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‘Take Up Your Mat and Walk’: [Dis-] Abled Bodies of Communication and Early Christian Wandering

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Abstract

Early Christianity relied heavily on walking, yet New Testament Studies has largely neglected the cultural significance of walking in the ancient world and its connection to Early Christian communication. Walking, often seen as a conscious cultural act, is often overlooked in scholarly discourse, with the focus primarily on its symbolic aspects. Drawing from interdisciplinary research in classics, cultural studies, and social science, this study aims to explore how early Christian bodily movement and communication have been perceived and culturally appropriated in European and North American scholarship. It presents three case studies: the portrayal of disabled bodies' movements in healings, the interpretation of Jesus and his disciples as itinerant wanderers, and the examination of walking in Pauline literature as a means of profiling missionary success.

Key words: walking, New Testament, bodily movement, ableist, mobility

Early Christianity moved largely on foot (Stambaugh and Balch, 1986:38). Despite this, New Testament Studies has paid relatively little attention to cultures of walking in the ancient world and beyond, nor indeed how Early Christian communication related to these. Whilst walking is a “conscious cultural act” (Solnit cited in O’Sullivan, 2011: 5) too often ‘normative’ walking is ‘skipped over’ (or rendered ‘pedestrian’?) in scholarly discourses, and when it is addressed, the focus is firmly ‘above ground’ on the symbolic and/or metaphorical aspects of the practice. As classicist Timothy O’Sullivan states, “in spite of — or perhaps because of — its’ pervasive presence in everyday life, walking is rarely analysed on its own terms as a distinct category of investigation” (O’Sullivan, 2011:3). That is, with the exception of disabled ‘walking’ or movement, which has, as disability studies perspectives have revealed, frequently incurred an ‘ableist’ gaze which comments on those performances of ‘walking’ in biblical texts which are perceived to fall short of normative ideals.

Here, employing insights from interdisciplinary work on cultures of walking, particularly in classics, cultural studies, and social science, I hope to take some hesitant first steps towards understanding how early Christian bodily ‘movement’ and communication

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across boundaries has variously been perceived and culturally-appropriated within European and North American scholarship, and to trace the ways in which the performances, affective dimensions, and purposes of early Christian walking matter. Three case studies are offered in this regard: First, I survey some of the ways in which disabled bodies' movements have been figured in scholarly constructions. Those 'dis-abled' bodies, commanded to 'walk' in healings, often attract more direct attention than able bodies, and as such are cast within what could be termed a "shadow history of walking" (Macfarlene, 2012:16) marked by their otherness to social norms. Second, whilst little information is given on the embodiment and walking of Jesus and his disciples within the New Testament texts, there has nonetheless been a significant trend in modern scholarship to understand their mobility as itinerant wanderers. I contend that this model adopts a philosophically-determined walking model, itself reminiscent of Enlightenment cultural values, which frequently coupled walking with rational thought, when in reality such bodily modes of communication would likely have incurred stigma, accusations of madness or dis-ability, and social disrepute. Third, and related to this, I briefly explore the ways in which walking in Pauline literature is frequently seen as a means to profile his missionary success, perceived as a destination/task-orientated strategic pursuit, itself once more reminiscent of Enlightenment and ableist ideals, rather than a more improvised, informal, or socially 'dis-abling' activity.

Walks of Life: Ancient Cultural Constructions of Walking

Cultural approaches to walking depart from methods which afford little significance to the practice beyond "a locomotive means to a particular end" (Lorimer, 2011:19). Emerging studies of walking cultures in antiquity have variously responded to a so-called "mobility turn" within the academy. Jan Bremmer's work on gesture and posture in ancient Greek culture for example, builds upon Aristotelian physiognomic tracts to reveal that:

> The body served as an important location for self-identification and demonstration of authority. By its gait, the Greek upper-class not only distinguished itself from supposedly effeminate peoples such as Persians and Lydians, but also expressed its dominance over weaker sections of society such as youths and women. [Whilst there is no] literary evidence that slaves could not display an upright carriage either, it seems important to note that on vases and relief they are regularly portrayed as sitting in a squatting position or as being of a smaller stature. (Bremmer, 1992:15-35)

The honorable and decorous citizen was unhurried and controlled in his movements. Men strode in extended steps, though women in contrast, often adopted a diminutive tread (Bremmer, 1992:20). Walking with hips moving to and fro was frequently associated with courtesans or moral deviance. In Roman culture, O'Sullivan (2011), has made a persuasive case that for the governing class, walking involved discernment, not just movement. Moreover, it played an important role in performances of philosophy, politics and identity. Gait was reflective of social status and gender: slaves harried; the elite processed honorably admired by others; free men promenaded, but not too slowly for fear of effeminacy.

Walking was also a crucial part of the philosophical formation for the peripatetic who (as their name indicates) enacted discourses while walking (Segrave, 2006:4). For followers of Stoicism, "walking like a sage helped the advance on the road to virtue" (O'Sullivan, 2011:8). Cicero similarly transposed activities of the body to the mind, for, in his view, "the ideal male body reveals nothing about its physicality only the mind and character of the male" (O'Sullivan, 2011:21). These intellectual connections between walking and learning derived from Greek thought in which Plato and others adopted movement as a "mode of philosophical enquiry" (O'Sullivan, 2011:9). O'Sullivan also notes how literal and metaphorical journeys coalesced allowing Roman elites to perform "the connection between the movement of the body and the accumulation of knowledge in the comfort and safety of the private villa" (2011:9). Perhaps most fundamentally walking was social: "a virtual symbol of time spent together with a good friend" (2011:6).

In the Hebrew Bible walking is often combined figuratively and cognitively with a route or way to denote a moral regime: The blessed person "does not walk in the counsel of the wicked" (Ps 1:1), but rather "walk[s] humbly with God" (Mic 6:8) (Ryken 1998:922). Indeed, the term *hâlak* can mean simply "to walk" but also idiomatically to behave according to law or be in right relationship with others or God. Walking as kinesthesia is also frequently coupled with sight: "your word is a lamp to my feet

and a light to my path" (Ps 119:105), and, in distinction from submission and compliance, walking and sight can be perceived as a mode of invention or discovery: "walk and see", "go and see" (Psalm 66:5) (Avrahami, 2012:78).

In the New Testament similarly, *peripateō* is used to denote both physical walking (a use which largely dominates the narrative genre in the synoptics), and a figurative walking (predominantly in John and the epistles where theological persuasion is central). Paul urges converts to "walk in newness of life" (Rom 6:4) and "in faith" (2 Cor 5:7). *stoikeō* literally to walk in line (or in a row, as or an army) is similarly employed metaphorically in Pauline epistles to link movement with robust moral insight and ethical cognition: to walk upright morally in relation to others (Rom 4:12). Most fundamentally, indicating the status of walking and mobility to constructions of identity, members of the early Christian movement first referred to themselves as "The Way" (*hē hodos*) (Acts 9:2), and patterned discipleship as following a cruciform and self-denying path (Luke 9:23).

"Get up and Walk!": Disabled Characters and Cultures of Walking

Whilst able-bodied walking is largely devoid of extended analysis in New Testament Studies, disabled bodies have often served as rich sites for physiognomic commentary. An able body still "largely masquerades as a non-identity, as the natural order of things" (McRuer and Berube, 2006:1) and hence passes without comment; in contrast the disabled body frequently is marked as anomalous, awkward, and the shadow image of societal norms and expectations. Jesus commands the paralytic to "Stand up and walk" and condemns the authorities who censor his alternative response to the man's condition: "Your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:9// Matthew 9:5//Luke 5:23). Whilst walking is at a basic level proof of a healing's veracity, many commentators also link the physical and spiritual dimensions of this man's walking: "the visible reality of the man's healed limbs is evidence of the invisible reality that his sins are forgiven" (Card, 2012:46). Mikeal Parsons work on the lame man in Acts 3:1-6, gives corporeal reasoning (thinking through, and with, the body) to such attitudes when he notes that feet and ankles are body parts of significant physiognomic import. He contends:

> The lame man's weak ankles would have been viewed as an outward sign of his weak moral character. The strengthening of the lower extremities would have been an outward sign of his newly found inner moral strength (Parsons, 2005:302).

Solomon Pasala in his exposition of the healing of the paralytic also notes that in the *Poetics of Aristotle* often walking denotes a transformation from one stage within a drama to the converse; additionally, "a discovery [implying] a change from ignorance to knowledge" (Pasala, 2008:172). Similarly, in the healing of Jairus' daughter, the narrator tells the audience, "immediately the little girl arose and began to walk" (5:42). Commentators note the immediacy of her bodily mobility as not only proof of her raising, but also a shadow of Jesus' own resurrection:

> He has the power to raise the dead "immediately". It takes only two Aramaic words, and instantly the dead girl comes to life again. Proof of return to life is seen in her rising up and beginning to walk ... the term arose *(aneste)* is used with respect to Jesus' own rising from the dead. (Stein, 2008:275).

In such readings the disabled body becomes a "narrative prosthetic" (an evocative term coined by Mitchell and Snyder 2000) which carries broader metaphorical or theological themes and through which their own specific bodily performance is elided.

John 5 presents another example of a disabled character onto which many commentators import pejorative assumptions linking movement with deviant morality. The man is an outcast, laying for 38 years at the pool, a number some have seen echoing Israel's years in the wilderness or representing long-standing "spiritual impotency" (Morris, 1971:268). My own previous work on the lame man at the pool in John 5 explored cultural dimensions of walking, and alternative movement (Lawrence, 2019:251-273). Jesus' imperative command, usually rendered "walk" (*peripatei*) (v.8), can also be translated as "go or move about", "live" or "conduct oneself. Rather than assuming a physical walking, I ask what if this action is conceived as an alternative physical movement (perhaps dragging oneself across the floor in a subversive walking movement) and a change of perspective regarding ones identity? Could the force of the man's action then be not only carrying an object (the

pauper's mat) from one socio-economic domain into another, but also displaying and moving his "disabled" body (which Levitical law would seek to exclude, see Lev 21:17-21) into the sacred courts of the temple? Jesus' later encounter with the man in the temple where he addresses him with the words "See" (*Ide*) you have been made whole. Do not sin anymore" (v.14) is, in this vein, not so much a revision of the link between sin and illness, nor a response to an individual who is vulnerable and unlikely to reach out for help (a position largely echoed by Gosbell (2018:288-292) and Solevag (2018:62-64) in their works on this passage), but rather a testimonial to this man's courage and agency in walking (crawling?) subversively to contravene maps of exclusion.

What all these examples show is that often it is those bodies which are "excluded" from elite ideals in walking cultures, which ironically often command the most commentary. These characters" inability to "walk" often encapsulates their identity and marks them out as "deviant", excluding them from realms in which "normal" others are more openly incorporated. As a result, their immobility regularly features as the subject of metaphorical discourses used to denigrate and reject certain persons, ideologies, and beliefs, moreover their healing often re-establishes normative patterns for both physical and moral movement.

Being Sent Out: Walking and Wandering of Jesus and the Disciples

Jesus walks. He does not hurriedly run like the crowds in Mark 9:25, or the comedic Zaccheaeus in Luke 19:1-10 (see Solevag 2020), or the slavish Rhoda in Acts 12:13-16 (see Harrill 2000), nor does he frantically wander like the unclean spirits in the synoptics (Mat 12:43//Lk 11:24) — he walks — along roads, besides (and at least according to tradition, on water, through cornfields, hills, wildernesses and rural villages, and it is while out walking he met others, ministered to them, and called his followers (Rodriguez 2012: 48). Little direct information in the synoptics is given on the performances of Jesus and/or his disciples (gait; pace etc.), nonetheless scholars have still projected (whether consciously or otherwise) certain ableist cultural forms and purposes onto such movements. For example, in Mark 6:7-11 (//Matt 10:5-15; //Luke 9:1-6) Jesus sends the twelve on foot into Galilean villages. Scarce physical observation is given by the authors. In Jesus' commands, however, practical advice is offered: "two by two [he sent them] and gave the authority over the unclean spirits. He ordered them to take nothing for their journey expect a staff: no bread, no bag, no money in their belts, but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics" (Mark 6:7-8). Commentators note how the staff would commonly be employed to aid in traversing craggy ground and also used for self- protection against wild beasts and brigands. Sandals would protect the feet from splinters, sharp stones, and surfaces (Rogers, 2004: 169). Commentators have also sought to identify analogues between Jesus and his followers" itinerant walking through prophetic models and the sacred nature of their passage (Keener, 2009:24). Just as Jacob crossed the Jordan with only a staff (Genesis 32:10), and Moses commanded the Israelites to have sandals and a staff in readiness for Exodus (Ex 12:11), so Jesus instructs his disciples likewise (Loeb and Nunn, 1997: 450) "for their own participation in God's miraculous deliverance" (Henderson, 2006: 156). Others note that a staff and sandals both assist an individual on the walk itself, "expediat[ing] the traveler's ultimate arrival at his destination and assist in contending with any obstacles which might hinder the journey" (Rogers, 2004:169) but the other items (bag, money, extra tunic) ensure self-sufficiency which the tradition seems to counsel against (Rogers 2004:178). This has led to various broader hypotheses about the early Christian movement's identity and mode, which assume (though often do not explicitly foreground) walking.

Gerd Theissen's construal of early Christian "wandering charismatics" (established chiefly on comparisons to the Cynics, deductions from the Synoptics, and the Didache's allusion to itinerant prophets) is one such example. These individuals are perceived to have voluntarily left homes and property to travel around the villages of Palestine to announce the in-breaking of the kingdom of God, and were offered sustenance by community sympathizers:

> The internal structure of the Jesus movement was determined by the wandering charismatics, their sympathisers in local communities, and the bearer of revelation.... Wandering charismatics

were the decisive spiritual authorities in the local communities, and local communities were the indispensable social and material basis for the wandering charismatics. Both owed their existence and legitimation to their relationship to the transcendent bearer of revelation. (Theissen, 1992:7).

Being reliant on others, these wandering charismatic itinerant walkers were "to render themselves radically dependent on those who perchance, might take them in. At the heart of the program [was] the necessity of human relationship" (Patterson, 1998:108). J. D. Crossan's construction of the historical Jesus as a Jewish wandering peasant cynic, similarly, underscored wandering itinerancy as a critical philosophical stance which "involved practice and not just theory, lifestyle and not just mindset, in opposition to the cultural heart of Mediterranean civilization" (Crossan, 1991:421). Crossan's Jesus was a peripatetic, border transgressor, intentionally contravening social norms (Draper, 1995:183). His itinerant wandering defied social practices, reimagined space and relationships, and bodily communicated resistance and renewal. In both these instances "wandering" is connected with social justice, and (widespread?) social change, and peripatetic tropes are used to symbolize victorious callings and missions.

Yet, do certain anachronistic cultural assumptions about the impulses and demands of such peripatetic routines shape these modern constructions of Jesus, his disciples, and early Christian followers in particular ways? John Kloppenberg speculates whether the scale often imagined for wandering itinerant ministry is idealized or magnified. Tongue-in-cheek he asks whether itinerancy in Galilee may "have looked more like morning walks" than an extended sojourn (Kloppenborg, 2001:22). They also tend to positively link walking, wandering and itinerancy (albeit acknowledging the hardships involved in such as sojourn) with social reform and achievement. This is a stance reminiscent of Enlightenment thought where walking was "transmuted from a merely practical and goal- orientated necessity into a deliverable and culturally encoded practice that also gave expression to the Enlightenment aspirations for political freedom and self-realization" (Fuchs, 2016:199). It is perhaps ironic that Crossan himself in a critique of Theissen's "wandering charismatics" notes how in contrast to the sedentary community sympathizers, the wandering charismatics strike him as similar to "athletes accepting applause from admiring spectators, or runners in a marathon receiving cups of water from support stations along their route". (Crossan, 1991:9). Herein lies another potential cultural assumption surrounding this model of walking — namely the context of privilege in which most documented walking occurs: As F. Wilkie notes, "The stories of those who walk because they are too poor to do otherwise are far less visible in the vast literature on walking ... walking in poverty needs to be acknowledged" (Wilkie, 2015). Wolfgang Stegeman's critique of Theissen's wandering radicalism as "the simple carefree life that ... manifests to a dangerous degree the traits peculiar to the daydreams of the rich (1984:148-l68) similarly alerts interpreters to the status implications inherent in these constructions of philosophically or morally inclined walking. Crossan himself also, albeit inadvertently, admits this when he anecdotally pictures the Jewish Mediterranean cynic prophet and his followers as "hippies in a world of Augustan yuppies." (1991:421). Performing "a way of looking and dressing, of eating, living, and relating that announced its contempt for honor and shame, for patronage and clientage" (Crossan, 1991:421). In effect adopting a mode of movement commonly associated with non-elites.

Also downplayed in such constructions is the largely negative perceptions of wandering in ancient contexts.59 Whilst as Ruth Padel notes, "For us [modern Westerners] wandering has a depth of glamour" for the ancients wandering was "a shameful, misery-dark state" (1995:110-111). Wandering was ascribed not only to the enlightened and divine, but also the mad and frenzied. This highlights fundamental ambivalence of walking — "The Cynic marries the beast and God in his persona as wanderer" (Montiglio, 1995:4). Classicists note that wandering was often associated with deviance and madness, an association which continues today in proverbial associations between anti-sociality and "going off the rails". The main terminology for wandering *planaomai* and *alaomai* conveyed ideas of an unstructured life, and as such wanderers were frequently perceived as estranged from their community and their own selves: "the external wandering of the madman corresponds with the interior wandering of their minds. Madness makes people err (error is Latin for wandering) and it also punishes error" (Pietikäinen, 2015:18). In many wanderer

traditions in Greek culture, travel is not only associated with suffering but also seen as affliction on account of hostility to the Gods (Schellenberg, 2011:149). The Hebrew Bible too conveys wandering as going astray from a path. Adam and Eve are exiled from the Garden of Eden to become wanderers. The audacious populace of Babel too become wanderers, "scattered abroad over the face of all the earth (Gen 11:9). Israel wanders in the wilderness as a place of testing. Wandering also depicts nonconformity to divine: if one "wanders from the way of understanding" one will "rest in the assembly of the dead" (Prov 21:16) (Ryken, 1998:926). Accordingly, whilst proponents of a positive view of early Christian wandering note "a staff served not only as a support while walking but also as a poor man's weapon against robbers and wild animals" (Lohfink, 1984: 53-54) historians note the shades of criminality which could also surround perceptions of wanderer with a staff for these could a conceal a "hollow for smuggling jewelry or to enable beggars to steal oil or wine" (Loeb and Nunn, 1997:450). This perhaps offers a culturally plausible reason for the differences between the accounts in Mark (where a staff is permitted), and Matthew and Luke (in which it seems to not be) to which as Robert Stein notes, "no fully convincing explanation has yet arisen that explain these differences" (2008:293).

The "mad" and unstructured wanderer's body was frequently inscribed intersectionally by disability, class, and gender. The wandering of female reproductive organs – the so-called "wandering womb" – credited to Hippocrates, also constructed a link between gender and madness and hysteria (Meyer 1997). Moreover, the philosophical and enlightened notion of walking inevitably excluded the non-elite and women from this activity in unhistorical proportions. So, their walking has been made invisible through this construction. Marking Jesus' and his followers" walking (and wandering) with edifying models of self-assertion and illumination, risks haunting historical enquiry with what Jane Cervenak terms, the legacies of enlightenment ideology: "the rational, self-same, self-possessed and self-mobilizing subject, invented, and revised by recognized European and American Enlightenment philosophers from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries [which] pervades thinking about appropriate public (read: visible) kinesis" (2014). And crucially an "ideal" from which those perceived as dis-abled in particular contexts are excluded.

Paul: Ideal Walking?

The vast majority of references to walking in Paul's writings have been understood as figurative moral reasoning: One can walk life's way according to human inclinations (1 Cor 3:3) or according to the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:25). Instructive to many such approaches is the widespread assumption that the apostle himself is perceived as an "ideal" ancient traveler, moving largely across land on foot. 2D visual mappings of Paul's missionary journeys often presented in modern bible translations, have in recent times been supplemented by digital technologies (and even a virtual reality computer game) which allows readers to model these journeys, to determine travel times, elevation gain, and likely terrain encountered, as well as concrete issues linked to ancient travel including kit, and climate (https://www.biblebytebooks.com/the-missionary-journeys-of-paul-3d-computer-bible-adventure-gamesby-biblebyte-books-and-games/; https://orbis.stanford.edu/; see also Wilson, 2018). Such information is used primarily to estimate chronology of his ascribed missionary journeys, from point to point. It firmly assumes a stance, widely held in scholarship, to picture Paul's walking as destination-orientated: "Tarsus, Antioch, Ephesus or Corinth. Paul was born and schooled in the Roman world and travelled in the places where Romans build roads, drew maps and set up rules" (Magda, 2009:53). "Geopiety" and tours across the "Holy Land" (Long 2003) no doubt also served to inscribe such constructions.

Picturing these journeys through the privileging of points of departure and arrival within them, can also be linked to certain ideological assumptions within Western scholarship. Accordingly, Ryan Schellenberg cautions against anachronistic models concerning Paul's peripatetic existence, which continue to influence present-day constructions of his movements and ministry. Just as the Victorians celebrated Paul as a courageous traveler and explorer? — danger here denotes adventure and unquenchable "determination not suffering" (2011:144) — so too neoliberal understandings of Paul link his individual suffering with

meritocratic overcoming and triumph:

> Paul deployed travel as a central aspect of his life-style and self-presentation...The Acts of the Apostles...dedicated to glorifying its first leaders has drawn the most attention...In his own letters Paul lays before his followers his afflictions on the road and sea in long lists of suffering on account of the gospel (2 Cor 11:25-28). (Marquis, 2013:6)

Furthermore, Paul, he submits, "performs rhetorical work by inhabiting an outsider position of doubly exiled consoler, a traveler outside the realm of society and an as-good-as-dead sufferer" (Marquis, 2013:144). He employed travel as a "motif of social change" (echoing Augustus" declaration of a new age, also eschatological change as featured in 4 Ezra) as a literary tool:

> The pervasiveness of travel as a motif of social change, suitable in its ambivalence, connoting both hope and fear, blessing and curse. In his attempts to institute a new age in the midst of Roman dominance and local anxieties, Paul harnessed the power of travel's semantic excess in order to forge an international community uniting various subject positions around the truth he proclaimed from city to city. (Marquis, 2013:3-4).

For both the Victorian and neoliberal episteme, such characteristics serve to posit Paul as heroic, physically strong, morally "upright", and steadfastly faithful. Schellenberg thinks that such impulses can be accounted for in part by an over-reliance on Acts in scholarly constructions of Paul's mobility and movements and Luke's interest to underscore the "superior character of his hero". In contrast, Paul's own writings show his itineraries and journeys fraught with "uncertainty and contingency" (Schellenberg, 2011:142-144). He also believes however that Enlightenment-inspired models of missionary endeavors also shape Paul's image as "prototypical missionary" and have cast Paul's mobility in certain triumphalist ways. Perhaps it is not only New Testament Studies, but also the cultural history of walking which produces "an implicitly masculinist ideology [which] frequently frames and valorizes walking as individualist, heroic, epic and transgressive." (Hedden and Turner, 2012:224). Just as the walks of Romantic poets, and naturalists were based on the concepts of adventure, peril, and the new, "the [ideal] walker is presumed to be uninflected by gender and thus male, reinforcing the position of the autonomous male walker who leaves behind everything in order to tap into the wildness of place." (Springgay and Turner, 2017: 27-58).

In contrast to these influential cultural templates, Schellenberg notes that Paul himself "see his homelessness as a result of divine compulsion (Cor 4:9-13)" and presents his own adversities on foot and sea not as self-sacrificing valor, but rather as a "consequence of being stricken with a shameful divine vocation" (Schellenberg, 2011:149). It would seem he sees himself as falling significantly short of other culturally-accepted pictures of an "ideal" and "able" walker. His extensive wanderings, particularly on foot, would have emasculated him, and could have aligned him with poverty and madness (2 Cor 5:6-7; 13), in the perceptions of contemporaries.

A Final Footnote

Whilst walking could seem a benign human activity, unworthy of sustained reflection in its own right, recent moves within a number of disciplines have established it as a performance inflected by social and cultural norms and assumptions. In this (necessarily brief and limited) preamble to the potential significance of a study of walking within New Testament Studies, I have focused on three aspects. First, I have shown how disabled bodies have been positioned as shadows of ancient elite cultural walking expectations, which allow certain bodies to "walk more freely than others" (Springhay and Turner, 2017: 16), but also representatives of alternative mobilities. Second, I suggest that the identity of Jesus and his followers as itinerant walkers/wanderers seems to unconsciously rehearse Enlightenment expectations which connect mobility and rationalism and self-realization. Third, I have observed that Paul's endeavors on foot reflect a model that connects walking with suffering and triumph, and destination/task-orientated strategies reflective of Enlightenment-inspired missionary ideals. In all instances, walking has been variously transposed from the "insignificant commonplace and ordinary" (Amato, 2004:16) to the meaningful, critical and significant.

Studies of walking can, and should, serve to "stop interpreters in their tracks" to acknowledge the ways in which walking matters to constructions of Early Christian communication across boundaries. For, unlike most modern scholarship which can risk eliding the physical,

or disembodying worldviews, early Christian movement had (often footsore, stigmatized, and dis-abled) feet firmly on the ground, and inevitably entangled with the corporeal, lived experience of a diversity of bodies walking and wandering.

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