καὶ ὅταν ἄγωσιν ὑμᾶς παραδιδόντες, . . .

The Christians threatened with persecution. Compare *μέλλει παραδίδοσθαι* (Luke 9:44), quoted below.

13:28 ἐγγὺς τὸ θέρος ἐστίν.

Cf. *ἐγγὺς τὸ θέρος ἐστίν* at Luke 21:30. The end of the world. Cf. 4:29 above.

15:34 εἰς τί ἐγκατέλιπές με;

The anguished Cry from the Cross. A supreme example of this rhythm in dialogic question.

¹¹ The effect of the periphrastic *ἦν προάγων*, which throws the stress onto the subject of the first clause, should also be noted: cf. H. B. Rosén, "Die 'zweiten' Tempora des Griechischen: Zum Prädikatsausdruck beim griechischen Verbum," *Museum Helveticum* 14 (1957), pp. 133-54. See the article by Gerald M. Browne, below.

III. *Luke*

1:29 λόγῳ διεταράχθη, καὶ διελογίζετο ποταπὸς εἶη ὁ ἄσπασμὸς οὗτος.

The Annunciation. Evidently another instance of dialogic mental turmoil.

2:35 καρδιῶν διαλογισμοί.

The prophecy of Simeon, and reminiscent of 1:29. With the noun *διαλογισμοί* may be compared the verb *διελογίζετο* there. It looks very much as if the more style-conscious Luke begins his Gospel with what Formalists call a “*dénudation du procédé*,” a “laying bare of the device” by which *esse videatur* rhythm is expressly associated with dialogue, with internal dialogue in particular.

6:9 ἡ κακοποιῆσαι, . . .

Cf. Mark 3:4 above.

6:23 and 26 οἱ πατέρες αὐτῶν.

(Cf. Acts 7:52.) Denunciation.

7:6 ἐπορεύετο σὺν αὐτοῖς.

On the way to cure the centurion’s servant. This is perhaps a first example of a type which could be catalogued as “scenery.”¹² The actual phrase may not refer to anything very striking, but its rhythm establishes a certain mood which conditions the reader to expect the marvelous.

7:22 τυφλοὶ ἀναβλέπουσιν, χωλοὶ περιπατοῦσιν, λεπροὶ καθαρίζονται,

Christ’s message to John’s disciples, displaying a double example of the paeonic rhythm, aided by isocolon (7; 7; 7) and homoeoteleuton, of which there is more in the context. Cf. Mark 10:32, above.

8:5 καὶ κατεπατήθη, . . .

The fate of the seed that fell by the wayside.

9:44 μέλλει παραδίδοσθαι . . .

¹² I borrow this term from G. N. Knauer, who uses it in *Die Aeneis und Homer* (Göttingen 1964) to describe those occasions when Virgil evokes a background rather than any particular characterization from Homer for his actors.

We have already met this rhythm in a similar context (Mark 13:11, quoted above). No doubt for the earliest Christians it had a special resonance.

10:13 *καθήμενοι μετενόησαν.*

Cf. exactly the same rhythm in the same context at Matthew 11:21, quoted above.

11:18 *εἰ δὲ καὶ ὁ Σατανᾶς ἐφ' ἑαυτὸν διεμερίσθη, . . .*

Cf. below, 12:51. Here, an impossible suggestion is derided.¹³

11:22 *αὐτοῦ διαδίδωσιν.*

The same context, the same notion of violence.

11:40 *ἔσωθεν ἐποίησεν;*

More tense confrontation.

12:28 *ὕμᾶς, δλιγόπιστοι.*

Cf. Matthew 6:31, quoted above.

12:51 *ἡ διαμερισμόν.*

More violence. "I have not come to bring peace, but division."

15:6 *μου τὸ ἀπολλώλς.*

and

15:7 *ἄμαρτωλῶ μετανοοῦντι . . .*

Pathos and joy over the lost sheep. Compare

15:10 *ἄμαρτωλῶ μετανοοῦντι.*

16:13 *ἑτέρου καταφρονήσει.*

Compare Matthew 6:24, exactly the same rhythm in the same context.

¹³ Not so much perhaps "And if Satan also . . ." ("Equally, if Satan is divided," according to the *New English Bible*) as "Even granted that Satan. . . ." For the force of *εἰ* . . . *καί* here, cf. R. Jebb's appendix to his edition of Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* (3rd ed., Cambridge 1893), p. 224, on v. 305: the usage would come under Jebb's (3): J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles* (repr. Oxford 1970), p. 303.

16:26 μηδ(ἐ) ἐκέιθεν πρὸς ἡμᾶς διαπερῶσιν.

The gulf fixed between heaven and hell. The cretics here leading into the paemonic/trochaic clausula would do credit to Cicero.¹⁴

18:8 πίστιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς;

An anguished question about the end of the world.

18:11 οὗτος ὁ τελώνης;

A quiver of contempt in the voice of the self-righteous man, engaged in prayer (= dialogue with God). Compare the Rich Young Man in Matthew 19:20 quoted above.

21:30 ἐγγὺς τὸ θέρος ἐστίν.

The end of the world. Cf. Mark 13:28, the same context and quotation.

24:17 Τίνες οἱ λόγοι οὗτοι οὐς ἀντιβάλλετε πρὸς ἀλλή||λους περιπατοῦντες;

An extraordinary instance of the double occurrence of this rhythm in a dialogic question, here preparing the way for the revelation of the Resurrection.

IV. John

1:22 τί λέγεις περὶ σεαυτοῦ;

Exactly the technique just noted in Luke. John the Baptist is asked to identify himself. His declaration will prepare the way for Christ.

Now four examples follow in quick succession.

1:32 τὸ Πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον . . .

Cf. 1:33 τὸ Πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον || καὶ μένον ἐπ' αὐτόν,

The revelation of divinity calls for the same rhythms as at Mark 9:7 and Luke 24:17, noted above. Cf. fourthly

1:36 τῷ Ἰησοῦ περιπατοῦντι . . .

¹⁴ Cf. τὸν δὲ Ἰησοῦν ἀπολέσωσιν, Matthew 27:20, cited above. Compare Cicero, Verrine V. 16. 40: *infamiam fugerit quam sin(e) ulla voluptate capiebat.*

the recruitment of the first disciples.

4:8 τροφὰς ἀγοράσωσιν.

Jesus is exhausted and thirsty, and is about to make an unexpected revelation of himself to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. A "scenic" use, which nevertheless sets the stage for a long dialogue, not without some touches of humor.

4:47 ἤμελλεν γὰρ ἀποθνήσκειν.

The royal official's son saved from death. John is attracted by this rhythm with this verb: cf. ἤμελλεν ἀποθνήσκειν (12:33) and ἤμελλεν ἀποθνήσκειν (18:32). With this may be compared ἐν τῇ ἀμαρτίᾳ ὑμῶν ἀποθανείσθε (8:21) and μὴ ὄλον τὸ ἔθνος ἀπόληται (11:50).

11:29 ἤρχετο πρὸς αὐτόν·

Lazarus' sister Mary goes out to meet Jesus. Scenery for a resurrection. Cf. ἐπορεύετο σὺν αὐτοῖς (Luke 7:6), quoted above, and the disputed 8:2, discussed below.

13:7 γνώση δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα.

A promise of future revelation made at the Last Supper, with a telling verb.

19:7-8 . . . Ἰὶδὸν Θεοῦ ἑαυτὸν ἐποίησεν. Ὅτε οὖν ἤκουσεν ὁ Πειλᾶτος τοῦτον τὸν λόγον, μᾶλλον ἐφοβήθη.

At the trial, and therefore in a dialogue. Religious foreboding and fear leads to the use of *esse videatur* rhythm in consecutive sentences. Cf. Mark 10:32 and Luke 24:17, quoted above.

19:28 πάντα τετέλεσται, . . .

The end approaches.

20:23 . . . κρατήτε, κεκράτηνται.

The conferring of the Holy Spirit. It is interesting that the rhythm is associated with the negative pole.

The list of examples in John has not included the often questioned opening of chapter 8, where the woman taken in adultery is forgiven. In fact, this passage shows three interesting usages of this rhythm. At the beginning

8:2 ἤρχετο πρὸς αὐτόν. . . .

sets the scene. We expect something extraordinary. Exactly the same phrase introduces the resurrection of Lazarus (11:29), quoted above.

Then two “dialogic” examples follow. Christ asks the sinner if anyone has condemned her:

8:10 οὐδεὶς σε κατέκρινεν;

And when she answers No, he rejoins:

8:11 Οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω.

The repetition is reminiscent of the Sermon on the Mount: cf. Matthew 6:19 and 20, quoted above. The question in itself recalls that of Pilate (Matthew 26:62), and its so different sequel.

V. Acts

1:2 ἐξελέξατ(ο) ἀνελήμφθη.

The Ascension.

2:1 ὁμοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό.

2:17 καθ' ἡμέραν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό.

The Descent of the Holy Spirit and the first preaching of the Gospel. A striking instance of ring composition, marked both by recurrence of vocabulary and of rhythm, at the beginning and end of chapter 2, suggesting that here the division into chapters owed to Langton (1214) and the medieval Paris Bible corresponded to something in the author's purpose.

7:32 ἔντρομος δὲ γενόμενος Μωϋσῆς οὐκ ἐτόλμα κατανοῆσαι.

From the speech made by Stephen. The revelation at the Burning Bush. A dialogue with God.

7:43 ἐπέκεινα Βαβυλῶνος.

Prophetic denunciation, also from the speech of St. Stephen.

7:51 οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν;

Yet another use of the paeon in an indignant question. Compare Luke 6:23 and 26, quoted above.

7:57 ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐπ' αὐτόν, . . .
and

8:2 κοπετὸν μέγαν ἐπ' αὐτῷ.

The beginning and end of Stephen's execution, marked by recurring rhythms as in Acts 2. With the first phrase may be compared 21:32, below, where Paul is rescued from a similar onslaught.

9:5: cf. 22:7; 26:14 Σαουλ Σαουλ, τί με διώκεις;

Although the rhythm is slightly varied (to give a pherecratean), we may note in the same passage:

9:5 Ἰησοῦς ὃν σὺ διώκεις;

(Cf. 26:15, but contrast 22:7.) The question and answer, with their repeated verb, are strongly reminiscent of John 8:10–11, quoted above.

9:24 αὐτὸν ἀνέλωσιν.

A plot to kill St. Paul. St. John's fondness for this rhythm in deadly contexts is comparable.

9:38 πρὸς αὐτὸν παρακαλοῦντες,

The background to a resurrection.

10:6 οἰκία παρὰ θάλασσαν.

Cf. 10:32 βυρσέως παρὰ θάλασσαν.

Scenery at the crucial discovery that even Gentiles may receive the Holy Spirit.

12:10 καὶ εὐθέως ἀπέστη ὁ ἄγγελος ἀπ' αὐτοῦ.

The rhythm here marks the end of the story about Peter's miraculous release from prison. Compare 16:37, quoted below.

12:22 ὁ δὲ δῆμος ἐπεφώνει, Θεοῦ φωνὴ καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρώπου.

The Voice of God has already evoked this rhythm: Mark 9:7 and Acts 9:5. Here of course it is the prelude to a horrible death, described by the agricultural compound, applied with devastating irony to a man, σκωληκόβρωτος.

14:3 ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ, . . .

The background to the signs and portents mentioned shortly in the context. Λόγῳ is telling. There is still dialogue.

16:26 ἠνέφχθησαν δὲ παραχρῆμα αἱ θύραι πάσαι, . . .

The symbolic opening of the doors.¹⁵

16:37 ἔξαγαγέτωσαν.

Indignant protest. Part of a dialogue concluding the miraculous rescue. The similar rhythm at the end of Peter's rescue (12:10) may be compared.

19:4 βάπτισμα μετανοίας, . . .

This picks up a rhythm often employed by the Gospels with this particular concept: cf. Matthew 11:20 and 21; Luke 10:13 and 15:10.

21:23 εἰσὶν ἡμῖν ἄνδρες τέσσαρες εὐχὴν ἔχοντες ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν·

A religious context, and of course the start of Paul's fateful involvement with the authorities. See 22:29, below.

21:29–30

. . . εἰσήγαγεν ὁ Παῦλος. ἐκινήθη τε ἡ πόλις ὅλη καὶ ἐγένετο συνδρομὴ τοῦ λαοῦ, καὶ ἐπιλαβόμενοι τοῦ Παύλου εἶλκον αὐτὸν ἔξω τοῦ ἱεροῦ, καὶ εὐθέως ἐκλείσθησαν αἱ θύραι.

The background to a riot, with the sentence following the *esse videatur* rhythm marked by isocolon (21; 20; 10) and homoeoteleuton. The closing of the doors is also a symbolic detail. The similar verb helps to link this closing with the earlier scene at Philippi (16:37, quoted above), where however the doors were opened.

21:32 κατέδραμεν¹⁶ ἐπ' αὐτούς·

The same context. A Roman tribune to the rescue. Contrast 7:57, the attack on Stephen, cited above.

¹⁵ Cf. O. Weinreich, "Gebet und Wunder" in *Genethliakon Wilhelm Schmid* (Stuttgart 1929), II Abhandlung (Türöffnung), pp. 280 ff., esp. 320 ff.

¹⁶ Allowing *muta cum liquida* to make position, as it does so often in Hellenistic literary Greek, e.g. in the *Gyges* fragment: see K. Latte, "Ein antikes Gygesdrama," *Eranos* 48 (1950), p. 138. Cf. *ēthnos*, John 11:50, quoted above.

22:29 εὐθέως οὖν ἀπέστησαν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ οἱ μέλλοντες αὐτὸν ἀνετάξειν·

The continuing story of Paul and the Roman authorities.

24:10 ἑμαυτὸν ἀπολογούμαι, . . .

A flourish in the course of the very first sentence of St. Paul's *apologia* before Felix, perhaps an extempore response to the careful rhetoric of the opposition's Tertullus.

25:7 οὐκ ἴσχυον ἀποδείξειν, . . .

An echo of the heated arguments before Festus' tribunal.

25:12 Καίσαρα ἐπικέκλησαι, ἐπὶ Καίσαρα πορεύσῃ.

The solemn judicial (and therefore dialogic) sealing of Paul's fate. All the majesty of the Empire is now to be engaged, with what fateful consequences for the Church!

26:5 ἔζησα Φαρισαίος.

Paul's *apologia* before Agrippa, fraught with memories and emotions.

The New Testament is of course filled with marvels, head-on challenges, reversals. There are many such passages where one might expect *esse videatur* rhythm, and where it does not occur. There are parallel passages, where one Evangelist uses it, and another does not. But these negatives (which of course do not prove that no other rhythms are used) cannot outweigh the positive evidence presented, which all suggests that this rhythm conveys a sense of excitement and agitation: the excitement of the Voice of God; of miracle, even of resurrection from the dead, of the end of the world; of the threat of death; of angry confrontation and denunciation; and then again of pathos and forgiveness.

Time and again in our lists we encountered this rhythm in dialogue, actual or implied, and this, I would like to suggest, is its basic usage. Its occurrence in rhetoric is to be explained by the fact that rhetoric is stereotyped dialogue, sometimes mechanized to the point of absurdity. The advantage of studying *esse videatur* in the New Testament is that it enables us to catch this rhythm in still living interchange, (which is nevertheless "kunstmäßig"). Hence the importance of those instances which occur in questions: Christ confronting his adversaries in debate; with the woman taken in adultery; wondering if at the end there will still be faith left on earth; before Pilate; before God

on the Cross; after the Resurrection teasing his disciples on the road to Emmaus; addressing Paul on the road to Damascus.

But of course in the Gospels and Acts this is also religious interchange, and here there is (*pace* Norden) a link with the Commagene inscription. When we read there τὴν ὁσιότητα (2), ἐν ἀγίωι λόφωι καθοσιωθεῖς (4), δαιμόνων ἐπιφανείαις (7), ἐνιαύσιον ἑορτήν (8), ἐγὼ καθοσιώσας (9), ἀξίως ἐπιτελείτω (11), we find something of the same tension and emotion. The King however expects from his audience only a respectful silence. Study of the New Testament helps us to understand the enormity of his claim.¹⁷

Our investigation has implications therefore for more than the interpretation of the New Testament. Already Norden compares the style of the Commagene inscription with some of Cicero's floridity, and certainly *esse videatur* was laughed at as early as Tacitus' *Dialogus*.¹⁸ There are pages where this rhythm appears to run riot.

But Cicero knows how to control this mannerism too,¹⁹ and rather than join Tacitus' Aper in accusing the great orator of automatism we must explain his fondness for these clausulae partly by studying particular effects, partly by the nature of his audience, and of the dialogic occasions of which he was so fond (including the *altercatio*), and partly by the difference of culture between the Romans and the peoples among whom the Asian style developed. This requires especial attention to the Roman (and Ciceronian) propensity for the comic and satirical, which meant that what emerged as serious and religious elsewhere for them took the stage (still therefore in "dialogic" guise) as farce, parody and wit. Something of this older spirit is still preserved in Aristophanes' use of this particular rhythm,²⁰ and with this may be associated the primitive element of satire and denunciation found notably in St. Matthew. But these large vistas open to another day.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

¹⁷ Cf. στόμα τ' εὐφημον ἄπας ἐξοσιούσθω, Eur. *Bacchae* 69–70. Yet it is precisely this play which illustrates the closeness of the religious and the comic.

¹⁸ C. 23. 1. Cf. Quintilian IX. 4. 73; X. 1. 18, adduced by Norden, pp. 927–28.

¹⁹ Cf. G. Panayiotou, *Consistency and Variation in Cicero's Oratorical Style*, diss. Urbana 1984 (available on microfilm), especially pp. 117–25 and 245–47. Professor Panayiotou compares two pairs of speeches, the *Pro Caecina* and the *De Imperio Cn. Pompei*, the *Pro Caelio* and the *Pro Balbo*, both delivered around the same time, to show how the *esse videatur* clausula is more common in the *De Imperio* and the *Pro Caelio*. The frequency of this clausula in the comic *Pro Caelio* is enlightening.

²⁰ See A. M. Dale, *The Lyric Metres of Greek Drama* (2nd ed., Cambridge 1968), pp. 97–103. The rhythms of *Lysistrata* 781 ff. (a negative parable forming part of an *agon*) and 805 ff. (a counter-example) may be compared with the effects registered here.