

Christ's Resurrection in
Early Christianity
and the Making of
the New Testament

Markus Vinzent

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION
IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY

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and the Making of the New Testament

MARKUS VINZENT
King's College London UK

ASHGATE

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Introduction

A Rise of the Risen Christ?

What role did Christ's Resurrection play in early Christianity? Instead of addressing the historical question of whether or not Jesus rose from the dead, we ask: When, to whom and why was it important to confess the Risen Christ? How did this tenet impact on Christian writings, on the New Testament and the creed, not as a marginal note like Pontius Pilate or as a point of controversy as with the virgin Mary, but as one of the most central and foundational beliefs on which Christianity and all its churches rest? 'The belief that Jesus did in fact rise from death is the basis of the faith of the Christian community'.¹

Our thesis evolved from years of study and resulted in the following observation: a prior 'fall'² or rather a decline in interest triggered the rise of the Risen Christ. Although a strong belief in Paul, the Resurrection was of little importance to most early Christians. Because of the close link between Paul and the Resurrection, the waning of Paul's theological popularity after his death and his sudden comeback towards the middle of the second century steered Christian thinking about the Resurrection of Christ.³ Christians 'did not adopt, probably no longer understood, the radicalism of Paul'.⁴ Over a hundred years later, we can sense the 'somewhat defensive manner' with which Irenaeus handles Paul. Paul, together with his belief in the Resurrection, had been rediscovered only a few decades earlier by an outstanding Christian teacher at Rome, Marcion of Sinope. Irenaeus maintains Paul's integrity, but critically states:⁵

It is necessary ... to examine the opinion of Paul, to explain what has received an interpretation from heretics, who have altogether misunderstood what Paul has spoken, and to point out the folly of their mad opinions; and to demonstrate from that same Paul, from whose (writings) they press questions upon us, that they are indeed utterers of falsehood, but that the apostle was a preacher of the truth.⁶

¹ A.D. Nock, 'Resurrection' (1928), 47.

² See K. Aland, 'Bemerkungen' (1979), 46.

³ A. Harnack, *Marcion* (1923. ²1924 = 1960), 12; A. Lindemann, *Paulus* (1999), 280; J. Carleton Paget, 'Paul' (1996); A.E. Barnett, *Paul* (1941), 186.

⁴ C.K. Barrett, 'Controversies' (1974), 235.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 235; see R. Noormann, *Irenäus* (1994).

⁶ Iren., *Adv. haer.* IV 41, 4; trans. ANFa (here and later with alterations).

A position harsher than that of Irenaeus is taken a few years later by Tertullian in his work against Marcion. Tertullian takes as his benchmark the Gospel, and correctly notes that there is no trace of Paul in its 'list of apostles'; therefore, Marcion's claim that Paul derives his authority from the Risen suggests that Christ lacked foresight and 'did not know beforehand that he would have need of him':

Shipmaster out of Pontus [Marcion] ... will you please tell us under what bill of lading you accepted Paul as apostle, who had stamped him with that mark of distinction, who commended him to you, and who put him in your charge? Only so may you with confidence disembark him: only so can he avoid being proved to belong to him who has put in evidence all the documents that attest his apostleship. He himself, says Marcion, claims to be an apostle, and that not from men nor through any man, but through Jesus Christ.⁷ Clearly any man can make claims for himself: but his claim is confirmed by another person's attestation. One person writes the document, another signs it, a third attests the signature, and a fourth enters it in the records. No man is for himself both claimant and witness.⁸

To Tertullian, Paul's writings and his witness, the Risen Christ, do not carry sufficient weight. They need the rubberstamp of others, the Gospels and *Acts*: 'From *Acts* I am led even to believe Paul.'⁹

Had Marcion, who taught after 140 AD at Rome, not picked up Paul's letters and put them together with a Gospel,¹⁰ the Resurrection of Christ would presumably never have made its way into the Christian creed.¹¹ The myth of God incarnate gave way, though only slowly and never fully, to the other myth of Jesus, the Risen Christ.¹² Even two centuries later, when Roman emperors lent their influence to the promotion of the Resurrection, it did not gain the same symbolic power as God's incarnation. So it remained in the West, while Eastern Christianity, fuelled by Apolinarius of Laodicea, Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria, but also by the Cappadocian fathers, became the Church of Easter and the Risen Christ.¹³

⁷ See *Gal.* 1:1; trans. follows (with alterations) the latest edition of the NET Bible / New English Translation (NT, 1998; 2005).

⁸ Tert., *Adv. Marc.* v 1; trans. Tertullian: *Adversus Marcionem*, Books I–III, and Books IV and V. Edited and translated by Ernest Evans (Oxford, 1972) (with alterations).

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ See A.E. Barnett, *Paul* (1941), 222.

¹¹ See P. King, *History* (51737), 253; M. Vinzent, *Ursprung* (2006), 70.

¹² See J. Hick (ed.), *Myth* (1977); M. Wiles, 'Naked Pillar' (1994), 118f.; I.U. Dalferth, *Der auferweckte Gekreuzigte* (1994), 28.

¹³ K.L. King, *Gospel* (2003), 163.

Consequently, it was not from the year of Christ's Resurrection that countries around the globe, West and East, began to count the years of a new era; rather it is the Lord's birth that is referred to by *Anno Domini*.¹⁴

For those who followed the man of Nazareth, his death was not the devastating experience that has sometimes been claimed. Although his followers knew of the death of their master, the one in whom they had placed all their hopes, they regarded him as a martyr for a right cause or read their experience against the background of their own upbringings, informed first of all by their Jewish culture, where belief in the resurrection of the dead was available for Pharisaic or Rabbinic Jewish Christians.

Trying to understand how the belief in the Resurrection of Christ began and why it rarely rose to such heights as belief in his incarnation and passion is not the same as asking whether Christ's Resurrection did happen, and whether the encounters with Christ were historical events or narrative fiction, or were visionary experiences, phantasms, illusions or delusions. The question of its theological importance would be valid even if the myth had no historical basis whatsoever, and would be equally vital if a pilgrimage to the empty tomb today or a journey into the third heaven re-produced certainty of Christ's presence similar to that of which early Christian authors later wrote. Eventually, in the twentieth century, the Resurrection did become, even in Protestant minds – for centuries so fixed on Christ's passion – one of the core identifiers of Christianity, and for some, like Karl Barth, *the* outstanding marker.¹⁵

All the more difficult it is, then, to understand why researching Christ's Resurrection in early Christianity is like visiting what not long ago was termed a 'virgin territory'.¹⁶ While there are books, serious and less serious, popular and scholarly, in the hundreds and scholarly articles in the thousands that deal with Christ's Resurrection in the New Testament, we still lack the first Patristic monograph to follow the intellectual path of this theological topic through the first few centuries of Christianity. We embark on an untrodden path, a fascinating journey through the wilderness of canonical and non-canonical texts, equipped with orthodox and unorthodox questions, to open up perspectives and seek to understand the breadth of early Christian thinking, writing and celebrating. That we can go little beyond the second century here has to do with space restrictions. It is the hope of the author later to continue the journey into the third, fourth and fifth centuries, and probably beyond.

The expedition will be an eye-opening experience for believers and non-believers equally, and is meant to give insights into the creative craftsmanship of

¹⁴ Dionysius Exiguus (c. 470–c. 544), when creating the dating system in 525, deployed it solely to calculate the date of Easter in his Easter table.

¹⁵ See G. Koch, *Auferstehung* (1965), 126f.; I.U. Dalferth, *Der auferweckte Gekreuzigte* (1994), 28, 54–7.

¹⁶ A. Hamman, 'Résurrection' (1975), 292f.

early Christians, the earliest existential debates about life and death, failure and rescue.

Christians of the first two centuries were concerned primarily with Jesus' sayings, with his cross and his sacrificial death, soon also with his birth, youth and life. Rather than picking up Paul's Pharisaic emphasis on Christ's Resurrection, they followed his belief in Jesus, the Passover lamb, and a priestly Jewish temple tradition that in many ways has links to Qumran, Samaria, and the Sadducees. The irony of history lurks. With the rediscovery of Paul's writings and their fundamental antinomy of love and law, endorsed by Paul's revelation and gospel of the Risen Christ, Marcion carried some of the core Rabbinic features into early Christian belief, among them their Scripture orientation and the belief in the Resurrection.

Marcion had an enormous impact on the development of early Christianity, but, as we shall learn, is still underestimated today. Although he was soon disputed, the Church accepted many of his fundamental tenets. Christians also accommodated his idea that they had a genuine identity, no longer part of Judaism, and that this identity was based on a new corpus of writings, the 'New Testament', set as antithesis to what could now be termed the 'Old Testament'.¹⁷ Marcion – naturally for a Christian who had grown up in a Jewish environment – read Christian writings 'in the light of the Old (Testament)',¹⁸ or shall we say more precisely against the darkness of it, and paved the way for Paul and his Gospel, the 'good news' of a shining, loving God.

Some Christians developed distinct anti-Marcionite views. In place of his rigorous Paulinism of a spiritual Christ, they substituted a human Jesus of flesh and blood, a baby in a manger, a revolting teenager, a tempted young adult, a Jew, who was foretold by the prophets, not unknown and unrecognized by his people as Marcion would have it. For Marcion, in contrast, Christ died on the cross, was raised on the third day, entered rooms without opening doors, and resides in heaven; he was also seen and touched here on earth, before and after his death, was not born of Mary, did not grow up, but had suddenly appeared as a young adult.

Paul, who insisted on his apostleship although he had never met the earthly Jesus, only the Risen Christ, was regarded by anti-Marcionites as surpassed by all those who had lived with Jesus from his baptism to his ascension. Paul himself had acknowledged that he was not the first apostle but the last who experienced the Risen Christ. As will be shown, it was only after Marcion that Paul's letters and the one Gospel were complemented by Petrine, Johannine and other 'Apostolic' literature¹⁹ that revised the portrayal of Paul. He was domesticated in *Acts*, corrected in *2Thessalonians*, and his Gospel, as read by Marcion, was rewritten and broadened, published in versions to which were attached the names Mark, Matthew, John and Luke. *Luke* became bound together with *Acts*. The period

¹⁷ See S. Moll, *Arch-Heretic* (2010), 82f., 102.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁹ Tert., *Adv. Marc.* IV 3.

between 140 and 160 AD was one of extraordinary literary activity.²⁰ If we can trust the latest findings of New Testament scholars, the new corpus as we know it was consciously created, edited and published in response to Marcion's version of his New Testament and linked to its antithesis, the Old Testament.²¹

Even if older scholarship were right in dating the canonical Gospels and *Acts* as prior to Marcion, sometime into the first century, the fact that none of these texts was ever quoted by anybody before Marcion yields the same result:²² with Marcion did Paul re-surge, and with him what we call the Gospel. Only slowly did they make their way into Christian consciousness. None of the early Christian church councils established a canonical Bible, and while Athanasius of Alexandria's (c. 295–373) festal letter of the year 367 gives us a list of Old and New Testament books, Didymus, a contemporary teacher at the catechetical school in the same city, accepts other gospels and ranks the *Gospel of the Hebrews* above *Matthew* and *Luke*.²³

These new 'Apostolic' instruments endorsed both Marcionite and non-Marcionite views, and formed a conscious set of well-defined ambiguities of not only complementary but also competing writings, instead of the clear-cut Pauline testament of Marcion. The explosion of Christian school traditions from the mid-second century did consolidate into countless anti-types and types of Christianity and their typologies of the Resurrection. While there are very few indications of Paul's Resurrection theology being received prior to Marcion, the numerous views on the Resurrection that mushroomed after Marcion cannot be condensed into a simplistic opposition between 'heresy' and 'orthodoxy'. On the contrary, Marcion's views left their imprint and gave rise to an emerging orthodox Christianity. Even in the fourth century, when Constantine married his Sun-God (*Sol Invictus*) with the Risen Christ and promoted the Resurrection, first the Sun took over and paved the way for iconographic and architectural renderings of the Resurrection: the day of weekly celebration became the 'Sun-day', and only much later the 'day of the Resurrection'; Easter remained for the first two centuries and for some time beyond the day upon which to commemorate Christ's death, rarely his Resurrection; and children are baptized in Jesus Christ, the Son, 'who was born and suffered' (*natum et passum*), not in the one who rose.

A Second-Century Easter Homily

The centrality of other topics, creation, theophany, incarnation and suffering, can be seen from early Easter homilies. In an anonymous second-century *Homily*

²⁰ On dating *Acts*, see R.I. Pervo, *Dating* (2006), 23.

²¹ See A. Gregory, *Reception* (2003), 210, 350f.

²² See B. Aland, 'Rezeption' (1989), 1.

²³ See *Gospel of the Hebrews*, frg. 4, in D. Lührmann and E. Schlarb, *Fragmente* (2000), 51.

on the *Holy Pascha*²⁴ we read what today will appear astonishing. Easter is 'the first [month] of the year and the beginning of every age'; the point of reference, however, is not Christ's Resurrection, but the Lord as 'the first begotten and the first-born':

Let us say first then why this month is 'the beginning of months' and why the month of the Pascha 'is the first of the months of the year'.²⁵ Now the esoteric *Doctrine of the Hebrews* says that this is the season in which the divine craftsman and maker of all things created the universe ... I do not refuse to believe this explanation, but I think, or rather am convinced, that the spiritual feast of the Pascha is the reason why the beginning and head and supreme authority of all time and of the whole age is considered to be this month of the Pascha, in which this great mystery is accomplished and celebrated, so that, as the Lord is the first-begotten²⁶ and the first born of all the intelligible and invisible beings from the beginning,²⁷ so this month, which celebrates the sacred rite, has become the first of the year and the beginning of every age.²⁸

Our preacher makes use of what he calls an 'esoteric *Doctrine of the Hebrews*' as, indeed, he refers to a teaching that cannot be found in any of the canonical Jewish scriptures. Instead, it stems from the so-called *Palestinian Targum*.²⁹ Targumim were renderings of the Hebrew scriptures into Aramaic at a time, as far back as that of Jesus, when the audience was no longer capable of understanding the old liturgical Hebrew language of the Jewish scriptures.³⁰ When during the synagogue meetings passages of the Torah, the five books of Moses, or the Prophets were read, the Aramaic interpretive translator 'followed each verse of the Hebrew' and rendered it verse by verse into Aramaic, the vernacular of the populace.³¹ Often, however, it was not solely a matter of a literal transposition or a 'simple paraphrase in Aramaic', but the communication process broadened the biblical text. 'Eventually it became more elaborate and incorporated explanatory details inserted here and there into the translation of the Hebrew text.'³² The interpreters did not shrink from longer paraphrasing and also dared to contradict the literal

²⁴ See C.C. Richardson, 'Riddle' (1973), 77.

²⁵ *Ex.* 12:2.

²⁶ See *John* 1:18.

²⁷ See *Col.* 1:15.

²⁸ Anon., *Homily on the Holy Pascha* 17, 1–3 (SC 27, 145–9 Nautin; no. 27b Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard) (trans. altered).

²⁹ Critical edition and English translation: Alejandro Díez Macho, *Neophyti I, Targum Palestinense* (Madrid, 1970), 77–9.

³⁰ See below, Philo, *De spec.*, leg. II 28.159 is already referring to the 'interpreters of the holy scriptures' with clear reference to what has its parallel in the *Palestinian Targum*.

³¹ B.M. Metzger, 'Bible' (1993), 40.

³² *Ibid.*

sense of the canonical reading. They produced what is called a ‘converse translation’ that often brought about an ‘opposite meaning’.³³ When put into writing, ‘produced first in Palestine and later revised in Babylonia’, some of these Targumim became recognized by the wider Jewish communities³⁴ and were already in use at the beginning of the Christian era.³⁵ Although we do not know ‘who the authors and compilers were, under what circumstances and for what specific purposes they labored, and how literary transmission was achieved’,³⁶ Targumim were well known in Jewish and Jewish-Christian communities. Those mentioned above, which incorporated ‘Hebrew doctrines’, were readily available, although then still regarded as ‘esoteric’ or even ‘blasphemous’ by some,³⁷ as a source of learning by others.³⁸

Philo himself relied on Targumic material, ‘the interpreters of the holy scriptures’, and explains the nature of the festival ‘of unleavened bread’, which he saw as a separate festival, ‘combined with the feast of Passover’.³⁹ The festival ‘of unleavened bread’, he saw as based on two accounts, one that referred to the creation of the nation through Israel’s exodus from Egypt, and the other ‘common one’ that was cosmological in nature. This latter refers to the month of Pascha being the first of all months, commemorating the beginning of creation. Philo gives an astronomical explanation for it, referring to the month as the start of spring and the beginning of the gradual disappearance of the darkness of night:

This month, being the seventh both in number and order, according to the revolutions of the sun, is the first in power; on which account it is also called the first in the sacred scriptures. And the reason, as I imagine, is as follows. The vernal equinox is an imitation and representation of that beginning in accordance with which this world was created. Accordingly, every year, God reminds men of the creation of the world, and with this view puts forward the spring, in which season all plants flourish and bloom ... This feast is begun on the fifteenth day of the month, in the middle of the month, on the day on which the moon is full of light, in consequence of the providence of God

³³ See *ibid.*, 41, and Michael Klein, ‘Converse Translation: A Targumic Technique’, *Biblica* 57 (1976): 515–37; Etan Levine, *The Aramaic Version of the Bible* (Berlin, 1988), 33–6, 151–66.

³⁴ For example the so-called *Palestinian Targum*, the *Targum of Onkelos*, both on the five books of Moses, and the *Targum of Jonathan* on the prophets.

³⁵ B.M. Metzger, ‘Bible’ (1993), 40.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

³⁷ The latter by Rabbi Juday (2nd cent.? AD): ‘He who translates a biblical verse literally is a liar, but he who elaborates on it is a blasphemer’ – *Tosephta*, Megillah 4:41, ed. M.S. Zuckerman (Jerusalem, 1937), 228.

³⁸ See Philo, *De spec. leg.* II 28.159, trans. of Philo here and later from: *Works of Philo Judaeus*, trans. C.D. Yonge (London, 1854) (sometimes with slight alterations).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, II 28.150.

taking care that there shall be no darkness on that day. And, again, the feast is celebrated for seven days, on account of the honour due to that number, in order that nothing which tends to cheerfulness and to the giving of thanks to God may be separated from the holy number seven. And of the seven days, Moses pronounces two, the first and the last, holy; giving, as is natural, a preeminence to the beginning and to the end; and wishing, as if in the case of a musical instrument, to unite the two extremities in harmony. And the unleavened bread is ordained because their ancestors took unleavened bread with them when they went forth out of Egypt, under the guidance of the Deity.⁴⁰

Our homily, based on the *Palestinian Targum*, is certainly more condensed than Philo, but encapsulates Philonic elements. Pascha is celebrated in the first month with reference to the beginning of creation and the appearance of light⁴¹ and to an older, otherwise unknown *Book of Memorials*. Pascha is a night of watching, for which the *Targum* gives a fourfold explanation, the first and the last of which are of special interest here.

'Night' commemorates first the Word of the Lord in the creation of the world, but also 'when the world reaches its end to be redeemed'.⁴² Like Philo the *Targum* (or the cited *Book of Memorials*) stresses beginning and end and speaks of redemption, here of redeemers, two people, Moses and somebody else.⁴³ As the Lord manifested himself in the beginning by creating the world in a first night, when the world was confusion, chaos and darkness, using his Word that 'was the light and shone', so did the Lord redeem the world at the end during night by breaking the yokes of iron,⁴⁴ blotting out the generations of wickedness, and using his Word to lead Moses and another (perhaps the Messiah) as two heads of the flock. Pascha or Passover is interpreted as the Lord's Word creating the world in a night and redeeming the world in a last night, a redemption that in itself is a passing over.

It seems that these highly loaded cosmological and eschatological imageries had their impact on early Christian rhetoric and philosophy,⁴⁵ even if texts like *Luke* 17:20 reject the Pharisaic idea that the kingdom of God will come in a way that can be closely watched, as 'the kingdom of God is in you'.⁴⁶ The imagery's impact can, however, be sensed from the opening of *John* (*John* 1:4: 'In him was life'), or from the quoted Paschal homily.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ *Ex.* 12:42.

⁴² No. 5, p. 30 Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard, trans. altered in the light of Joseph A. Fitzmyer in his review of A. Díez Macho, '*Neophyti 1* (1970)', *JBL* 91 (1972): 575–8.

⁴³ J.A. Fitzmyer, 'Review' (1972), 578.

⁴⁴ See *Jer.* 28:2–14.

⁴⁵ See note k to no. 5, p. 124 in Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard.

⁴⁶ *Luke* 17:21.

This notion of light that shines in the night governs the opening of our anonymous homily. The preacher is closer to an Alexandrian or Palestinian Hebrew doctrine, as he himself admits:

Already the sacred rays of the light of Christ are shining, the pure lights of the pure spirit are beaming, and the heavenly treasures of glory and divinity are opening. The great dim night is swallowed up, and the impenetrable darkness is dissolved in him, and the sad shadow of death is overshadowed. Life is poured out upon all things, they all overflow with unlimited light, dawns of dawns occupy the universe, and he who was 'before the morning star'⁴⁷ and the lights of heaven, immortal and immense, the great Christ shines upon everything, brighter than the sun.⁴⁸

Based on a cosmic sun-Christology our preacher elucidates God's working of wonders, creating 'marvels out of impossibilities, so that it may be known that he alone can do whatever he wills'. Towards the end of the homily, in hymn-like style, the preacher concludes, pointing to God appearing as man and man ascending as God:

O (Pascha) of the mystical expenditure!

O (Pascha) of the spiritual feast!

O divine Pascha, who made your way from the heavens to earth and again went up from earth into the heavens!

O festivity in which everything has a share, cosmic solemnity!

O joy and honour and sustenance and delight of the universe! Through you dark death was destroyed and life extended to all, and the gates of heaven were opened, God appeared as man and man ascended as God. Through you the gates of hell were shattered and the iron bars broken,⁴⁹ and the people below, hearing the gospel, rose the dead, and a choir from earth is assigned to the ranks above.⁵⁰

Is it not extraordinary that all this cosmic praise of Pascha focuses on God being 'joined' with man on earth, God appearing as man so that man appears as God? Even when the preacher mentions the joyous effect when people hear the gospel and '[rise] the dead', it is the spiritual unity with God, our wedding with him, not the Resurrection of the Messiah that is the author's focus.

⁴⁷ See *Ps.* 109:3.

⁴⁸ Anon., *Homily on the Holy Pascha* 17, 1 (SC 27, 145 Nautin; no. 27b Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard).

⁴⁹ See *Ps.* 107:16.

⁵⁰ Anon., *Homily on the Holy Pascha* 62, 1–4,1 (SC 27, 189–91 Nautin; no. 27d Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard).

'If Christ has not been raised, your faith is useless' (1 Cor. 15:17)

Today, it seems, Christians think differently: Christ's death was followed by his Resurrection, the empty tomb, appearances to his female and male disciples, visions of the living Christ on earth. Christians find their belief explicitly voiced by Paul in his *First Epistle to the Corinthians*:

If Christ has not been raised, your faith is useless; you are still in your sins. Furthermore, those who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished. For if only in this life we have hope in Christ, we should be pitied more than anyone.⁵¹

If Paul, our oldest witness of the Resurrection,⁵² is so adamant on the Resurrection and makes it the sticking point of Christian belief – 'your faith is useless' without it – how should the Resurrection be anything else but the basis of Christian belief? Did Jesus himself not foretell his future Resurrection – explicitly anticipated in the synoptic Gospels (although not in *John*)?⁵³ Did not all four canonical Gospels report the Resurrection? Did Christians not, from the first days after the Resurrection, commemorate it every Sunday? Did they not convene annually at Easter, instead of fasting and celebrating Passover with the Jews? Were they not baptized to die with Christ in order to rise with him?

Indeed, according to our synoptic Gospels, Jesus told the disciples that he would 'go up to Jerusalem' so that 'the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the experts in the law'. Sadducees and Pharisees would 'condemn him to death' to be raised 'on the third day'.⁵⁴ And it happened precisely 'as he said':

Now after the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. Suddenly there was a severe earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descending from heaven came and rolled away the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were shaken and became like dead men

⁵¹ 1 Cor. 15:17–9.

⁵² See A. Lindemann, *Paulus* (1999), 27–36.

⁵³ See J. Terence Forestell, *Cross* (1974), 92.

⁵⁴ *Matth.* 20:17–19. B.M. Metzger, *Tools* (1960), 19–21: 'The devotees of Attis commemorated his death on March 22, the Day of Blood, and his coming to life four days later, March 25, the Feast of Joy or *Hilaria*. According to one account of the Egyptian cult, the death of Osiris took place on the 17th of Athyr (a month corresponding to the period from October 28 to November 26), the finding and reanimation of his body in the night of the 19th. When Adonis rose is not certain, but the reconstruction of a papyrus text has been thought to make the third day probable. ... There are, in fact, no literary or epigraphical texts prior to the time of Antoni[n]us Pius (A.D. 138–161) which refer to Attis as the divine consort of Cybele, much less any that speak of his resurrection. ... In the case of Adonis ... the only four witnesses ... date from the second to the fourth century.'

because they were so afraid of him. But the angel said to the women: 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised, just as he said. Come and see the place where he was lying. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: "He has been raised from the dead. He is going ahead of you into Galilee. You will see him there". Listen, I have told you!' So they left the tomb quickly, with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.⁵⁵

It was not just hearsay or a message of the women to the disciples,⁵⁶ but the same *Matthew* reports a personal encounter with the Risen:

Jesus met them, saying, 'Greetings!' They came to him, held onto his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them: 'Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee. They will see me there'.⁵⁷

Luke gives a very similar account of Jesus' Resurrection, even if he adds some elements and leaves others aside: new are aromatic spices and two brilliantly shining men; he inserts the foretelling of the passion and Resurrection that *Matthew* reported earlier; now there are not only two Marys, one specified as 'Mother of James', but also two other women, Joanna and one unnamed; we are faced with the women's disbelief, and see Peter run to the tomb to check and wonder. 'Luke alone among the canonical gospels ... claims that the risen Lord first appeared exclusively to Peter ... Mary Magdalene correspondingly loses the primacy that she holds as a resurrection witness.'⁵⁸ Other things are missing: the sudden and severe earthquake, the white angel of the Lord descending from heaven sitting on the stone, the terrified guards, the indication that the appearances are going to take place in Galilee:

Now on the first day of the week, at early dawn, the women went to the tomb, taking the aromatic spices they had prepared. They found that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men stood beside them in dazzling attire. The women were terribly frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them: 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has been raised! Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.' Then the women remembered his words, and when they returned from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the

⁵⁵ *Matth.* 28,1–8.

⁵⁶ See J. Lieu, 'Women' (1994).

⁵⁷ *Matth.* 28:1–10; J. Hartenstein, 'Geschichten' (2010), 139f.

⁵⁸ A.G. Brock, *Mary* (2003), 19, 32.

rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles. But these words seemed like pure nonsense to them, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb. He bent down and saw only the strips of linen cloth; then he went home, wondering what had happened.⁵⁹

Despite the alterations, omissions and additions, the accounts in *Matthew* and in *Luke* still have much in common. Although there is a major difference in locating the Resurrection appearances – *Matthew* sees the Risen in Galilee, while *Luke* only reports those meetings in and around Jerusalem⁶⁰ – they both concur that the Risen Christ met friends, women and disciples.

Whether or not *Mark's* Gospel originally lacked the passage on the appearances after the Resurrection⁶¹ – a much debated chapter in scholarship⁶² – the final chapter 16 in vv. 1–8 reminds us of *Luke*, with a few elements of *Matthew*. We encounter again two Marys, including the mother of James, together with an added Salome, then read of the aromatic spices, of one man dressed in white, rather than two, and again the same insertion of the foretelling of the passion and Resurrection. Peter's run to the tomb is omitted, and the mention of Peter as addressee of the Resurrection message is strangely phrased ('even Peter'), as if the original readers would have expected that it was futile to tell him the Resurrection message – an assumption that is supported by the addition that the women 'said nothing to anybody':

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought aromatic spices so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, at sunrise, they went to the tomb. They had been asking each other, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled back. Then as they went into the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has been raised! He is not here. Look, there is the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples, even Peter, that he is going ahead of you into Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you'. Then they went out and ran from the tomb, for terror and bewilderment had seized them. And they said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.⁶³

⁵⁹ *Luke* 24:1–12.

⁶⁰ J. Hartenstein, 'Geschichten' (2010), 140.

⁶¹ *Mark* 16:9–20.

⁶² Bibliography in S. Sabugal, *Anástasis* (1993), 413; J. Fenton, 'Ending' (1994).

⁶³ *Mark* 16:1–8.

The relation between *Mark* and *Luke* is also visible from the disputed remaining part of chapter 16:9–20 where *Mark* reports that the Risen ‘appeared in a different form to two of them while they were on their way to the country’,⁶⁴ a summary of the *Luke* story of the disciples on their way to Emmaus.⁶⁵ On the other hand, this part of *Mark*’s Gospel has some new information (the Risen appears to Mary Magdalene), but it also shares elements that are common to *Matthew* and *Luke*, as for example the nations as target for the Christian message:

John gives the Resurrection a different twist, and not only in his final two chapters, which read like a summary of what has gone before. Already in the so-called ‘farewell discourses’ *John* has referred to Christ’s death and the destiny of the world, his departure from this world to the Father ‘in the supreme hour of his glorification (13,1). ... By his death upon the cross Jesus is going to the Father to prepare a place for the disciples in the Father’s house. ... There is nothing in the text of 14,1–3 which suggests a glorious parousia nor is there any time indication to determine whether the reference is to the resurrection appearances, the death of the individual, or the end of the world ... The text also implies the necessity of Jesus’ death. Elsewhere in these discourses Jesus tells the disciples that he will come to them and that they will see him again.’⁶⁶

When Jesus mentions to his disciples that he will see them again,⁶⁷ it ‘signifies something even more definitive’ than the Resurrection appearances: the passage of Jesus through the sorrows of death to life with the Father is the eschatological event for the disciples but not for the world that sees in Jesus’ death its triumph over him. ‘The disciples ... will no longer need to ask questions because they will be instructed from within’,⁶⁸ ‘whereas in the synoptic the proclamation of the resurrection was based on the discovery of the empty tomb. “He has risen, he is not here”’.⁶⁹ In *John* the message is the new spiritual and glorious state of Jesus after his death: “Do not hold me ... Go to my brothers and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God”. ... This Johannine narrative does not emphasize the physical character of Jesus’ resurrection body as do the Lucan apparition narratives. On the contrary it presents a mysterious picture of the presence of the glorified Christ’.⁷⁰

Salvation in *John* ‘is completely christocentric’, with emphasis not on the Resurrection, but on ‘his final exaltation’.⁷¹

⁶⁴ *Mark* 16:12.

⁶⁵ *Luke* 24:13–35.

⁶⁶ J. Terence Forestell, *Cross* (1974), 93f.

⁶⁷ *John* 16:22.

⁶⁸ J. Terence Forestell, *Cross* (1974), 94f.

⁶⁹ *John* 16:22.

⁷⁰ J. Terence Forestell, *Cross* (1974), 97.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 146.

In *John's* account, Mary Magdalene has prominence and is even more important than in *Mark* or *Luke*. Indeed 'Mary Magdalene was so esteemed among some early Christians that they bestowed on her the honorific title, "apostle to the apostles",⁷² and yet for others she holds no apostolic status at all and is instead known as a reformed prostitute, a concept for which there is no biblical basis'.⁷³ According to *John*, Mary was all alone, while it was still dark, when she went to the tomb. She addresses Peter with the message of the empty tomb. Peter, in turn, 'and the other', unnamed, 'disciple set out to go to the tomb'; the latter not only reaches it before Peter, but is the only disciple of whom it is said that 'he saw and believed'.⁷⁴ Mary alone, standing outside the tomb and looking into it, sees the two angels in white; moreover, she is gifted with seeing 'Jesus standing there' and hearing him addressing her, although 'she did not know that it was Jesus'⁷⁵ and mistook him for the gardener. Only when Jesus 'said to her, "Mary", she turned and said to him in Aramaic, "*Rabboni*" (which means Teacher)'.⁷⁶ This disclosure of a very intimate conversation in vernacular Aramaic underlines the close relation *John* sees between Mary and Jesus. She is not allowed to touch him (one wonders whether that was what the reader had expected), but is endowed with the message to the 'brothers'. *John* adds (chapter 20) the appearances, first to the disciples in Jerusalem (*Luke's* tradition), to the Twelve, to Thomas, but he also seems to know of appearances in Galilee (*Matth.'s* tradition), which are given in the final chapter 21 with a special focus on the disciple Jesus loved, another intimate but also odd story towards the end of this Gospel:

Peter turned around and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them (this was the disciple who had leaned back against Jesus' chest at the meal and asked, 'Lord, who is the one who is going to betray you?'). So when Peter saw him, he asked Jesus, 'Lord, what about him?' Jesus replied: 'If I want him to live until I come back, what concern is that of yours? You follow me!' So the saying circulated among the brothers and sisters that this disciple was not going to die. But Jesus did not say to him that he was not going to die, but rather, 'If I want him to live until I come back, what concern is that of yours?''⁷⁷

If we want further proof of the importance of Christ's Resurrection and appearances in early Christianity, even at the peak of Jesus' life narratives, we only need to read *Acts*, seen as a continuation of *Luke*.⁷⁸ Peter is the preacher of the Kerygma that summarizes Jesus' deeds, his life, death and Resurrection:

⁷² See Hippol., *On the Song of Songs* 25,6; see J.A. Cerrato, 'Martha' (2001), 297.

⁷³ A.G. Brock, *Mary* (2003), 1.

⁷⁴ *John* 20:9.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 20:14.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 20:16.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 21:20–23.

⁷⁸ See R.I. Pervo, *Dating* (2006); J.B. Tyson, *Marcion* (2006), 10.

Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man clearly attested to you by God with powerful deeds, wonders, and miraculous signs that God performed among you through him, just as you yourselves know – this man, who was handed over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you executed by nailing him to a cross at the hands of Gentiles. But God raised him up, having released him from the pains of death, because it was not possible for him to be held in its power.⁷⁹

In linking Jesus to King David, *Acts* underscores the reliability of an unbroken Jewish tradition between David and the Risen Christ, with Peter preaching of the incorruptible body of Christ that had been foretold:

David by foreseeing this spoke about the Resurrection of the Christ, that *he was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did his body experience decay*.⁸⁰ This Jesus God raised up, and we are all witnesses of it. So then, exalted to the right hand of God, and having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, he has poured out what you both see and hear.⁸¹

And turning to the crowd, Peter adds: ‘You killed the Originator of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this fact we are witnesses!’⁸² Like a refrain, this witnessing of the one who was killed ‘by the rulers and elders’ and ‘the people of Israel’, but raised by God, reoccurs in various chapters of *Acts*, either from the mouth of Peter,⁸³ or from that of Paul.⁸⁴

It seems that *Acts* has been reliably following Paul’s own understanding of the Resurrection message as expressed in his letters, although, as we shall see, only to some extent. In the crucial *Letter to the Galatians* in which Paul has to defend his own authority and his gospel against those Christian brothers who came to pervert his course, to undermine his missionary teaching and ridicule his Apostolic authority, the opening verse sets the tone: ‘From Paul, an Apostle, not from men, nor by human agency, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead.’⁸⁵ Paul carries on bringing to light the right version of the gospel against the distorted one of his enemies by insisting upon the divine origin of his preaching. His knowledge of Christ does not derive from human agency in any shape or form or tradition, but he received his insights in an apocalypse, an unmediated revelation of Jesus Christ:

⁷⁹ *Acts* 2:22–4.

⁸⁰ *Ps.* 16:10.

⁸¹ *Acts* 2:31–3.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 3:15.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 4:10, 5:30, 10:40.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 13:30–31, 17:31–2.

⁸⁵ *Gal.* 1:1.

Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. For I did not receive it or learn it from any human source; instead I received it by a revelation of Jesus Christ.⁸⁶

And it is this revelation that Paul, again, is referring to in *2Corinthians* to boast about the secret visions and revelations given to him by the Lord:

'I know a man in Christ', and Paul seems to talk about himself, 'who fourteen years ago (whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows) was caught up to the third heaven. And I know that this man (whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows) was caught up into paradise and heard things too sacred to be put into words, things that a person is not permitted to speak.⁸⁷

Earlier on in the same letter, Paul qualified the revelation experience as the Lord's light that 'shines in our hearts to give us the light of the glorious knowledge of God in the face of Christ',⁸⁸ an experience that he does not restrict to himself.

We have to add Paul's testimony in *1Corinthians*, where, as in *Galatians*, he has to defend himself against those who do not accept his apostleship:

Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, at least I am to you, for you are the confirming sign of my apostleship in the Lord. This is my defense to those who examine me.⁸⁹

Having heard and seen the Lord, he knows⁹⁰ that he has been given the authority to be an 'Apostle', preaching his gospel and founding Christian communities, in an experience not, of course, of the earthly Jesus, but of the one who appeared in a vision. Paul equates this revelation with the Resurrection appearances to other Apostles:⁹¹

The Lord appeared 'to Cephas, then to the Twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James,⁹² then to all the apostles', before he appeared to him, Paul.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 1:11–12.

⁸⁷ *2Cor.* 12:1–4.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 4:6.

⁸⁹ *1Cor.* 9:1–3.

⁹⁰ *Phil.* 3:8.

⁹¹ *1Cor.* 15:5–7.

⁹² See the explicit Resurrection appearance to James, mentioned in the *Gospel of the Hebrews* according to Jerome, *De vir. inl.* II: see D. Lührmann and E. Schlarb, *Fragmente*

Having read all these witnesses, we could easily fill hundreds more pages with commentaries on Paul, *Luke*, *Acts*, *Matthew*, *John* or *Mark*, and it appears to be a convincing and coherent picture that, after Jesus' death on the cross, it was the Resurrection that triggered the new movement and made Christianity into what it has become, the new 'assembly of God'. This at least is the opinion of a host of New Testament scholars and scholars of systematic theology.⁹³

However, among scholars of early Christianity there is disagreement. The learned Italian Catholic scholar Raniero Cantalamessa, for example, published his *Easter in the Early Church* in the year 1978. In the introduction, he highlights the exclusive nature of the Easter celebration as the sole feast within the liturgical calendar of the young movement: 'There was a time in the life of the Church when "Pascha" (what, as we shall see, only later becomes "Easter")⁹⁴ was, in a way, everything.' Why had Pascha this extraordinary exclusivity within the festival calendar of early Christianity? Cantalamessa answers: 'There were no other feasts. Pascha alone commemorated the whole history of salvation from the creation through to the parousia [second coming of Christ]. In addition, certain essential elements of the community's life emerged in the course of its celebration: the liturgy, for instance, but also typological exegesis, catechesis, theology, and also the fixed canon of scriptures'.⁹⁵

Cantalamessa sees many early Christian writings, among them the most important ones (he mentions the canonical four Gospels, *1 Corinthians*, *1 Peter*, *Revelation of John*, but also non-canonical writings such as *Barnabas* and *Diognet*), being written in the context of Pascha.⁹⁶ Suffering from an overwhelming abundance of available texts that refer to Pascha, he limits himself to those which contribute to understanding the history of the development of Pascha/Easter, its ritual and liturgy, spirituality and theology.

Contrary to Cantalamessa's judgement, however, stand Reinhart Staats' observations in a substantial article on 'The Resurrection of Christ', published just one year after Cantalamessa's collection, in the respected German *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*.⁹⁷ Staats notes that Christ's Resurrection attracted attention neither from many early Christian authors, nor from artists or craftsmen. Staats has a precursor in the French scholar of patristics and liturgy, Adalbert Hamman, who just three years earlier had published two articles on our topic and drew attention to the incongruence between New Testament and early Christian studies: 'While

(2000), 52.

⁹³ See, for example, G. Vermes, *The Resurrection* (2008); N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (2003); E. Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God* (New York, 1963).

⁹⁴ The English translators of this book prefer the term 'Easter', but do also indicate the shift of meaning.

⁹⁵ R. Cantalamessa, *Easter* (1993), 1 (trans. altered).

⁹⁶ See *ibid.*

⁹⁷ R. Staats, 'Auferstehung II/2' (1979).

there is an abundant exegetical literature on the question of the Resurrection, early Christian studies are practically inexistent', or, in short, show a 'virgin territory'.⁹⁸

Especially in datable early Christian writings up to around 140 AD a surprising number of texts do not refer to Christ's Resurrection at all.⁹⁹ Others contain only passing notes or allusions to the Resurrection.¹⁰⁰ The main exception is found in the letters of Ignatius of Antioch, the dating, locating and authorship of which, however, were and still are heavily debated. Paul is mentioned twice¹⁰¹ and the Resurrection figures prominently.¹⁰² Staats indicates that, even in later writings of the patristic period, the Resurrection and the post-Resurrection appearances of the Risen Christ are often absent in places where one might have expected to find them. Most curiously, the Resurrection is not introduced or referred to even in some tracts that deal with the resurrection of the dead. Of course, what has not been written about could still have been of utmost importance, kept secret or been so broadly accepted that there was no need to mention it. We know that Christian authors of the first centuries rarely intended to present a full or coherent picture of their belief, as it was a belief in the making.¹⁰³ Gaps, therefore, are certainly natural, whether or not intended. However, using assumptions such as these to explain every lack is equally problematic, especially if we compare the Resurrection with other elements of Christian belief. We need to check why a particular topic is given weight, whether sources depend upon each other or only reflect a particular strand or perspective, problems that have overshadowed the little research that has been undertaken in the field of the Resurrection of Christ in early Christianity. The question has to be: what mattered to Christians, what was important to them, when they thought about salvation and eternal life, and when they celebrated their own future resurrection?

To give just one example: when the author of *On the resurrection*, a little-known Christian philosopher of the second century (Athenagoras?), refuted other Christians, people who 'admit the same principles as we do, yet somehow depart from their own admissions'¹⁰⁴ and who objected to the belief in a resurrection of bodies on grounds that even our author took seriously and granted worthy of pondering, he refers to the 'Apostle' with a quote from *1 Corinthians* 15:54: 'this corruptible (and dissoluble) must put on incorruption'.¹⁰⁵ We look in vain,

⁹⁸ A. Hamman, 'R surrection' (1975), 292f.; T. Nicklas, A. Merkt and J. Verheyden (eds), *Auferstanden* (2010).

⁹⁹ For example the canonical New Testament writings *1 Tim.*, *Titus*, *James*, *2 Peter*, 1–3 *John* and *Jude*, but also non-canonical ones like *Didache*, *Hermas*, *2 Clement*, *Quadratus*.

¹⁰⁰ In the New Testament: *2 Tim.* 2:8; *Hebr.* 13:20; *Rev.* 1:5, 2:8; in non-canonical writings: *1 Clem.* 24:1, 42:3, *Barn.* 15:9.

¹⁰¹ *IgnEph.* 12:2; *IgnRom.* 4:3.

¹⁰² On Ignatius, see below.

¹⁰³ See the critical remarks in A. Lindemann, *Paulus* (1999), 295.

¹⁰⁴ *On the resurrection*, 19, trans. ANFa.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

however, for a reference to Paul's firm statement earlier in the same chapter: 'For I passed on to you as of first importance what I also received – that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures.'¹⁰⁶

If people doubted the resurrection of the body of the dead, why did *On the resurrection* not address them as Paul did? In *1 Corinthians* Paul was in a similar position and started from his own assumption and unshakeable belief in Christ's Resurrection. He could not understand 'how some of' the Corinthians could 'say there is no resurrection of the dead' 'now that Christ is being preached as raised from the dead'.¹⁰⁷ Whether Paul had to deal with people of the same background as the author of *On the resurrection* is immaterial, but they both had to convince people who drew similar conclusions: they did not believe in the resurrection of dead bodies. While Paul immediately points to what for him was a firm fact that he thought his interlocutors would or should share, namely that God had raised Christ from the dead, our author develops a lengthy philosophical tract with numerous Aristotelian elements, but does not mention Christ's Resurrection at all to his fellow Christians.

The nature of the author's arguments has led scholars to assume that he is dealing either with philosophically trained Christians from the school of Origen, or with pagan philosophers like Celsus who had written against Christianity. In the latter case it might be easier to explain why the author did not refer to Christ's Resurrection; however, he clearly addressed Christians. In addition, why would one quote Paul, if the audience were pagan? If the author found it useful to rely on Paul's belief in the resurrection of the dead, referring also to testimonies from the ten commandments and finishing his tract with a reference to the God of *Exodus* who discloses his name as 'He who is',¹⁰⁸ why did he not refer to Christ and his Resurrection? The addressees of *On the resurrection*,¹⁰⁹ and especially those among them who did not believe in a resurrection of the dead – 'the majority', as the author admits – were familiar with both the Jewish scriptures and Paul. Yet our author does not hint at *1 Cor.* 15:1–3. To Paul, it was clear: had he not preached the Risen Christ, his witness about God would have been false and he would have stood against God. If people did not believe in a resurrection, as, for example the Sadducees,¹¹⁰ they could not believe that even Christ has been raised. In our tract, however, despite its explicit reference to the 'Apostle', there is little left from Paul's kerygma of the Risen Christ.

Henry Leclercq, the polymath French scholar of the history of liturgy, archaeology and iconography of late antique Christianity and editor of the famous

¹⁰⁶ *1 Cor.* 15:3–4.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 15:12.

¹⁰⁸ *Ex.* 3:14.

¹⁰⁹ *On the resurrection*, 25.

¹¹⁰ See *Mark* 12:18; *Matth.* 22:23; *Luke* 20:27; *Acts* 4:1–2, 23:6–8, and further below.

Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie,¹¹¹ wondered in his 1948 article on the 'Resurrection of the Saviour' about the absence of the Resurrection from Christian iconography across various arts. The Resurrection, he thinks, 'should have inspired the painters, the mosaic craftsmen, the sculptors, but it did not, the reason for this being unclear, because the representation of it, both consoling and triumphing, seems necessarily to have imposed itself on their imagination and their effort. One has asked the question how the Resurrection happened. It is hardly possible that ignorance of this mystery should have turned artists off to elaborate on more or less symbolic depictions'.¹¹²

The search for such depictions, first symbolic and then illustrative ones,¹¹³ gives positive results, but only from the fourth century onwards,¹¹⁴ a phenomenon, as we shall see, that is consistent with the rise of the Resurrection in literary output from the fourth century until today.¹¹⁵ Prior to the fourth century, however, even symbolic depictions of the Resurrection are almost entirely missing.

Known depictions on Roman sarcophagi of New Testament scenes related to the Resurrection (the women at the tomb and Christ's appearance to the women, to disciples or to Thomas) are extremely rare.¹¹⁶ The first chapter of the *Iconography of the Resurrection of Christ* is called 'The Problem'.¹¹⁷ Indeed, in the first three centuries we mainly find the following symbols in Christian epigraphy and iconography: lamb, anchor, vase, dove, boat, olive branch, the Orante, palm, bread, the Good Shepherd, fish, vine and grapes, Jonah/Endymion, cross, Mary, and Jesus the wonder worker.¹¹⁸ As revealing as this list is the semiotic content of the basic symbols prior to Constantine:

1. symbols of conflict (anchor, boat and fish);
2. symbols of deliverance (Orante, dove,¹¹⁹ and olive branch);
3. symbols of community (Good Shepherd, lamb, palm or tree, bread, wine (vase), and vine and grapes);
4. symbol of satisfaction (Jonah);
5. symbol of the deliverer (wonder worker);
6. symbol of supremacy (Mary);

¹¹¹ See G. Koch, *Art* (1996).

¹¹² H. Leclerq, 'Résurrection du Sauveur', *DACL* 14 (1948), 2398–401, 2400.

¹¹³ G.F. Snyder, *Ante pacem* (2nd2003, 1st1985), 23.

¹¹⁴ See G. Ristow, 'Passion' (1983).

¹¹⁵ See P. Seewald, *Jesus Christus* (2009), 648–59.

¹¹⁶ See G. Koch, *Sarkophage* (2000), 181.

¹¹⁷ O. Schönewolf, *Auferstehung* (1909), 1–2.

¹¹⁸ See this list and the following seven categories taken from G.F. Snyder, *Ante pacem* (2nd2003, 1st1985), 23; A. Provoost, 'Il significato delle scene pastorali del terzo secolo d.C.', in: *Atti del IX congresso internazionale di archaeologia cristiana I* (Vatican, 1978): 407–31, and his chart on page 414.

¹¹⁹ F. Sühling, *Taube* (1930).

7. symbol of defeat (the cross); and
8. invisible symbol of power (God).

The symbols of conflict ‘referred to security in the midst of an alien environment. [They] carried the early Christian through a difficult life. When that alienation with Rome no longer existed [from the fourth century onwards], the symbol of the ship, like the anchor, lost most of its popularity in Christian art’.¹²⁰ Moreover, the fish points to Jesus Christ. The letters of the Greek term for fish, ΙΧΘΥΣ, form an acrostic, the first letters of J(I)esus Ch(X)rist, Son (= ΥΙΟΣ) of God (= ΘΕΟΥ), Saviour (= ΣΩΤΗΡ). We can assume that Tertullian, towards the beginning of the third century, was already familiar with this acrostic. In the opening to his work *On baptism*, Tertullian identifies the fish with Jesus Christ, links the symbol to the water of baptism, and uses it to secure perseverance in the right Christian environment where ‘we are freed for everlasting life’:

Happy mystery of our water, because the sins of our former blindness are washed away and we are freed for everlasting life! The present treatise will not be useless, if it instructs alike those who are at this moment being formed, and those who, satisfied with simple belief, do not investigate the grounds of what has been handed down, and in inexperience carry an untried credible faith. ... we little fish, according to our ΙΧΘΥΝ Jesus Christ, are born in water, and it is only by remaining in water that we are safe.¹²¹

The ΙΧΘΥΣ acrostic was known during the third century. In addition to Tertullian the *Sibylline Oracles* provide a long poem, where the first letter of each line ‘eventually forms the full ΙΧΘΥΣ acrostic with the addition of seven lines that spell ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ, or cross’.¹²² These lines about the cross spell out the importance of this sign of the Saviour, mentioned in the last line: ‘Saviour, eternal king, who suffered for us.’¹²³ Eternal life through Jesus Christ, the fish, was summarized not in the Resurrection, but in the Saviour’s suffering and eternal kingship, and therefore symbolized through the cross, not as a motif ‘of death and resurrection’, but rather of overcoming ‘illness, political and social difficulties, and death ... [stressing] deliverance and victory rather than death and resurrection’.¹²⁴

Why did artists and sculptors not develop symbolic imageries of the Resurrection? Was the message of the Resurrection too transcendent, arcane, or,

¹²⁰ G.F. Snyder, *Ante pacem* (2nd ed. 2003, 1st 1985), 30.

¹²¹ *Tert., De bapt.* 1; trans. Alexander Souter, *Tertullian’s Treatises Concerning Prayer and Baptism* (London, 1919; altered); see F.J. Dölger, *ΙΧΘΥΣ* (1910).

¹²² G.F. Snyder, *Ante pacem* (2nd ed. 2003, 1st 1985), 32; see F.J. Dölger, *ΙΧΘΥΣ* (1910), 51–2.

¹²³ *Orac. Sibyll.* (GCS Geffcken), 153ff.; G.N. Stanton, *Jesus* (2004), 45–6.

¹²⁴ G.F. Snyder, *Ante pacem* (2nd ed. 2003, 1st 1985), 46.

on the contrary, too ordinary? But if so, why do early Christians hint symbolically at the mysteries of the Eucharist and Baptism?

The different focus is underscored when we look at the tradition of Jonah.¹²⁵ According to the *Book of Jonah* its protagonist had been devoured by a fish to be spat out on the third day. How could the combination of the 'third day' and the accounts in *Luke* 11:29–32 and *Matth.* 16:1–4 ('No other sign will be given to you than that of Jonas'¹²⁶) not be linked to Jesus' death and Resurrection 'on the third day'? Indeed, numerous interpreters have drawn that conclusion and interpreted the Jonah iconography accordingly,¹²⁷ all the more as *Luke* and *Matthew* locate Jesus' mention of the sign of Jonah in his discussion with Pharisees and Sadducees. The dispute, however, was not about the resurrection of the dead, but about the arrival of the end of time, the final judgement. Again, the Resurrection has no bearing on the way Jonah is presented in early Christian writings or in iconography.¹²⁸

Scholars have looked for sources of inspiration other than the Gospels and have pointed to a non-canonical story as a *Vorlage* for most of the Jonah imagery.¹²⁹ 'The image is superficially actualised and used for preaching penitence.'¹³⁰ Used in a typological comparison with Christ, who offers human beings so much more than what was offered to Jonah,¹³¹ 'the numerous patristic texts about Jonah, and his even higher number of depictions in antique Christian art, astonishingly fail to refer to *Matth.* 12:40 and, therefore, to Christ's Resurrection. Significantly, even Tertullian, speaking about the fate of Jonah as a precursor of Christ's suffering, does not make a straight comparison between the three days in the stomach of the fish and Christ resting for three days in his tomb. Central to him was: as Jonah had been spat out, but remained entirely unhurt, so the preservation of our human body is secured in the resurrection of the dead'.¹³²

There is only one potential exception in early Christian iconography that probably refers to the Resurrection. But if so, the example rather proves our case: there was no principle hindrance to artists to develop an iconography of the Resurrection. This depiction, from the middle of the third century, is found in a 'clumsy' mural in a house at the crossroads town of Dura-Europos, situated above the right bank of the river Euphrates in Syriac Mesopotamia.¹³³ 'The scene

¹²⁵ R. Staats, 'Auferstehung II/2' (1979), 522; G. Koch, *Sarkophage* (2000), 154–6; P. Prigent, *L'art* (1995), 159–78.

¹²⁶ Note that *Mark* 8:11–13 asserts that no sign at all will be given.

¹²⁷ See E. Stommel, 'Problem' (1958), 112.

¹²⁸ See J. Allenbach, 'Jonas' (1971), 107.

¹²⁹ See E. Stommel, 'Problem' (1958), 112–14.

¹³⁰ Justin, *Dial.* 107,3; so P. Prigent, *L'art* (1995), 177; E. Dassmann, *Sündenvergebung* (1973), 231.

¹³¹ See *ActPaul* 8,3; *Iren., Adv. haer.* IV 19,1, IV 52,1, V 5,2.

¹³² R. Staats, 'Auferstehung II/2' (1979), 522 (my trans.); Tert., *Orat.* 3–4; id., *De res.* 32,3.

¹³³ See M. Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its Art* (1938), 100–101.

has been variously interpreted, but the most plausible explanation is the women coming to the sepulchre on Easter morning ... The details of the representation do not fit the story of any single gospel.¹³⁴

In contrast, from the time of Constantine in the second quarter of the fourth century, we find a growing number of depictions.¹³⁵ Still, the mid-fourth century iconography highlights the centrality of the cross, as it is not the Risen Christ that is shown on the earliest monuments, but the cross standing as a mark not of death but of victory, carrying the wreath or crown with 'the first two letters in Greek of the title of Christ. The X (Chi) R (Ro) laid on top of one another ... became in the fourth century the most pervasive of all Christian symbols'.¹³⁶ Interpreters like Ephrem of Syria rendered the R (Ro) of the cross in harmony with an old pagan interpretation as the sign of salvation, luck and help: 'The R over the cross means βοήθεια (help), which conforms to the value of 100.'¹³⁷ The Greek character R carries the value of 100 because that is the sum of the values of the characters that spell βοήθεια, an example of antique *isopsephy*:¹³⁸

β ο ή θ ι α

$$2 + 70 + 8 + 9 + 10 + 1 = 100 = R$$

The triumphant cross is a remarkable symbol, as it not only marks the transition from a focus on Jesus' death as the central moment of salvation to Christ's Resurrection as crown of this victorious cross; it also underlines that there were no apparent reasons for the absence of at least symbolic depictions of the Resurrection.¹³⁹

Why, then, are we faced with an absence of artistic and written expressions of belief in the Resurrection? Our journey leads back into the first two centuries of our era. Unlike earlier attempts, we are not starting with the anachronistic perspective of an established Church and a scriptural canon, of an institutionalized Christianity supported by the Roman Emperor, his administration, policing and programmes for representations, at a time when Rome – at least in the top ranks of its politically powerful strata (emperor household, leading elite, military, senate and provincial officials) – had widely embraced Christianity, and Christianity had incorporated many features of Roman cult, ritual, belief and ideology. Nor are we starting by rewriting the factual history of events of Jesus' death and the days that followed, as the historical question cannot be answered because of the lack of

¹³⁴ A. Perkins, *Art* (1973), 53–4; see R. Milburn, *Art* (1988), 12.

¹³⁵ R. Harries, *Passion* (2004), 5; R.M. Jensen, *Art* (2000 = 2007).

¹³⁶ H. v. Campenhausen, 'Die Passionsarkophagē' (1929), 81.

¹³⁷ Ephraem, *In sanctam Parasceven* (Ephraem Syri opera omnia quae exstant graece – syriace – latine III, Rome 1746, 477).

¹³⁸ F.J. Dölger, *Sol* (1925), 74.

¹³⁹ See J. Bowden, 'Resurrection' (1994).

eye-witnesses. Conversely, we have to be careful not to fall into the opposite trap of demythologizing, as pseudo-historical studies have done since the eighteenth century.

Our basis has to be broader than the canonical writings: the New Testament corpus or canon, especially in its structure, already represents a selection of early Christian writings that has emerged as a product of intellectual, theological and institutional developments. In its final normative form the canon does not predate the fourth century, and even its formation, as we shall see, is a product of debates that are intrinsically linked to that about the Resurrection of Christ. Instead of beginning with the final product of the canon, we shall be taken into the creative process of the emerging New Testament.

My own journey into this area started eighteen years ago, in 1993, when I responded to a call for papers for a conference in Rome on *La Narrativa Cristiana Antica* ('The Early Christian Narrative'). Having worked before on Apolinarius of Laodicea, a theologian of the fourth century to whom the Resurrection is a core element of Christian belief, I started looking into a topic that I mistakenly believed would be a straightforward piece of research, namely the Resurrection narratives in early Christianity.¹⁴⁰ Soon the small conference contribution turned into a paper counter to my own assumptions and those of the overall conference. It carried the title: 'History does not always tell stories'. I discovered that only a small number of narrative attempts had been made in early Christian literature of the first two centuries, and that theological engagement was limited.

This long history of research, which has not come to an end, explains why some of the observations will still be tentative, especially as some have turned out to be revolutionary. On the other hand, I try to read as little as possible into the sources and hold back from conclusions rather than running into standard explanations or presenting unconventional speculations. I am particularly grateful to my colleagues and former teachers Reinhard M. Hübner (Munich) and A. Martin Ritter (Heidelberg), who both have read the draft of this book, as also has Otto Zwierlein (Bonn), who all made important suggestions; thanks also to my undergraduate and postgraduate students with whom I have discussed sections of it. My persevering text editor, Ann-Marie Wareham, wrote after the completion of the final draft: This 'could be a life's work! It seems quite extraordinary that you are marking out new ground here. I wonder why this has been ignored for so long – do you attribute the lack of work to ignorance, complacency, or perhaps fear of upsetting the established order? Is it that (even) scholars are so entrenched in their own traditions, whether consciously or unconsciously, that they do not look any further? The manuscript has certainly caught my imagination'.

My reluctance to produce this monograph earlier was, indeed, due to a constant rethinking of the question of why no Patristic scholar had taken up this type of study before. Had previous and present colleagues simply overlooked an important, if not *the* core element of Christian life and belief? Has the topic not been covered

¹⁴⁰ M. Vinzent, 'History' (1995).

by studies of the history of Easter? Or was the lack of scholarship due to the nature of the sources available? Is it because Christ's Resurrection was embedded as the core of their Sunday celebration, and hence part of their weekly ritual, that it is hardly mentioned or alluded to in the many writings, liturgical texts and prayers of early Christians? Are the regular celebrations of the Eucharist and the annual feast of Easter not the most obvious counter-evidences to the assumption of a period of remoteness and a rather late rise of the belief in the Risen Christ and, on the contrary, proof of the centrality of Christ's Resurrection from the beginnings of the early Church?

If this were so, why have scholars not reflected on this self-evident truth? To take one example, Alois Grillmeier, in his magisterial work *Jesus Christ in Christian Belief*, a multivolume encyclopaedia on how early Christians of the first five centuries reflected about Jesus Christ, discusses the relation between the historical Jesus and the Lord alive in his Church, in prayers, liturgy, creeds and controversies. The index to the first volume, covering the period up to the year 451 AD, notes only five references to the Resurrection: the *Gospel of Peter* (2nd cent.), Eusebius of Caesarea (4th cent.), and three texts of the fifth century.¹⁴¹ Among the many Latin terms in the index, *resurrectio* is missing, and the Greek word ἀνάστασις ('Resurrection') refers only to the apostle Paul and to the fourth-century Alexandrian presbyter (and 'heresiarch') Arius.¹⁴² In another example, *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (2008), on 1020 pages with chapters on 'Interpretation of Scripture', 'Doctrine of God', 'Christ and Christologies', 'Doctrine of Creation', 'Early Christian Ethics', and other topics by most eminent scholars, there is not a single reference to Christ's Resurrection.¹⁴³

Of course, we find more evidence in early Christian literature than discussed in most previous studies. A rich kerygmatic and liturgical literature flows, especially from the late fourth century onwards. It is, however, true that '[t]o date there is no comprehensive survey available of the belief in Christ's Resurrection in the early church'.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche. I. Von der Apostolischen Zeit bis zum Konzil von Chalcedon (451)* (Freiburg i. Br., 21979), 7, 44, 58–9 (on NT writings), 154 (on the *Gospel of Peter*), 317 (on *Eusebius*), 353 (on *Asterius*, the homilist), 570 (on *Aponius*), 615 (on *Theodor of Mopsuestia*).

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 81 (on *Paul*), 376 (on *Arius*).

¹⁴³ Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David G. Hunter (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (Oxford, 2008).

¹⁴⁴ R. Staats, 'Auferstehung der Toten' (1979), 468.

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Chapter 1

The Beginnings of the End

Jewish Beginnings

Any attempt to understand the beginnings of early Christianity has to overcome the entrenched assumption of the Jesus movement as being a ‘new’ religion, based on a ‘new’ gospel, a ‘New’ Testament, as being a ‘new’ Israel and so forth, a picture that, as we shall see, was created only towards the mid-second century by Marcion, a Christian teacher to whom we shall return.

Christianity was not born into Judaism, but from its infancy was simply Jewish, part of the variety that we mean by ‘Judaism’.¹ This outset had its bearing on the significance of Christ’s Resurrection and the contents of Easter and Sunday.² Moreover, in the first centuries what we call ‘Judaism’ was made up of diverse regional and conceptual traditions in Palestine–Israel and beyond, shaped by Greek cities and Roman powers, with centres in Alexandria, Antioch, Rome and elsewhere. Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes and Samaritans met in a multitude of synagogue communities of like-minded members, people from a whole host of such backgrounds of similar social, cultural and geographical milieu. Rabbinic Judaism with its Aramaic orientation did not dominate Judaism before the fourth and fifth centuries of our era, and was already the product of the mutual segregation of Judaism and Christianity in a then-Christianized and Hellenized Roman Empire. Even then Judaism had tried, with only limited success, to shake off its Greek traditions, and promoted an Aramaic-based counter-byzantine religion³ against the background of a Greco-Roman institutionalized Christianity that had lost some of its Hebrew and Aramaic Jewish traditions. If we look back to the beginnings of Christianity, we are reading Jewish history. Neither Paul nor any member of his communities knew that they were Christians or that they would later be called ‘the first’ Christians.⁴ The growing and often painful split was neither the first nor the last in Judaism, and it was never completed.⁵ Centuries before, the Hebrew tradition had already suffered divisions: Samaritans and Jews shared their past, the Torah, but they had developed different and competing centres of worship, located in geographically separated territories – Mount Garizim in Samaria close to Sebaste, and Mount Zion in Judaea in the north of the old city of Jerusalem.

¹ See A. van Aarde, ‘Tendencies’ (2006), 354.

² See H.C. Cavallin, ‘Leben’ (1979), 243.

³ See N. de Lange, *Reception* (2009).

⁴ J. Lieu, *Jew* (2005), 192.

⁵ See A.H. Becker and A. Yoshiko Reed (eds), *Ways* (2003).

The growing split between Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity did not develop into a neat geographical divide. Rather, after 70 AD the post-war situation of the lost battle against the Romans, when Jews were banned from Jerusalem and scattered over the already-existing empire-wide diaspora, meant that Jews and Jewish Christians had to live side by side as minorities in Greco-Roman environments.

While the Samaritans shared with Jews much of the Torah, the authority of further Jewish literature was part of an inner-Jewish debate and one of the grounds for the various strands in Judaism: Sadducees, to some extent like the Samaritans, solely accepted the Torah; the Pharisees added the Prophets and Scriptures, and as part of the latter produced further writings. A major step in the formation and canonization of the Pharisaic–Jewish scriptures was the translation of the Hebrew *Tanak* (Torah = 5 books of Moses, *Nebiim* = Prophets, *Ketubim* = Scriptures) into Greek with the production of the Septuagint at Alexandria in Egypt in the years before 132 BC.⁶ Still, after this translation, the *Tanak* ‘was not yet quite rigidly closed, its third division was still in a somewhat fluid condition, and ... there were in circulation numerous sacred writings in Greek of which a considerable number became gradually and quite naturally attached to the authoritative collection’.⁷ It would have been ‘in no sense surprising, nor would it have been regarded as extraordinary, if from the Christian side some new edifying works had been added to this collection’.⁸

Judaism in the two centuries before and in the early years of our era was both Greek- and Aramaic speaking, and many if not all Christian writings of the first hundred years were part of this Jewish literature production, although the divide between the Greek and Aramaic traditions was certainly widening. The Aramaic literature that ‘supposedly record the teachings of the Rabbinic Sages who lived in Palestine from the first to the early third centuries’ AD, the so-called Tannaïtic literature, includes a wide range: the *Mishnah*, the *Tosefta*, the *Baraitot* of the Jerusalem and Babylonian *Talmuds*, the *Mekhilta* of Rabbi Ishmael (on *Exodus*), *Sipre* (on *Leviticus*) and *Sipre* (on *Numbers* and *Deuteronomy*).⁹ Yet these Rabbinic writings were the product of only ‘one particular religious party or movement within Judaism. But there were other forms of Judaism’, for example, that ‘of the Diaspora ... before Palestinian Rabbinate was to stamp its authority comprehensively on many Diaspora communities. And there was also “popular” Judaism’.¹⁰ Many of the writings, unfortunately lost today, grew out of schools of Pharisees, Rabbis, local schoolmasters, and philosophy teachers.

⁶ A.F. Segal, *Life* (2004), 363.

⁷ A. Harnack, *Origin* (1925), 4.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ P.S. Alexander, ‘Torah’ (2001), 262.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Rabbinic and Christian literature that started to replace the oral tradition of earlier centuries¹¹ only gradually substituted the ‘living voice’.¹² Still in the second century, Bishop Papias of Hierapolis, who himself wrote books, regarded the living voice as more reliable than any written testimony, while well into the second century written literature only made its way to ‘limited geographical locations by special groups’.¹³

Christianity grew within and only slowly out of ‘Judaism’. Of course, with Paul and his missionary activity, and even potentially earlier, with the expulsion of the first followers of Jesus from Jerusalem, missionary activities among non-Jews had begun. But as we know from *Matthew* and *Acts*, this venture was not undisputed by some followers of Jesus. Moving beyond the Palestinian, Pharisaic–Jewish strongholds into Samaria was not easily accepted, so old was the conflict between Jews and Samaritans.¹⁴ Nevertheless, Paul is an example who crosses borders. He was educated in a Pharisaic–Rabbinic tradition, but his views are in many ways close to the teachings that we find connected with Stephen, the first martyr, Philip and the other so-called Hellenists of *Acts* 6, which, as we shall see, have a lot in common with Samaritan thinking.

In the first years, the early Church was mainly concerned with business common to their broader Jewish community – to interpret the law and to settle legal issues of circumcision, food, communion and ethics. From the early days the tension was there between limiting the gospel to the confines of the Jewish law, or letting it move outside the Jewish community, to the so-called God-fearers, the Samaritans, and even to Gentiles.

One main topic carried explosives into the synagogue: it was not the Resurrection, but it touched upon it, as it had to do with interpreting the Jewish Law. The big question was whether new male members who underwent baptism would need to be circumcised. Baptism became seen as the sign of God’s covenant among those who followed Jesus. Paul had a pronounced position and a radical reading of the Law. His active approach to convert non-Jews led the young movement to its first tests, which brought it close to breaking up. The Resurrection served Paul to underline the saving character of baptism, a topic still firmly embedded in its Jewish frame within which the broader Christian community began to flourish. Then, the Resurrection secured Paul his own authority, independent from anybody.¹⁵ For Paul, not only did his authority depend on his having experienced the revelation of the Risen, as he had never met Jesus of Nazareth, but he had also gained through

¹¹ See J. Neusner, ‘Traditions’ (1972).

¹² See H. Koester, ‘Gospels’ (2005).

¹³ See *ibid.*, 33.

¹⁴ See, for example, Joseph., *Ant.* XIII 74–9; S.J. Isser, *Dositheans* (1976), 5–6, and the contrast between *Matth.* 10:5–6 and *Luke* 9:45–6.

¹⁵ Other authorities were the Twelve, other apostles, James, Peter and John, the three pillars in Jerusalem; prophets and teachers of Antioch, Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius and Manaen.

this encounter his dramatically life-changing turn from a zealous Pharisee¹⁶ who persecuted Jesus' followers to an energetic supporter of this movement.

Jesus' Death and Resurrection – In the Eyes of Jews and Samaritans

Paul had put pressure on the young Jesus community by extending it beyond the confines of Judaism. For some decades, however, a significant number of members still observed Jewish law.

Galilee, the Jewish diaspora in the north of Palestine with powerful Greco-Roman imperial cities like Tiberias, but also Greek-influenced towns like Nazareth, provided the homeland for Jesus and his first fellows. The young Jesus movement encompassed people from all strands of Jewish life in Jerusalem and Judaea, but also Samaritans who had come into contact with Jesus, who had heard of him, somehow had approached him, and used his name. They had all shouldered the Hellenistic cultural baggage.

How did people of such varied backgrounds react to the fatal cross scenario? Naturally, each tried to understand it through the lens of his own religion and culture, which produced a multiple picture of 'little precision'.¹⁷

'No one remembers you in the realm of death' – The Older Jewish Tradition

The Rabbis shared a vivid belief in life after death. This central Jewish tenet, however, had grown only slowly in Judaism to replace earlier views on life before death. 'The Israelite loves life ... Thus the believer does not long to escape from this world ... and change into some intemporal spiritual state ... His ideal finds its expression in the portrait of Job, satisfied with honours and substance, a perfect and upright man, fabulously rich, a model of piety and generosity'.¹⁸ Hence, 'there is no biblical doctrine to sustain the Jewish belief in life after death',¹⁹ which is 'alien to the vast majority of the Old Testament traditions'²⁰ and still widely absent in the first generation of Jews who returned from exile in Mesopotamia in the late sixth century BC.²¹ The Torah does not know of a resurrection of the dead, only the survival of 'semen' and 'name'. Procreation alone secured 'life after death'.²² The only exception where the strict demarcation between life and death could be over-

¹⁶ Despite his moderate teacher Gamaliel – but pupils are often very different from their teachers, as we see by comparing Aristotle with his teacher Plato.

¹⁷ A. Harvey, '(Mark 9.10)' (1994), 69.

¹⁸ R. Martin-Achard, *Life* (1960), 3; see, for example, *Ps.* 128.

¹⁹ J.J. Adler, 'Life' (1994), 85.

²⁰ E.-J. Waschke, 'Auferstehung' (1998), 915; although present in some funeral inscriptions, see E. Puech, *Croyance* (1993), 10–13.

²¹ See H.C. Cavallin, 'Leben' (1979), 243.

²² *Ibid.*; for example, *ActPI* 14.

come was via ascension from life directly to God without undergoing death, as in the case of Enoch,²³ or as later reported about the prophet Elia.²⁴ ‘But these were no resurrection stories as ... at the end of the revival there was another death’.²⁵ The Psalms, too, keep close to the Torah tradition and mainly view life as ending with death,²⁶ the Sheol as being out of God’s reach, as in *Ps.* 6:5.²⁷

Belief in the Resurrection developed only after the Babylonian exile of the sixth century BC, at a time that shows multiple influences from Zoroastrian ideas that spread from Persia and Mesopotamia, mixed with Egyptian and Hellenistic cosmopolitan views of God acting in this world. The fact that Jews were martyred under oppressors like Antiochus IV Epiphanes, made Jewish believers look beyond this earthly life and seek out God’s reward.²⁸

Explicit references to the resurrection of the dead occur only in later added passages in the Prophets, for example, in the famous *Ezekiel* passage of the valley ‘full of bones’²⁹ and in *Isaiah*,³⁰ whose writings play a central role in the Jewish Passover or Pascha celebration and incorporate the most dramatic messages of hope and anticipation of future human integrity beyond death, together with apocalyptic scenarios of judgement and punishment:³¹

He will swallow up death permanently.
The sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from every face ...
Here is the Lord! We waited for him.
Let’s rejoice and celebrate his deliverance!³²

Daniel is seen as ‘the only undisputable evidence’ for the belief in bodily resurrection³³ that intensified from the second century BC onwards.³⁴ The just are allowed

²³ *Gen.* 5:24; *Hebr.* 11:5.

²⁴ *1Kings* 17:17–24 a.o.

²⁵ E.-J. Waschke, ‘Auferstehung’ (1998), 915.

²⁶ See the discussion of *Ps.* 16:10; 17:15; 49:16; 73:23–8 especially in the light of their later interpreters in: E. Puech, *Croyance* (1993), 46–59.

²⁷ ‘For no one remembers you in the realm of death. In Sheol who gives you thanks?’ See also *Ps.* 88:2–3.

²⁸ *Dan.* 12:2–13. See H.C. Cavallin, ‘Leben’ (1979), 244.

²⁹ *Ez.* 37.

³⁰ See R. Martin-Achard, *Life* (1960), 118–38.

³¹ See W. Schmithals, *Theology* (1997), 10–15, 281.

³² *Is.* 25:8f. We could also add *Is.* 26:7–21; *Quoh.* 3:19–21.

³³ *Dan.* 12:1–4.13. E.-J. Waschke, ‘Auferstehung’ (1998), 916 following H.C. Cavallin, ‘Leben’ (1979), 249–50; see also R. Martin-Achard, *Life* (1960), 138–46.

³⁴ See *1Hen.* 51:1; *Test. Sim.* 6:7; *Test. Jud.* 25:1; *Test. Benj.* 10:6f.; *Test. Zeb.* 10:2; *Test. Job.* 4:9; *LibAnt.* 3:10; *4Esr.* 7:29ff.; *Vita Adae et Evae* 13:3; *2Bar.* 42:50–51; further details in K. Schubert, ‘Auferstehungshoffnung’ (1960); H. Wahle, ‘Lehren’ (1972); G.

to rise,³⁵ especially the martyrs,³⁶ as a reward for faithful perseverance.³⁷ The patriarchs who had died had already risen prior to the general resurrection of the dead.³⁸ Job rose to God's place and, regarded as a martyr, sat on the throne at the right hand of God in heaven.³⁹ *2Maccabees* links 'resurrection' and martyrdom.⁴⁰ The martyr Polycarp thanks God for having been found worthy to partake in the cup of Christ 'for the resurrection of eternal life of body and soul'.⁴¹ Martyrs are hurrying towards death, 'in order to achieve an earlier resurrection ... of the dead':⁴²

Emperor, I am not living a short life for my king! And if you get me beheaded,
I am going to rise up and appear to you (to prove) that I have not died, but live
for my Lord Jesus Christ.⁴³

People believed in a post-mortual ascension of the soul to the spheres of eternal life. Antipatros of Sidon (around 170–100 BC) had his tombstone inscribed, 'Blessed for ever the people that made Heraclea rise to the spacious kingdom of heavenly clouds.'⁴⁴ Others mention eternal life of the soul, life after death or resurrection of the dead.⁴⁵

Still, 'the older idea of life in the shadow of the Sheol outside the community with the living God was unbroken and existed further amongst the broader Palestinian Jewish community',⁴⁶ and the learned scholar Philo of Alexandria, who

Stemberger, *Auferstehung* (1972); id., 'Problem' (1972); H.C. Cavallin, 'Leben' (1979), 252–72; E. Puech, *Croyance* (1993).

³⁵ *1Hen.* 90–2; *PsSal.* 3:12.

³⁶ See *2Macc.* 7; *4Macc.*; *Sap. Sal.* 2–5; U. Kellermann, *Auferstanden* (1979).

³⁷ See also on the idea of reincarnation (e.g. *Mark* 6:14) A. Harvey, '(Mark 9.10)' (1994), 69.

³⁸ *Test. Benj.* 10:6; a similar idea that is to recur in *Mark* 12:26–7; U. Kellermann, *Auferstanden* (1979), 64.

³⁹ *Test. Job.* 4:9–10; 41:4, reminiscent of *Rev.* 20:4–5. On Revelation, see U. Kellermann, *Auferstanden* (1979), 122–7.

⁴⁰ *2Macc.* 7; U. Kellermann, *Auferstanden* (1979), 65.

⁴¹ *Mart. Pol.* XIV 2.

⁴² *Mart. Pion.* XXI 4.

⁴³ *Mart. Paul.* IV.

⁴⁴ *Anthologia Graeca* 7, 748; more examples with discussion in U. Kellermann, *Auferstanden* (1979), 89–93.

⁴⁵ H.C. Cavallin, 'Leben' (1979), 321–2; E. Puech, *Croyance* (1993), 184–99.

⁴⁶ See for example *Jesus Sirach* (the old Hebrew version), *Tob.*, *Bar.*, *1Macc.*, *Assumptio Mosis*, *Martyrium Isaiae* that do not embark on life after death, reward or punishment, 'although the content of these writings would have lent itself to introduce transcendent life', H.C. Cavallin, 'Leben' (1979), 245; we can add others, such as *Judith*, *Aristeas*, *3Macc.*, *3Esra*, where the non-mentioning of life after death might be accidental. The writings of Qumran are dubious.

knew *Daniel* and *2Maccabees*, does not support the idea of the resurrection of the dead, but rather embraces the philosophical idea of life without death.⁴⁷ People asked for tomb inscriptions that defied belief in life after death with exhortations such as ‘be courageous, nobody is immortal’,⁴⁸ or ‘be happy, you living brothers, and drink, you happy people, nobody is immortal’.⁴⁹

Only with the ‘victory of pharisaic–rabbinic Orthodoxy at the “Synod of Jamnia” at the end of the first century AD’ and the Bar Kochba disaster (132–135 AD) did belief in resurrection become more widely accepted.⁵⁰ The Rabbis actively advocated a bodily resurrection that became one of the hallmarks of Rabbinic identity.⁵¹ They added ‘the confession of the resurrection to the daily prayer’ and stressed ‘that those who deny the resurrection will not have a part in the world to come’.⁵² The proof text for the resurrection was the Torah. The argument ran that ‘[o]ne simply needs to know how to interpret’ the Scriptures.⁵³

Rabbinic Judaism had assimilated Zoroastrianism’s afterlife, the appearance of a Saviour and hope for a Messiah, for resurrection and eternal life. As Jews had drunk the Zoroastrian milk to an extent that they substantially moved away from many older concepts, the new views on heaven, hell and limbo, but also individual judgement at a celestial bridge or the final, universal, judgement, were passed on via Judaism and Hellenism to Christianity, and digested and handed down to the later emerging Islam. Certainly, as we shall see more clearly, Christianity made these ideas its own. Religious and cultural adaptation was never simply a one-way form of borrowing or stealing. On the contrary, it has been and remains a most dynamic, complex and creative process of taking, shaping and eliminating, of trying to make the right use of a variety of older and newer concepts, of conscious and unconscious appropriation and the moulding and creation of something new.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ See Philo, *Prob.* 109; U. Kellermann, *Auferstanden* (1979), 48.

⁴⁸ H.C. Cavallin, ‘Leben’ (1979), 321 with further evidence.

⁴⁹ See E. Puech, *Croyance* (1993), 184 with further lit.

⁵⁰ H.C. Cavallin, ‘Leben’ (1979), 245.

⁵¹ That, again, we have only a blurred picture with a certain variety (including, for example, reincarnation) within the Rabbinic tradition has been pointed out by A. Harvey, ‘(Mark 9.10)’ (1994), 69–70.

⁵² G. Stemmerger, ‘Auferstehung’ (1998), 917 with reference to *Sanh.* 10:1; H.C. Cavallin, ‘Leben’ (1979), 312–21.

⁵³ *SifDev* 306.

⁵⁴ See Christian Gnülka, *Chrësis* II (Basel, 1993); note my review in: *ZKG* 106 (1995): 133–7.

Messianic Eschatology – Pharisaic and Rabbinic Judaism

Pharisees or Rabbis, as they were gradually called,⁵⁵ are well known for their opposition to Sadducees.⁵⁶ They did not simply believe in the resurrection of the dead, but as Josephus, himself a declared Pharisee, propounds, they subscribed to a particular, Platonized version of the preservation and eternity of the soul.⁵⁷ As in Plato, the soul is divine, eternal, and the place wherein God is present.⁵⁸ The resurrection of the dead is part of the scenario of the end of times, when the soul will enter an entirely new body.⁵⁹

Paul was influenced by Pharisaic belief in the resurrection of the dead. But he went further and saw a connection between the resurrection of the dead and that of Christ: 'Christ died and returned to life, so that he may be the Lord of both the dead and the living.'⁶⁰ For Paul, eternal life is realized in baptism as something that has already happened,⁶¹ or will happen in one's own death.⁶² Paul's vision of the end scenario, unfolding not in a distant future, but while still 'alive', begins with Jesus' Resurrection:

About those who are asleep ... you will not grieve like the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also we believe that God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep as Christians. For we tell you this by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not go ahead of those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in

⁵⁵ 'The precise relationship of the rabbis to the pre-70 Pharisees is a matter of dispute ... The transformation of this sect into a national political party in the post-70 period was one of the most important developments in the history of early Judaism', P.S. Alexander, 'Torah' (2001), 263 n3; see also M. Goodman, *State* (1983); C. Heszer, *Rabbinic Movement* (1997); R. Deines, *Pharisäer* (1997).

⁵⁶ See E. Puech, *Croyance* (1993), 213–42.

⁵⁷ See *Joseph.*, *BJ* II 163b–c; *Ant.* XVIII 14, only Platonized, not Platonic, as the Pharisees did not believe in the fundamental distinction between body and soul, but rather in their communion, although Josephus can also state the Platonic verdict on the body that it is the prison for the soul – see *BJ* VII 340–50.

⁵⁸ See *Joseph.*, *BJ* III 372.

⁵⁹ See *ibid.* 374b; on the late Christian forgery of the so-called *Testamentum Flavianum*, F.W. Horn, 'Das Testamentum Flavianum' (2007), 124 (lit.).

⁶⁰ *Rom.* 14:9; see also *Rom.* 10:9; *1Thess.* 1:10; *Gal.* 1:1; *1Cor.* 15:12 etc.; see also *Matth.* 27:52.

⁶¹ *Rom.* 6:1–11. See later authors who develop this idea further: Menander, in: *Iren., Adv. haer.* I 23,5; Tert., *De anima* 50; *id., De res.* 5.

⁶² *Phil.* 1:23; 3:10–11; see also *2Cor.* 5:1–10; see U. Kellermann, *Auferstanden* (1979), 109–13.

Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be suddenly caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord.⁶³

We do not know whether Paul was influenced by traditions like the Zoroastrian *Bundahishn*,⁶⁴ although parallels (and differences) with 1*Thessalonians* are striking: the connection with the messianic saviour, and the temporal sequence within the resurrection scenario (although the Zoroastrian saviour did not die, nor was he raised).⁶⁵

There is some evidence that Paul was not the only Pharisee who hoped for a suffering, dying and rising Messiah. Recently it has been suggested that ‘the character of the Messiah son of Joseph and the tradition of his killing were created in the late first century BCE or the early first century CE’;⁶⁶ a stone inscription with an extract from the *Vision of Gabriel*⁶⁷ seems to confirm ‘that this messianic character was already known at that time’.⁶⁸

Since *Ex.* 30:22–5 an anointed king or priest had been called Messiah, or in Hebrew the ‘anointed [one]’. Scripture calls even a non-Hebrew like Cyrus the Great, king of Persia, ‘God’s anointed’, God’s Messiah.⁶⁹ The Messiah became a focal point for Jewish hopes, pointing to a future Jewish king, a descendant from King David⁷⁰ and Solomon⁷¹ who will be ‘anointed’ as Mélekh ha-Mashiaḥ who will initiate the messianic age and rule not only over the Jewish people, but even over leaders of other nations.⁷² He will have a global impact: weapons of war will be destroyed,⁷³ and he will be the messenger of peace,⁷⁴ reaching out to people from all cultures and nations and bringing them together,⁷⁵ filling the world with knowledge of God,⁷⁶ so that the entire world will worship the one God of

⁶³ 1*Thess.* 4:13–17.

⁶⁴ See *Bundahishn* XXX 1–32, trans. E.W. West, from: *Sacred Books of the East V* (Oxford, 1897); M. Boyce, *Zoroastrians* (1979 = 2003); ead., *Zoroastrianism* (1992).

⁶⁵ A similar difference is noticeable from the other cult tradition influenced by Zoroastrism, namely Mithras: see G. Bertram, ‘Auferstehung’ (1950), 926.

⁶⁶ Disputed, however, by V. Sasson, ‘The Vision’ (2009).

⁶⁷ A. Yardeni and B. Elitzur, ‘Document’ (2007).

⁶⁸ I. Knohl, ‘Gabriel’ (2008), 149; see his earlier article ‘Son’ (1998).

⁶⁹ *Is.* 45:1.

⁷⁰ *Is.* 11:1.

⁷¹ 1*Chr.* 22:8–10, 2*Chr.* 7:18.

⁷² *Is.* 2:4; *Zach.* 8:23.

⁷³ *Ez.* 39:9.

⁷⁴ *Is.* 52:7.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 11:10.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 11:9.

Israel.⁷⁷ A man of this world who fears God⁷⁸ restores Jerusalem,⁷⁹ its judges and counsellors,⁸⁰ and brings all Israelites back to their homeland from exile,⁸¹ where there will be no more hunger or illness, and death will cease;⁸² all of the dead will rise again in eternal joy and gladness⁸³ in a land that is abundant and fruitful.⁸⁴

How could Jews who were acquainted with Jesus and had lived through the turmoil of his trial, crucifixion and death not identify him with the One announced by *Isaiah*, not equate him with the Messiah, an 'embodiment of an angel-like spirit'⁸⁵ or even with the Lord himself – 'Look, here is our God!' said *Isaiah*, 'we waited for him and he delivered us ...'?

Today, it seems like a big step to see in Jesus the Messiah, and even equate him with the Lord. But if Christians had listened year after year to the *Passah Haggadah* they must have felt the invitation to make those connections and proclaim, as Paul did in his gospel, the Resurrection of this Messiah and the coming of the Lord. Not all, however, followed Paul, and not all, even if most, followers of Jesus came from a Pharisaic background.

Nobody does 'rise again' – The Sadducees

The Sadducees, not the Pharisees, were the most powerful party in Jesus' times.⁸⁶ They emphasized 'the centrality of the Temple and Jerusalem in the life of the nation',⁸⁷ and 'the restoration of the idealised kingdom of Israel as David once reigned over it'.⁸⁸ Even a writer 'hostile to the Sadducees', who 'described them as scornful and impious men', had to assert that they called themselves 'just'.⁸⁹ Justice re-appears in their traditions and names: they hoped for 'justice' (*sedeq*) unto '*Šedeq*' (Jerusalem). The 'just' kings (Melchi*sedeq* through the Canaanite Adoni*sedeq* to the last Judaeon king, *Zedekiah*) culminate with the coming of

⁷⁷ Ibid., 2:11–7.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 11:2.

⁷⁹ *Ez.* 16:55.

⁸⁰ *Is.* 1:26; 11:4.

⁸¹ Ibid., 11:12.

⁸² Ibid., 25:8.

⁸³ Ibid., 26:19; 51:11.

⁸⁴ *Amos* 9:13–5; *Is.* 11:6–9; 51:3; *Ez.* 36:29–30.

⁸⁵ W. Horbury, *Messianism* (1998), 83–6.

⁸⁶ See H.C. Cavallin, 'Leben' (1979), 246–7; for more on the Sadducees see J.M. Baumgarten, 'Apocalyptic' (1979), 236–9; E. Puech, *Croyance* (1993), 202–12.

⁸⁷ J.M. Baumgarten, 'Apocalyptic' (1979), 237.

⁸⁸ R. Meyer, 'art. Saddoukaïos', *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 7 (1971): 44.

⁸⁹ *Assumptio Mosis* 7:3: *homines pestilentiosi et impii docentes se esse justos*, the quote from J.M. Baumgarten, 'Apocalyptic' (1979), 237.

the Messiah who is ‘just’, ‘in whose days Jerusalem is to be called ... God, our Justice’.⁹⁰

Do early Christian authors reflect a proximity between the young Jesus movement and the Sadducees? Were there, even, Sadduceeic Christians?

The three synoptic gospels of the New Testament refer to Sadducees who ‘say that there is no resurrection’.⁹¹ In *Acts* Sadducees even exclude the resurrection of angels and spirits.⁹² This concurs with what we know from other Jewish sources. In his *Jewish War*,⁹³ Josephus attests that Sadducees negate the ‘preservation of the soul and punishment of the Sheol’.⁹⁴ A fascinating discussion between Sadducees and the famous Rabbi Gamaliel, probably Paul’s teacher,⁹⁵ gives us another glimpse into Paul’s background, and shows the extent to which he followed the fashion of his day: ‘From where do we take that the Holy, blessed be he, will revive the dead? – from the book of law, because it is said: “Then, the Lord spoke to Mosche, soon you will go to rest with your ancestors and will rise”.’⁹⁶ But on good grounds the Sadducees counter-argue: ‘Perhaps (one should read): “and this people will rise and turn away”.’⁹⁷

Tanchuma Bereshith 5 opines:

The Sadducees deny [the resurrection] and say: ‘As the clouds are dispersed and disappear, so the one who goes down to the grave, does not rise again’.⁹⁸

However, some Sadducees were interested in Jesus. They approached him and raised one of the questions contentious between the Pharisees and themselves, namely the resurrection of the dead.⁹⁹ According to *Mark*, Jesus answered:

⁹⁰ *Jer.* 33:16. J.M. Baumgarten, ‘Apocalyptic’ (1979), 237.

⁹¹ *Mark* 12:18; *Matth.* 22:23; *Luke* 20:27.

⁹² *Acts* 4:1f. See E. Puech, *Croyance* (1993), 206–8.

⁹³ II 165; see also id., *Ant.* XVIII.

⁹⁴ See also Joseph., *Ant.* XVIII 16.

⁹⁵ *Sanh.* 90b., not Gamaliel II, as the discussion on the resurrection was still an ongoing debate, which, as indicated, is less likely after Jamnia, 70 AD.

⁹⁶ *Deut.* 31:16.

⁹⁷ See H.C. Cavallin, ‘Leben’ (1979), 315, who also points to the parallel discussion in *Sanh.* 90b between Rabbi Jehoschua b. Chananja and the Romans, and R. Jochanan in the name of R. Schimon b. Jochaj.

⁹⁸ *Job* 7:9. On this and further testimonies see H.C. Cavallin, ‘Leben’ (1979), 246.

⁹⁹ According to *Mark* the question was raised with reference to *Deuteronomium* (25:5–10) and the practice of ‘Yibbum’, levirate marriage – see *Ruth* 4:1–12; Mishnah, *m. Yevamot*; Josephus, *Ant.* IV 8.23 (4,254–6). The practice of levirate marriage is also customary in other ‘clan’-oriented societies, such as the Indian Punjabis, the Jats, Huns, Chinese Xiongnu, Hsiung-nu, Mongols and Tibetans.

As for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?¹⁰⁰ He is not the God of the dead but of the living. You are badly mistaken!¹⁰¹

Why, one may ask, should Jesus allude to Moses at the burning bush? Was it to satisfy the Sadducees, as none of the New Testament Gospel authors made Jesus refer to his own Resurrection (as they frequently do in other instances), but introduce the idea of God's continuous care for his people?¹⁰² In the subsequent part of the same sequence, where Jesus is still shown preaching 'in the temple courts',¹⁰³ *Mark* reveals that the reference to *Ex.* 3:6 was a hint at the coming of the Messiah, something Christian Sadducees would have understood. According to *Mark*, Jesus carried on to expound on the messianic reading of *Ex.* 3 and addressed the question of whether the Messiah is the son of David, or rather the Lord himself. Conforming to Jewish monotheism, Jesus first cites the Shema' Israel: 'Listen, Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength',¹⁰⁴ and adds to it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself'.¹⁰⁵ Then, an 'expert of law' highlights the monotheistic statement implied in the Shema'. By stating that 'He is one, and there is no one else besides him',¹⁰⁶ he also accepts that the two commandments quoted by Jesus are 'more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices'.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, the pinnacle of his preaching is still to follow:

'How is it that the experts in the law say that the Christ is David's son? David himself, by the Holy Spirit, said: *The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet"*'.¹⁰⁸ If David himself calls him "Lord", how can he be his son?' And the large crowd was listening to him with delight.¹⁰⁹

Jesus' main argument was the monarchian message that the one and only God is a 'God of the living' whose Messiah is not the 'son of David', but the Lord himself. The story ends with the remark that the 'large crowd was listening to him with delight' and, although in the next passage Jesus will criticize the public appear-

¹⁰⁰ *Ex.* 3:6.

¹⁰¹ *Mark* 12:18–27. On this passage see E. Puech, *Croyance* (1993), 202–6.

¹⁰² See E. Puech, *Croyance* (1993), 205–6.

¹⁰³ *Mark* 12:28–37.

¹⁰⁴ *Deut.* 6:4–5.

¹⁰⁵ *Lev.* 19:18.

¹⁰⁶ *Deut.* 4:35.

¹⁰⁷ *Mark* 12:29–33.

¹⁰⁸ *Ps.* 110:1.

¹⁰⁹ *Mark* 12:35–7.

ance and behaviour of the ‘experts in the law’, the passage insinuates that the Sadducees who had approached Jesus were among those who found delight in him.

Eternal Life – The Samaritans

What do we know about Samaritan Christians? If there were Samaritans among followers of Jesus, how would they interpret Jesus, and his message, life and death? We have just seen that it is likely that early Christians did not all derive from a Pharisaic background. In addition, we know the importance of the old priestly calendar from which the Pharisees deviated. While Pharisees followed a lunar calendar with changing weekdays for their main festivals (as in Christianity where Christmas falls on a different week day each year), early Christians celebrated Pentecost not according to the Rabbinic calendar, but to an ancient priestly calendar, so that it always fell on the first day of the week (our Sunday). The same calendar was followed by the Samaritans, the Sadducees and the people of the Dead Sea Scrolls.¹¹⁰ These different calendar traditions were not the only source of rivalry and hatred between Rabbinic Jews, in particular those of Alexandria, and Samaritans, as can be seen from the *Antiquities* of the Pharisaic Josephus.¹¹¹ While Josephus calls the Samaritans ‘apostates of the Jewish nation’, he also saw them as commercial competitors:

When the Jews are in difficulties they deny that they have any kinship with them [the Samaritans], thereby, indeed, admitting the truth; but whenever they see some splendid bit of good fortune come to them, they immediately jump at the chance of sharing it, saying that they are related to them, and tracing their line back to Ephraim, and Menasseh, the descendants of Joseph.¹¹²

Pragmatically oriented people crossed the boundaries between Jews and Samaritans, although the two groups battled over the status of the right temple mountain, either that of Jerusalem for the Jews, or Mount Garizim for the Samaritans, where the temple had been destroyed in 129 BC by John Hyrcanus.¹¹³

We have to ask, ‘how could any of ... [Paul’s thinking] cut ice in Samaria? David was not in the Samaritan Bible; he was the arch-apostate who had set up worship at Jerusalem. The Messiah was not a Samaritan concept; Samaritans had not heard of Daniel or the Son of Man. Their faith was in the restoration of the cult on G[a]rizim, not in one whose death might be a sacrifice; and resurrection was, in

¹¹⁰ See A. Jaubert, ‘Jésus’ (1960/61); she has therefore suggested that Jesus celebrated the last supper on a Tuesday evening, hence the beginning of Wednesday, see ead., *Date* (1957).

¹¹¹ See E. Puech, *Croyance* (1993), 287–92.

¹¹² Joseph., *Ant.* XI 340f., trans. by H.St.J. Thackeray and R. Marcus (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1934).

¹¹³ See Josephus, *Ant.* XIII 254ff.; S.J. Isser, *Dositheans* (1976), 6–7.

all probability, a foreign notion to them. ... Philip might begin by preaching Jesus as the prophet like unto Moses, but in the end he must keep up with the Simon Magus's. He cannot have spoken of him as a Jewish son of David, but ultimately as a Samaritan God become man. ... A Samaritan Christology would tend to contribute five things to a hitherto Galilean interpretation of the significance of Jesus:

1. an emphasis on wisdom and knowledge as the primary fruits of conversion, rather than faith and love;
2. the myth of Jesus' pre-existence in the Godhead, and of his incarnation;
3. a 'glory'-ministry instead of a Son-of-Man ministry, with Moses instead of David as the type-figure;
4. a minimizing of the cross and resurrection – Jesus should rather just go his way to the Father; and
5. a realized eschatology rather than a futurist eschatology. In addition, the emphasis on revelation of the mysteries transcending the world would tend to issue in a depreciation of this world, with ethical corollaries of both ascetic and antinomian kinds, as in second-century Gnosticism'.¹¹⁴

It would be mesmerizing to explore the labyrinth of what we know about the origins and development of Samaritanism, and the mentioned five central specificities, but we need to concentrate on a few topics only.

The Samaritan Bible comprised solely the five books of Moses, and the revelation is cut off with him. As a result God was understood as a divinity that had withdrawn from history, not, as the Jewish Rabbis saw him, as acting continuously in history. God cannot be experienced in history, only through revelation, captured in the five books of Moses and in secret and mysterious light, wisdom and knowledge.¹¹⁵ Key passages for the Samaritans were the seven-day creation of the opening of *Genesis*, the reading that opened all Samaritan synagogue services: 'The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the Lord by name.'¹¹⁶ There is a 'strongly dualist note', probably based on the differing names for God in the creation story of *Genesis* 1 ('Elohim') and *Genesis* 2 ('Jahwe'), or as in *Ex.* 34 where the same name, 'Jahwe', is used twice, and 'a literal reading of the text suggests a duality', indicating the creator and the redeemer, the first Jahwe 'in the cloud' and the second 'on whose name the first calls'.¹¹⁷ The first Lord descended in the cloud, stayed with humans, proclaimed the Lord without being dissolved, and lived without dying. 'Both Jewish and Christian sources in the main

¹¹⁴ M.D. Goulder, 'Christian myth' (1977), 74–5; independently, A. von Dobbeler, *Philippus* (2000).

¹¹⁵ See M.D. Goulder, 'Christian myth' (1977), 68–9.

¹¹⁶ *Ex.* 34:5–7.

¹¹⁷ M.D. Goulder, 'Christian myth' (1977), 71.

say that Samaritans *did not believe in the resurrection* of the dead, often aligning them with the Sadducees in this respect'.¹¹⁸

The *Gospel of John*, unlike the synoptic Gospels, refers to Philip-traditions and obviously Samaritan material.¹¹⁹ It even gives a short scene between Philip and Nathanael.¹²⁰ Philip is the one who asks the question that pushes Jesus to go beyond his teaching of the unity between him and the Father¹²¹ and to talk about the Father being seen through him. Only when Philip asks for an explanation of this extraordinary statement does Jesus refer back to what he had said before about the unity of Father and Son:

Have I been with you for so long, and you have not known me, Philip? The person who has seen me has seen the Father! .. the Father residing in me performs his miraculous deeds. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me, but if you do not believe me, believe because of the miraculous deeds themselves. ... If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.¹²²

John 'could rely on traditions of Philip, the Hellenist, independent wonderworker, preacher of a glorified, heavenly Christ [as in the hymn in *Phil.* 2:6–11], and made him to a disciple of the first hour who at the same time functions as contact person to the Greeks'.¹²³ *John* also relates the story of Jesus and the woman at the well that is explicitly located in Samaria, and, no surprise to us, refers to differences between Jews and Samaritans, including the resurrection of the dead.¹²⁴ 'In contrast with the much less successful dialogue with Nicodemus' in *John* 3, in this pericope Jesus attracts people from the Samaritan town Sychar to see him. According to *Acts* the Christian movement had created a firm foothold in Samaria. 'John in particular shows signs of Samaritan sympathy, as well as detailed background', to an extent that scholars saw a triangular connection among the Greek-speaking Jewish Hellenists of *Acts* 6 under the leadership of Stephen, the first Christian

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 73.

¹¹⁹ See A. von Dobbeler, *Philippus* (2000).

¹²⁰ *John* 1:45–6. Potentially because the author 'wanted to inaugurate Philip as a disciple in the style of the synoptics', J. Hartenstein, 'Spekulationen' (2009), 73. Philip is only mentioned among the Twelve in *Mark* 3:16–9,18: between Andrew and Bartholomew; *Matth.* 10:2–6,3: before Bartholomew; *Luke* 6:14–16,14: before Bartholomew; *Acts* 1:13: between Andrew and Thomas, as participant in the feeding of the people, helped by Andrew (*John* 6:5–9), the one to whom interested Greeks turn and who brings them (together with Andrew) to Jesus (*John* 12:21–2).

¹²¹ *John* 10:30.

¹²² Ibid., 14:8–14.

¹²³ J. Hartenstein, 'Spekulationen' (2009), 73; A. von Dobbeler, *Philippus* (2000).

¹²⁴ *John* 4:3–30.

martyr, the Samaritans and the circle of John.¹²⁵ Some even regarded Stephen as a Samaritan or discovered Samaritan elements in Stephen's speech in *Acts*.¹²⁶

John opens his story about the encounter between Jesus and the woman with the master travelling from Judea to Galilee. Although it was not necessary to pass through Samaria to make this journey – indeed, it was customary, easier and safer to travel to the north through the valley of the River Jordan –, the indication that Jesus 'had' to take the route via Samaria indicates a divine plan behind this detour. The reference to Samaritan tradition, Jacob and his well, prepares the pro-Samaritan background. And when towards the end of the story Jesus' disciples return, they are shocked not because their master is speaking to a Samaritan, but because he is speaking to a woman.

Samaritans did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, but in an everlasting, indestructible life, God's presence. In 'a new age of good pleasure',¹²⁷ when God would become active again and send a prophet like Moses, '[t]he Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you – from your fellow Israelites; you must listen to him ... I will put my words in his mouth and he will speak to them whatever I command'.¹²⁸ Jesus hints at God's gift of living water, the fountain that is springing up to eternal life. His introduction of the example of the woman who has no husband, although she has married five times, underscores how literally eternal life has been understood – in Samaritan terms as life without end, hence the statement that her first husband had never died. In the ensuing dialogue, Jesus does not point to his own future Resurrection, but to wisdom, his mysterious insight into the woman's series of marriages. As a result of responding to and embracing Samaritan religiosity, *John's* story concludes:

When the Samaritans came to Jesus, they began asking him to stay with them. He stayed there two days, and because of his word many more believed. They said to the woman: 'No longer do we believe because of your words, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this one really is the Saviour of the world'.¹²⁹

John makes a strong case for Samaritan Christians. After 'Rabbi' Jesus had been seen by the Pharisee Nicodemus, to whom he tried to expound his message of the

¹²⁵ See O. Cullmann, *Kreis* (1975), 41–60, 89–98; id., 'Samariten' (1953/54); id., 'Stephanuskreis' (1975); A.M. Johnson Jr., 'Philip' (1975/76); G. Bouwman, 'Samaria' (1973); H.H. Scobie, 'Origins' (1972/73), 393; R. Scroggs, 'Christianity' (1968); J. Bowman, *Probleme* (1967), 53–4, 76; E.H. Plumptre, 'Element' (1878), 22–40; J.J. Wettstein, *Novum Testamentum* (1752 = 1962), 494, 496; M.H. Scharlemann, *Stephen* (1968), 19–22, 45–51, 186–8.

¹²⁶ A. Spiro, 'Stephen' (1967), 285.

¹²⁷ M.D. Goulder, 'Christian myth' (1977), 73.

¹²⁸ *Deut.* 18:15, 18–19.

¹²⁹ *John* 4:40–42.

descending and ascending ‘Son of Man’ in order to convey eternal life, it is noticeable how positive was the response to Jesus’ very similar message in Samaria. Moreover, *John* puts into the mouths of the Samaritans the confession ‘[t]his one really is the Saviour of the world’, complementing the earlier statement ‘[h]e came to what was his own, but his own people did not receive him. But to all who have received him – those who believe in his name – he has given the right to become God’s children’.¹³⁰ To *John* the Samaritans, not the Jews, were the very first who believed in Jesus as the Saviour! They accepted what his name indicated: ‘Jesus’, a Hellenization of Jesus’ native Aramaic *Yeshua* (Joshua) or of the liturgical older Hebrew *Yehoshua* that translates literally as ‘God saves’.

Through the lens of *John*, Jesus is prepared to broaden Jewishness to encompass Samaritans, and overcomes both Jewish worship in the temple of Jerusalem and Samaritan rituals on the mountain by playing on Samaritan core concepts of spirit and truth. By the time of *John*, a powerful Jesus movement must have developed in Samaria with its own Samaritan–Christian teaching, based on wisdom, knowledge, truth, dualism, pre-existence, incarnation, Moses-typology, transfiguration, and a realized eschatology, all elements to which we shall return. For Samaritans the Resurrection was theologically impossible.

An extraordinary Samaritan document from before 500 AD gives us detailed information about Jesus’ life, his passion, crucifixion, the life of the early Church and its ‘39 Gospels’ (some of which we only rediscovered in the twentieth century). The text is critical not of Christians, but of the Jews who stood against him. The explicit report about Jesus’ life ends with the following scene at the cross, not with his Resurrection:

‘You who are the destroyer of the temple and will rebuild it in three days, save yourself. If you are God’s son, come down from the cross. Surely you who can save other people can save yourself. If you are the king of Israel, come down from the cross and then we shall believe in you’. Yet he made no reply to any of them [Pilate’s soldiers], but raised his voice and wept. . . . Jesus the Nazarene was the subject of vengeance on the part of his own people, his own community, from whom he rose, that is, the Judaist community. They hated him wholeheartedly, so much so that they were the cause of his execution, his crucifixion.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Ibid., 1:11–12.

¹³¹ J. McDonald (Introduction, Text, Translation and Notes) and A.J.B. Higgins (Commentary), ‘Christianity’ (1971), 65.

Resurrection: Lost in Tradition?

Paul had a deep impact on early Christianity. We need only to read the canonical *Acts*. They are as much a tendentious biography of Paul, the missionary, as they are a picture of the growth of the Church.

However, and this is especially true for *Acts*, we notice with every decade following Paul's death that the gospel he had preached in the communities (founded by others or by himself) developed in directions pointing away from where Paul had envisaged his teachings would be taken. Scrutinizing the revision of the theological meaning of the Resurrection within the broader frame of early Pauline Christianity – recognizable in Pauline letters, but also in communities influenced by Paul – is a means whereby we can learn both the power of the cultural, religious and political environment, and the intellectual freedom and breadth that steered such developments. In particular the hopes of people, Jewish and non-Jewish, that were to be fulfilled in or were set on Jesus were changing.

As soon as we open pseudo-Pauline, and then non-Pauline books that are clearly set in a Pauline tradition, and compare these with Paul's own writings, we are puzzled by the difference in nature and beliefs. Not only do we seem to enter worlds in which Jesus is interpreted in ways radically different from Paul, we also find open criticism of Paul, with authors doubting and rejecting letters, teachings and sometimes any authority of this Apostle. The Resurrection is one of the contentious issues: it is often obscured, sometimes entirely abandoned, or survives only as one among other testimonies of God's acting.

The Resurrection Abandoned

Our first example is already a drastic one:¹³² *2Thessalonians*, today generally regarded as a pseudonymous writing from the turn of the first century,¹³³ has Paul rejecting an earlier, first, letter to the Thessalonians, 'allegedly from' him, 'to the effect that the day of the Lord is already here'.¹³⁴

The author criticizes the first letter's eschatology and, literally imitating *1Thessalonians*, he intends to produce a competing letter to the Thessalonians, or rather one claiming sole authenticity.¹³⁵

In *1Thessalonians*, as in other writings, Paul had repeatedly made reference to the Resurrection of Christ. The Thessalonians welcomed Paul, converted from Gentile worship of idols 'to serve the living and true God and to wait for his Son from heaven, *whom he raised from the dead*, Jesus our deliverer from the coming

¹³² Why A. Lindemann, *Paulus* (1979), 42 calls this letter the theologically least independent is difficult to see.

¹³³ See *ibid.*, 238–9, as Marcion has accepted it as a letter by Paul.

¹³⁴ *2Thess.* 2:2.

¹³⁵ So convincingly, A. Lindemann, *Paulus* (1999), 232.

wrath'.¹³⁶ A little later, he developed his imminent eschatological scenario, starting with the Resurrection of Jesus as the basis for the belief in the resurrection of the dead, quoted above.¹³⁷ The Saviour, Jesus Christ, provides salvation through his death, 'for God did not destine us for wrath' (1*Thess.* 5:9), and the sign of life is his Resurrection.

In contrast, 2*Thessalonians* does not even mention the Resurrection. Paul's statement about the proximity of the forthcoming end-time is corrected,¹³⁸ and his central belief in the Resurrection of Christ as basis of our future redemption is replaced by the idea of salvation through the 'gospel' that is now 'the traditions that we taught you, whether by speech or by letter', meaning the spiritual possession of 'the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ',¹³⁹ no longer the belief in the Resurrection.

The Resurrection as Messianic Testimony

Good reasons have been given to suggest that *Colossians* is a letter¹⁴⁰ not written by Paul himself, although the author uses Paul's name and authority, which places the letter into Paul's lineage.¹⁴¹ Paul's emphasis on the Resurrection is shifted towards incarnation and most importantly death. It is the Lord's death that saves: 'Now he has reconciled you by his physical body *through death* to present you holy, without blemish.'¹⁴² Rescued through his death, we are dying with Christ in baptism. This spiritual circumcision removes Christians from the power of evil spirits, but also from those powers that are embedded in Jewish or pagan rituals, laws and calendars.¹⁴³

Although the author still reminds the reader of the Resurrection when he speaks about men being buried with Christ in baptism and 'raised with him through faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead',¹⁴⁴ the Resurrection has become a messianic testimony for God's salvific power, spiritualized and ethicized, while the cross becomes core:

Even though you were dead in your transgressions and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he nevertheless made you alive with him, having forgiven all your transgressions ... *He has taken it away by nailing it to the cross.* Disarming the

¹³⁶ 1*Thess.* 1:9–10.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 4:14–17.

¹³⁸ Overlooked, for example, by A. Lindemann, *Paulus* (1999), 240.

¹³⁹ 2*Thess.* 2:14–5.

¹⁴⁰ In reality addressed to the community in Laodicea? See with good arguments A. Lindemann, *Paulus* (1999), 195–9.

¹⁴¹ A. Lindemann, *Kolossierbrief* (1983), 73–5.

¹⁴² *Col.* 1:22.

¹⁴³ See *ibid.*, 2:20.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 2:12.

rulers and authorities, he has made a public disgrace of them, *triumphing over them by the cross*.¹⁴⁵

Both the centrality of the incarnation and the salvific act on the cross are also the pillars of the hymn, integrated and phrased or at least reshaped by the author.¹⁴⁶ reconciliation and peace come 'through the blood of his cross', and his being 'the firstborn from among the dead' – as in *Revelation* (1:5) – is said in the light of eschatology. Christ's eschatological existence as 'the firstborn from among the dead' is not linked to the Resurrection, as one would have expected in a genuine letter of Paul, but with the Lord being the head of the body, neither physical or non-physical, nor angelical, but an ecclesial body, the Church.

*Ephesians*¹⁴⁷ is seen as a remake of *Colossians*, a description that can be supported by a comparison of what the letters teach with regards to Resurrection and salvation. At the very beginning *Ephesians* alludes to *Colossians*, stating that 'in him we have redemption *through his blood*'.¹⁴⁸ As in *Colossians* the author stresses salvation through the Lord's blood, an act that is longing for eschatological achievement in 'the fullness of times'. Only when Christ will be leading all things, or, as *Colossians* added, where he is firstborn of the dead, will the eschaton have arrived. *Ephesians* also sees the Resurrection as a messianic testimony for the rescuing power of God, the spiritual wisdom, revelation and growing knowledge of Him in us.¹⁴⁹ God's power is 'exercised in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at His right hand in the heavenly realms',¹⁵⁰ a privilege that God also grants 'us' with him: although 'we were dead in transgressions, he made us alive together with Christ – by grace you are saved! – and he raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus'.¹⁵¹

With more clarity than *Colossians*, *Ephesians* highlights both the Resurrection and the authority of its messenger, Paul, referring to the Apostle's visionary experience of the Risen Christ, a feature that links *Ephesians* with *1Timotheus* and the wider Pauline tradition.¹⁵² *Ephesians* shares with *Colossians* the moralizing and spiritualizing tone in its treatment of the resurrection of the dead: 'For everything

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 2:13–15. On the moral impact of the Resurrection see *ibid.*, 3:1–5.

¹⁴⁶ *Col.* 1:15–20.

¹⁴⁷ Whether it was ever addressed to the Ephesians is unclear, as some reliable manuscripts omit 'to the Ephesians'; see A. Lindemann, *Paulus* (1999), 211.

¹⁴⁸ *Eph.* 1:7.

¹⁴⁹ See *ibid.*, 1:17.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1:20.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 2:5–6.

¹⁵² *Eph.* 3:1–6; *1Cor.* 15:8; *Gal.* 2:2; *2Cor.* 12:1–4. See also *Eph.* 4:14 with the same nautical imageries that can be found in *James* and *Jude*; A.E. Barnett, *Paul* (1941), 2–40 lists the parallels between *Eph.* and other Pauline letters (incl. *Col.*).

made evident is light, and for this reason it says: “Awake, O sleeper! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you!”¹⁵³

1Peter, with its insistence upon the salvific function of the Resurrection, sounds at first like Paul. Indeed, the first of the letters that goes under Peter’s name is written by a presbyter (5:1) who names himself ‘Peter, an *Apostle* of Jesus Christ’ (1:1) and seems deeply influenced by Pauline thinking – more so, as we shall see, than the author of *2Peter*, although the latter makes explicit reference to Paul.¹⁵⁴

In some early Christian communities neither of the two letters had been accepted, and they both reflect a historical and theological climate that seems distant from Paul’s authentic letters.¹⁵⁵ Nevertheless, *1Peter* in particular has remarkable parallels to Paul. Christians are exhorted to endure the repressions of a terrible environment, accusations and oppression, and to follow the model of the crucified, even the death penalty in the courts. Martyr-like, ‘those who suffer according to the will of God, should entrust their souls to the trustworthy creator in doing the right thing’.¹⁵⁶ The hint here at the notion of God as creator, expresses hope in a post-mortal re-creation of the soul.¹⁵⁷ The author draws on martyr parallels from Jewish scriptures.¹⁵⁸ Like Paul, the letter starts with a firm pointer to the Resurrection:

By God’s great mercy he gave us new birth into a living hope through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, that is, into an inheritance imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. It is reserved in heaven for you, who by God’s power are protected through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.¹⁵⁹

As with Paul, the author’s interest lies not in the nature of the Resurrection, but in its salvific function. The Resurrection is the moment when the future is being mediated to us.

Unfortunately, we have no clear indications when *1Peter* was written. Recently the suggestion was renewed that places this text between 110/13.¹⁶⁰ But we are also faced with hints that point to a dating of *1Peter* slightly later. In *1Peter* 1:10–12 it is stated that ‘the prophets predicted the grace that would come’ to Christians, also ‘the sufferings appointed for Christ and his subsequent glory’, that the prophets ‘searched and investigated carefully’ what was revealed to them. This scrutinized

¹⁵³ *Eph.* 5:14.

¹⁵⁴ On parallels between *1Peter* and Paul’s letters see A.E. Barnett, *Paul* (1941), 51–69.

¹⁵⁵ Neither is listed in the *Canon Muratori*; *2Peter* is first known to Origen, to whom it is a dubious writing.

¹⁵⁶ *1Peter* 4:19.

¹⁵⁷ See *2Macc.* 7:23 (and 14:46).

¹⁵⁸ See *Sap. Sal.* 3:1–6. U. Kellermann, *Auferstanden* (1979), 114–15.

¹⁵⁹ *1Peter* 1:3–5.

¹⁶⁰ See O. Zwierlein, *Petrus* (2010), 315.

and secured prophetic knowledge, and that Christ was even 'foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times' for humanity's sake sounds like a position that is being voiced against Marcion in the mid-second century; as we shall see, here, however, it is combined with a strong emphasis on the Resurrection: 'Through him you now trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.'¹⁶¹ Very similar to Marcion, indeed, *1Peter* assumes that the imperishable inheritance does not apply to the flesh – a major difference from Paul –, and cites *Isaiah* 40:6-8: 'All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of the grass; the grass withers and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord endures forever.'¹⁶² The letter voices also a spiritualized identification of the temple with the community that reminds of what we can read in Marcion.¹⁶³

Another indication that the letter reflects a pro-/anti-Marcionite stance is given by the expression that Christ has suffered as 'the just for the unjust', another allusion to and summary of *Isaiah* (53:1–12). Christ suffered for his creatures by being put to death in the flesh:

*The just for the unjust ... by being made alive in the spirit. In it he went and preached to the spirits in prison, after they were disobedient long ago when God patiently waited in the days of Noah as an ark was being constructed. In the ark a few, that is eight souls, were delivered through water. And this prefigured baptism, which now saves you – not the washing off of physical dirt but the pledge of a good conscience to God – through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, who went into heaven and is at the right hand of God with angels and authorities and powers subject to him.*¹⁶⁴

1Peter shares with Marcion the non-physical aspect and emphasis on Resurrection and salvation. The core salvific moment is not death on the cross; rather, it is the Resurrection that mediates action, a Resurrection that stresses the spiritual aspect. Death is 'in the flesh', being alive is life 'in the spirit'. Resurrection is going 'into heaven' and sitting 'at the right hand of God with angels and authorities and powers'. The 'eight souls', here, potentially play with the symbolic meaning of the Ogdoad, as can be found also in other spiritually oriented writings of Christian teachers – often anachronistically labelled 'gnostics'.¹⁶⁵ If the letter was written, as scholars today suggest, then it provides evidence for a Pauline milieu out of which Marcion – whom we shall get to know in more detail below – could easily grow.

¹⁶¹ *1Peter* 1:20–21.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 1:24–5.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 2:7 and its parallel in *Luke* 20:17 par.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 3:18–20.

¹⁶⁵ R. Staats, 'Ogdoas' (1972), 39.

The *Second Letter of Peter* in some respects is very different from *1Peter*, clearly positions itself as following Paul, and even seems to develop ideas with reference to *1Peter*.¹⁶⁶ In *2Peter* we find the only reference in the New Testament outside Paul (a literal parallel to Ignatius) to a collection of ‘all his [Paul’s] letters’:

Regard the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as also our dear brother Paul wrote to you, according to the wisdom given to him, speaking of these things *in all his letters*. Some things in these letters are hard to understand, things the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they also do to the rest of the scriptures. Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard that you do not get led astray by the error of these unprincipled men and fall from your firm grasp on the truth.¹⁶⁷

A new threat is present: twisting the scriptures. Within a Jewish framework, both interpretative attempts and their criticisms was part of the tradition. To voice opinions and agree or disagree with previously uttered interpretations did not necessarily lead to a breaking up of community. Differences were a matter of ‘heresy’, which at that stage in history still bore its original Greek meaning of school-opinion. What is striking – especially within the Jewish-Christian community – is the explicit reference to a collection of writings, not limited to the letters of Paul. Whatever the precise date of *2Peter*, the letter shows a similar concern for Paul’s letters ‘and the rest of the scriptures’, as do Marcion, Polycarp and Ignatius.

The author of *2Peter* admits that in Paul’s letters ‘some things’ were ‘hard to understand’. People who were not learned and were not firm, ‘twisted’ the letters and the rest of the scriptures to their own destruction. This is a harsh statement, as the correct reading had a bearing on the question of salvation. Unfortunately, we do not know what the author means by ‘scriptures’ – is he referring to the rest of Paul’s letters? But then, presumably, the author would have written ‘other letters’. Instead, he uses the Greek τὰς λοιπᾶς γραφᾶς, which rather points to ‘the other writings’ we can assume were kept or bound together with ‘all the letters of Paul’, and again, we would love to know which letters and writings formed this totality of Paul’s legacy that the author had in mind.

What kinds of distortions are hinted at? Earlier on in his letter, the author has distinguished his own position from ‘cleverly concocted fables’ regarding ‘the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ’. The status of Jesus was questioned. The author points to a scene that we know as the ‘transfiguration of Jesus’:¹⁶⁸ ‘He received honour and glory, majestic glory from God the Father’ and by ‘that voice’ (NT: ‘out of the cloud’) he was called: ‘This is my dear Son, in whom I am delighted.’ Is the letter hinting at Gospel narratives?

¹⁶⁶ See G.H. Boobyer, ‘Indebtedness’ (1958); the indebtedness to *Jude* is indicated by A. Lindemann, *Paulus* (1979), 91.

¹⁶⁷ *2Peter* 3:15–17.

¹⁶⁸ See *Matth.* 17:1–9; *Mark* 9:2–10 and *Luke* 9:28–36.

A second question related to the standing of Christ was that of the 'reliability' and 'authority' of the one who reported the transfiguration. *2Peter* refers to Paul's authority, namely that his message is of the kind of the prophets; it came not by his 'own imagination' or on 'human impulse', but, as Paul had pointed out in several instances, directly 'from God'. The adversaries of *2Peter* evidently denied the genuineness of Paul's revelation. Deploying Peter as eyewitness of the transfiguration, the letter is a strong defence of Paul's authority without, of course, drawing on Paul's Resurrection experience, which was itself under scrutiny.

Endued with Life

The anonymous author of the *Letter of Diognet* is introduced as a disciple of Apostles in the plural, hence not of Paul. Nevertheless, the author seems also to hint at Paul through his self-description as 'a teacher of the Gentiles', albeit that he distances himself from 'strange discourses and perverse questionings'.¹⁶⁹

Embedded in the text is a beautiful sequence of contrasts, typical of Asian rhetoric, which, in its content, is all the more surprising as the author sets a marked difference between Christian belief and Greco-Roman worship, the latter setting hope of salvation on ephemeral objects revered as gods.¹⁷⁰ In this respect Christian belief is different; however, it varies also from the Jewish tradition,¹⁷¹ while not 'from the rest of mankind either in locality or in speech or in customs':

For they (the Christians) dwell not somewhere in cities of their own, neither do they use some different language, nor practice an extraordinary kind of life.

Nor again do they possess any invention discovered by any intelligence or study of ingenious men, nor are they masters of any human dogma as some are.

But while they dwell in cities of Greeks and barbarians as the lot of each is cast, and follow the native customs in dress and food and the other arrangements of life, yet the constitution of their own citizenship, which they set forth, is marvelous, and confessedly contradicts expectation.

They dwell in their own countries, but only as sojourners;

they bear their share in all things as citizens, and

they endure all hardships as strangers. Every foreign country is a fatherland to them, and every fatherland is foreign.

They marry like all other men and

they beget children; but they do not cast away their offspring.

They have their meals in common, but not their wives.

They find themselves in the flesh, and yet they live not after the flesh.

Their existence is on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven.

They obey the established laws, and they surpass the laws in their own lives.

¹⁶⁹ *Diogn.* 11:1.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 2:4–5.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 3–4.

They love all men, and they are persecuted by all.
 They are ignored, and yet they are condemned.
 They are put to death, and yet they are endued with life.
 They are in beggary, and yet they make many rich.

...

They are insulted, and they respect
 Doing good they are punished as evil-doers;
 being punished they rejoice, as if they were thereby quickened by life.
 War is waged against them as aliens by the Jews, and persecution is carried on against them by the Greeks, and
 yet those that hate them cannot tell the reason of their hostility.¹⁷²

What a fanfare of Christian identity that is based neither on locality nor on speech nor customs, but on a misunderstood Christian understatement! It results in ‘death, and yet they are endued with life’. The letter sounds like a Pascha homily, as can be sensed from its ending:

Salvation is set forth, and the apostles are filled with understanding, and the Pascha of the Lord goes forward, and the congregations are gathered together, and [all things] are arranged in order, and as He taught the saints the Word is gladdened, through whom the Father is glorified, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.¹⁷³

If, as scholars claim, *Diognet* has embraced Paul’s thinking, understood ‘his soteriology’, seems ‘even more Pauline than Paul’¹⁷⁴ and ‘has been educated in Paul’s school’,¹⁷⁵ why, despite the link to Pascha, is the congregation not pointed towards Paul’s teaching on the Resurrection? Why should we regard God ‘as nurse, father, teacher, counsellor, physician, mind, light, honour, glory, strength and life’, but not as the ‘Risen’?¹⁷⁶

Christ, the High Priest

With *Hebrews* we look almost beyond the Pauline tradition within the New Testament. *Hebrews* is an intriguing ‘masterpiece of early Christian art of

¹⁷² *Diogn.* 5:1–17, trans. J.B. Lightfoot (adapt. by Athena Data Products, 1990).

¹⁷³ *Diogn.* 12:9.

¹⁷⁴ E. Molland, ‘Stellung’ (1934), 309–10.

¹⁷⁵ C. Andresen, ‘Diognetbrief’, *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*³ 2 (1958), 200; see A. Lindemann, *Paulus* (1999), 281.

¹⁷⁶ *Diogn.* 9:6.

preaching',¹⁷⁷ its author ranked as 'one of the three great theologians of the New Testament'.¹⁷⁸

The text of this letter, long disputed by early Christians as to whether it could be accepted in the communities,¹⁷⁹ is in many ways at odds with Paul's genuine letters, to the extent that scholars have concluded, 'One cannot assume that *Hebrews* has a place in Paul's school',¹⁸⁰ although the text seems to be known at Rome.¹⁸¹ The 'general resurrection' can be found in the letter, but Christ's Resurrection does not surface.¹⁸² Nevertheless, the anonymous author of this 'short letter' of thirteen chapters positions himself explicitly in the Pauline tradition, a friend and contemporary of 'Timothy', passing on greetings 'from our Italian friends'.¹⁸³ Granted, in the opening address the writer of *Hebrews* does not imitate Paul's letters, nor does he pose as Paul,¹⁸⁴ and he omits an author's name, whereas it is customary to Paul to introduce himself first by name.¹⁸⁵ The proximity to Timothy, however, evokes a Pauline origin.

The letter is not written to a community, as with Paul's *Romans*, *Corinthians*, *Philippians* or *Thessalonians*,¹⁸⁶ nor to communities in a specific area as with *Galatians*, or to a fellow as with *Philemon*.¹⁸⁷ Instead, it is written to the 'Hebrews',¹⁸⁸ a name that is difficult to identify with a particular group. Who are these Hebrews? Are the addressees 'converts from Judaism'? 'The use of "Hebrews"', however, cannot 'be taken to imply that the issue is settled'.¹⁸⁹ We know that the Samaritans frequently called themselves Hebrews as heirs of the Mosaic tradition to differen-

¹⁷⁷ H.W. Attridge, 'Hebräerbrief' (2000), 1494.

¹⁷⁸ Together with Paul and the author of the *Gospel of John*: see B. Lindars, *Theology* (1991).

¹⁷⁹ In Chester Beatty Papyrus P46 (perhaps from as early as 200 A.D.) *Hebrews* is placed between *Rom.* and *1Cor.* and taken as genuinely written by Paul: see B.M. Metzger, *Manuscripts* (1981), 64.

¹⁸⁰ H. Conzelmann and A. Lindemann, *Arbeitsbuch* (31977), 301; see, however, the parallels between *Hebr.* and Paul's letters in A.E. Barnett, *Paul* (1941), 69–88.

¹⁸¹ See below on *1Clem.*

¹⁸² See, for example, the 'index of subjects' in B. Lindars, *Theology* (1991), 155.

¹⁸³ *Hebr.* 13:22–4.

¹⁸⁴ *Eph.* 1:1; *Col.* 1:1; *1Tim.* 1:1; *2Tim.* 1:1; *Tit.* 1:1.

¹⁸⁵ *Rom.* 1:1; *1Cor.* 1:1; *2Cor.* 1:1; *Gal.* 1:1; *Phil.* 1:1; *1Thess.* 1:1; *2Thess.* 1:1; *Philem.* 1 – similarly all other letters in the New Testament carry the author's name – *James* 1:1; *1Peter* 1:1; *2Peter* 1:1 – except *John's* letters, of which *1John* does not have an address at all, while *2John* and *3John* are written by 'the elders'.

¹⁸⁶ Similarly the pseudo-Pauline letters to the *Colossians*, perhaps also the one to the *Ephesians*.

¹⁸⁷ Similarly the pseudo-Pauline letters to *Timothy* and *Titus*.

¹⁸⁸ Although scholars argue that the headline is a later addition: see H. Conzelmann and A. Lindemann, *Arbeitsbuch* (31977), 301.

¹⁸⁹ R.P. Gordon, *Hebrews* (2000), 7.

tiate themselves from the *Iudaioi*; but we also know of orthodox Jews who called themselves Hebrews.¹⁹⁰ All attempts to identify the addressees of this letter must be based mainly on the profile that can be extracted from the letter itself. Some parallels exist between *Hebrews* and *1Clement*,¹⁹¹ a Roman letter to Corinth that will be discussed below. Recently, scholars have found anti-Ebionite elements in *Hebrews*.¹⁹²

The content of *Hebrews* has astonished readers throughout history. In chapter 6 the author gives us a summary of ‘the rudiments of Christianity’, before he ‘advances’ and expounds what he sees as the more mature gist of faith. The rudimentary foundations are:

Repentance from the deadness of our former ways, and faith in God, by means of instruction about cleansing rites, and the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgement.¹⁹³

The list of these topics reads like the headline for an advert for Rabbinic Judaism: ethics, belief, observance of purity laws, ordination rite for Rabbis, eschatology. There is nothing that makes this list stand out as particularly Christian.¹⁹⁴ In addition, the opening is reminiscent of other, non-canonical early Christian writings that clearly set out the teaching of two ways, the former way of death, sin and darkness and the new one of life, repentance and light, a teaching that has its parallel in a text from the Dead Sea Scrolls.¹⁹⁵ While the foundational or rudimentary elements appear to be addressing Rabbinic Jews (at least ‘the resurrection of the dead’ excludes Samaritans and Sadducees), the more advanced element of faith according to *Hebrews* is a radical exclusion of a second chance of repentance after having been admitted to Christianity.

Hebrews does not speak of people who have only taken in the basic elements of Christianity, but of those who have matured in it, have been enlightened, tasted the gift of the Holy Spirit – and are still in danger of falling away. When did this enlightenment take place? ‘There is no indication that at this stage “enlightenment” referred to baptism’,¹⁹⁶ but *Hebrews* remembers ‘the earlier days, when after you

¹⁹⁰ See M.D. Goulder, ‘Christian myth’ (1977), 67.

¹⁹¹ *Hebr.* 1:3–7.13; *1Clem.* 36:2–4. It is not certain that, as is usually suggested by scholars, *1Clem.* borrows from *Hebr.* as the direction of borrowing could be the other way around, or both could depend on the same source, oral or written; see H.W. Attridge, ‘Hebräerbrief’ (2000), 1495; H. Conzelmann and A. Lindemann, *Arbeitsbuch* (³1977), 301.

¹⁹² Notably M.D. Goulder, ‘Hebrews’ (2003).

¹⁹³ *Hebr.* 6:1–8.

¹⁹⁴ See, for example, an alternative formula in *Acts* 20:21: ‘Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus’, see R.P. Gordon, *Hebrews* (2000), 72.

¹⁹⁵ *Didache*, *Barnabas*; *1QS* 3:13–4:26. See on these and further parallels and a potential history of editorial development, J.S. Kloppenborg, ‘*Didache*’ (2005).

¹⁹⁶ R.P. Gordon, *Hebrews* (2000), 73.

were enlightened, you remained steadfast in a hard and painful struggle'.¹⁹⁷ The letter delivers a stark verdict against those who 'have fallen away', not because they had given in to external pressures, but because they 'crucified the Son of God in their own selves and exposed him to mockery and contempt'. Many scholars have made the connection between this scenario and the description of the joining and falling away of Simon Magus in Samaria,¹⁹⁸ although *Hebrews* differs from *Acts*: while *Acts* lets Simon repent, *Hebrews* excludes any repentance. According to *Acts*, Simon was regarded as 'someone great', the divine 'great power' in Samaria.¹⁹⁹ Justin, himself a Samaritan, reports that 'almost all the Samaritans, and a few even of other nations, worship him ... as the first god'.²⁰⁰ In Irenaeus the story grows into anti-heretical phantasy, in which Simon

himself might seem to be a wonderful being, and he applied himself with still greater zeal to the study of the whole magic art, that he might the better bewilder and overpower multitudes of men. Such was his procedure in the reign of Claudius Cæsar, by whom also he is said to have been honoured with a statue, on account of his magical power.²⁰¹ This man, then, was glorified by many as if he were a god; and he taught that it was himself who appeared among the Jews as the Son, but descended in Samaria as the Father while he came to other nations in the character of the Holy Spirit.²⁰²

According to Irenaeus Simon presented himself as an incarnation of the divine, bridging Jewish, Samaritan and Gentile traditions, something that reminds us of the Hellenists (Stephen, Philip) as depicted by *Acts*. Even if we account for misrepresentations through Irenaeus, 'the great power' is known as 'a Samaritan designation for the supreme deity. Simon declared that this deity had come to earth in his person for the redemption of men'.²⁰³ According to *Acts*, Simon, having listened to Philip's preaching, believed, was baptized and remained close to Philip. Subsequently *Acts* castigates him for wanting to buy the gift of the Spirit, but still offers him repentance and reports that Simon asked Peter and John to pray for him. Whether or not they did, is left open.²⁰⁴

A number of elements in *Hebrews* and *Acts* make one think of *Hebrews* embodying a Pharisaic-Christian address to Samaritans. As in *John*, the resurrection

¹⁹⁷ *Hebr.* 10:32.

¹⁹⁸ *Acts* 8:9–24. See J. Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte* (1998), 261, with further sources and lit.

¹⁹⁹ *Acts* 8:10.

²⁰⁰ *1Apol.* 26,3; *Dial.* 120,6, trans. ANFa.

²⁰¹ On the origin of this misinterpretation of a statue, dedicated not to Simon Magus, but to the Roman God 'Semo Sancus', see O. Zwierlein, *Petrus* (2010), 132–3.

²⁰² *Iren., Adv. haer.* I 23.

²⁰³ E. Haenchen, *Acts* (1971), 303.

²⁰⁴ *Acts* 8:25.

of the dead figures among the topics of Christian belief, and seems to be discussed in a context of Samaritan expectations.

Hebrews focuses on the five books of Moses, the content of the Samaritan Bible. It recurrently uses *Genesis* and *Exodus*, the key texts for the Samaritans, with Abraham and Moses as their guarantors and God's servants, making Jesus greater than Moses because he is God's Son.²⁰⁵ Very similar to Stephen's homily in *Acts*, the letter focuses strongly on the experience of exile, the wandering people of God, the people of the new covenant.²⁰⁶ Jesus is not linked genealogically to David, but heads the long list of examples of faith and the host of witnesses all taken solely from the books that the Samaritans accepted.²⁰⁷ The list runs from the creation of the world to Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, 'even Sarah', Isaac, Joseph, Moses, the celebration of Passover, the crumbling of the walls of Jericho and 'the prostitute Rahab's escape'. As a sort of appendix the letter adds: 'And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets',²⁰⁸ but then the author adds a list of what has been promised to the prophets 'yet' they 'did not receive. God had provided something better for us, so that they would be made perfect together with us'.²⁰⁹ Christian martyrs are stylized as those who convey salvation even to the old samples of faith.

Despite the explicit mention of the 'better resurrection' for the martyrs,²¹⁰ the author does not draw on Jesus' Resurrection, but concentrates on him solely as the true High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.²¹¹ It is a 'sacrificial argument ... drawn from the Tabernacle, not the Temple'.²¹² What, according to *Hebrews*, delivers salvation? It is the ultimate, salvific sacrifice, Christ's suffering and death for all mankind, 'crowned now with glory and honour because he suffered death', 'a pioneer of salvation perfect through sufferings'.²¹³ *Hebrews* speaks of Christ remaining always alive despite his death 'to plead on their behalf', but is silent about the Resurrection.²¹⁴

Christ's appearance marks the irrevocable 'climax of history ... just as it is our human lot to die once, with judgement to follow, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of mankind, and will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to bring salvation to those who eagerly await him'.²¹⁵ Again there is no word

²⁰⁵ *Hebr.* 3:1–6.

²⁰⁶ See A. Oepke, *Gottesvolk* (1950), 57–74.

²⁰⁷ *Hebr.* 11:1. See M.D. Goulder, 'Christian myth' (1977), 67.

²⁰⁸ *Hebr.* 11:32.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 11:39.

²¹⁰ See U. Kellermann, *Auferstanden* (1979), 119–20.

²¹¹ *Hebr.* 4:14–7:28.

²¹² M.D. Goulder, 'Christian myth' (1977), 67.

²¹³ *Hebr.* 9:23–8; 2:9f. See M.D. Goulder, 'Hebrews' (2003), 399.

²¹⁴ *Hebr.* 7:25; 2:11–7.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 9:27–8.

about Christ's Resurrection. Instead, the letter speaks about Christ's perpetual priesthood, life that has no beginning and no end, the Son, the King, the Messiah, God, whose 'throne is for ever and ever', of a transfiguration of him who 'has passed through the heavens', has 'raised high above the heavens', but not about the Risen Christ.²¹⁶ Christ is sitting at the right hand of God's Majesty, the one who does not change, 'the same' whose 'years will have no end', the 'radiance of God's glory and the representation of his essence',²¹⁷ the one who advances forgiveness and purification from sins, hence the combination of the creation of the world, *Genesis* 1f., and its salvation, *Ex.* 34:5–7, and the two key Samaritan reference texts.

The temple in Jerusalem is not mentioned. Instead, *Hebrews* supports a spiritualized cult in an allegorical sense: the 'Sabbath rest remains for the people of God', priesthood and offerings are necessary to absolve sins.²¹⁸ The letter even amplifies the effectiveness of the cult concept by generalizing it. Similarly the new covenant and law are better than the old ones;²¹⁹ the new ones are the fulfilment and realization of what was only promised in shadowy symbols before, making the old ones now obsolete – and so they disappear.²²⁰ Instead, enlightenment, 'knowledge of truth' and wisdom appear, markers of a strongly philosophical Christianity of the second century.²²¹

In *Hebrews*, the widening gap between the different interpretations of Christianity can be felt. Even within a religious and cultural arena as small as Samaria the attempt to develop a genuine Christianity seems to have caused inner tensions, external persecutions and a variety of ways to deal with these.

Do not be carried away by all sorts of strange teachings. For it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not ritual meals, which have never benefited those who participated in them. We have an altar that those who serve in the tabernacle have no right to eat from. For the bodies of those animals whose blood the high priest brings into the sanctuary as an offering for sin are burned outside the camp. Therefore, to sanctify the people by his own blood, Jesus also suffered outside the camp. We must go out to him, then, outside the camp, bearing the abuse he experienced. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.²²²

This 'going outside' indicates the growing fissure within the Hebrew origins of Christianity. In this sense, Marcion's break with the Hebrew and Jewish tradition,

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 6:20; 7:3,24; 7:3; 1:8; 4:14; 7:26.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1:3; 8:1; 1:12–13.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4:9.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 7:12; 8:1–10:18, esp. 8:6,28.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 8:5–6; 8:13.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 10:26.

²²² *Hebr.* 13:9–14.

as will be detailed further, is only pushing the existing inner-Hebrew and therefore inner-Christian tensions. In the last section of *Hebrews* the author summarizes again his message of ‘Jesus Christ’ who ‘is the same yesterday and today and forever’. It is because of Jesus’ sacrifice, his ‘blood of the eternal covenant’ that ‘the God of peace leads up from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep’. This sacrificial typology has, again, a basis in both Paul’s interpretation of the Lord’s Supper and his reading of Pascha.²²³ For *Hebrews*, however, it is the bloody sacrifice, not the Resurrection, that secures eternal life for him and through him ‘to whom be glory forever’.²²⁴

‘The one who is dead’ gives Life

The *Epistle of Barnabas* is another iridescent writing. It is difficult to establish the date and place of its composition. Suggestions range from after 70 to the end of the second century, because ‘we know virtually nothing about the author of *Barnabas*’.²²⁵ The widening gap between a Greco-Jewish eschatological, ethical Christian interpretation of the Torah and the Prophets, and their ritualistic non-Christian Jewish reading becomes discernible. Still in the tradition of Paul,²²⁶ indicated by the pseudonymous name of the author of this epistle more than by the topics discussed, *Barnabas* advocates, as can be seen from the first quote from the scriptures, a redefinition of the temple sacrifice, the lunar calendar and the Sabbath:

What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices, said the Lord, I am full of whole burnt-offerings, and the fat of lambs and the blood of bulls and of goats I desire not ... If you bring fine flour, it is in vain; incense is an abomination to me; your new moons and your Sabbaths I cannot away with.²²⁷

To some extent similar to *Hebrews*, but with a strong emphasis on the David-typology, *Barnabas* uses sacrificial language, and transfers it from God onto the Lord Jesus, the preferred title of Christ in the epistle, from the weekly or annual celebrations according to the lunar calendar to an eschatological expectation, the celebration of which has already started in the midst of a historical environment that is felt as adverse, wicked and reigned over by the ‘lawless’, the ‘prince of evil’.²²⁸ *Barnabas* calls this transfer not a new interpretation of the old law, but a messianic

²²³ 1Cor: 5:6–8; 11:23–7. On this see below in the chapter on Pascha.

²²⁴ *Hebr.* 13:20–1.

²²⁵ A.J. Bellinzoni, ‘Overview’ (2005), 61; J. Carleton Paget, ‘Paul’ (1996), 364, and id., *Barnabas* (1994), 6–30 (‘the mid 90s’ Alexandria); R. Hvalvik, *Struggle* (1994), 19–20 (after 136), similarly P. Prigent, in *Barnabé* (1971), 27.

²²⁶ J. Carleton Paget, ‘Paul’ (1996), 376–7.

²²⁷ *Barn.* 2:5.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 15:5; 14:13.

reception of a 'new law'. The author criticizes the temple and bodily circumcision as does Stephen in his speech in *Acts* 7, however, with clearer emphasis on Jesus' role as expressed in *Mark* 12:35–7. Only in two instances does *Barnabas* use the messianic title 'Christ' in combination with Jesus.²²⁹ The 'son of God' is a prophet above all prophets, not a 'son of man'. He terminated the going astray of Israel and wrote down the new law in a book with Moses' endorsement, while he 'annulled' the earlier things, so 'that the new law of our Lord Jesus Christ, being free from the yoke of constraint, might have its oblation not made by human hands'.²³⁰

The 'new law of our Lord Jesus Christ' as opposed to an 'oblation ... made by human hands', is a blatant criticism not of Moses, the lawgiver, but of those who had received the law through Moses and, like the Pharisees and Rabbis, trusted in their own interpretative authority of reading the law:

Ours it is [scil. the law]; but they lost it for ever, when Moses had just received it ... Their covenant was broken in pieces, that the covenant of the beloved Jesus might be sealed unto our hearts in the hope which springs from faith in Him.²³¹

Jesus in his messianic function restores the law of Moses 'unto our hearts'.²³² The epistle is, however, far from being anti-Jewish; on the contrary, it centres entirely on the *Tanak*, the Rabbinic canonical writings.²³³ But *Barnabas* sees himself 'in these last days', entrenched in the apocalyptic fight against those people who have lost the law in 'the season of lawlessness', in which faith of the 'sons of God' means offering fierce 'resistance' to 'the Black One'.²³⁴

Time has moved on since Paul's letters, with the beginning of the parting of the ways in *Rom.* 9–11 and the evolving understanding of a rediscovery of a lost law in *Barnabas*. As indicated, we have no firm evidence to date the epistle: *Barn.* 16:3f. refers to the destruction of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD, but also expresses hope that it will be rebuilt, a hope similar to that expressed on coins minted by Jewish rebels during the Bar Kochba Revolt (132–135 AD).²³⁵

Women and men – the letter explicitly addresses people of both sexes²³⁶ – have to find out and teach how we can be saved through surrendering of our broken hearts to God.²³⁷ Sacrifice and perfect knowledge, not a physical building, provide

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 2:6 and 12:8–11.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 2:6.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 4:7–8, trans. J.B. Lightfoot (adapt. by Athena Data Products, 1990).

²³² See W. Kinzig, *Erbin* (1992), 80–83; id., *Novitas* (1994), 125–6, 171 (further lit.).

²³³ In this respect, I have to correct myself, see M. Vinzent, 'Barnabas' (1995), 76; similarly, R. Staats, 'Ogdoas' (1972), 42.

²³⁴ *Barn.* 4:9.

²³⁵ See M.H. Williams, 'Shaping' (2004), 43.

²³⁶ *Barn.* 1:1.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 2:10.

the social environment ‘which is God’s true temple’.²³⁸ As a spiritual promise rather than a physical gift, salvation is not given once and for all, but remains a journey towards life, a constant choice between two options, the way of life and the way of death,²³⁹ a central idea in the letter.²⁴⁰ Still on ‘our’ way towards life, we shall reach the final destination only once we have pursued the chosen direction to its end.²⁴¹ The Lord, pre-existent and incarnate, has only prepared the way of life, at a particular moment in time.²⁴² And although God, the ruler, has made known everything through his prophets, the course of history is ambiguous.²⁴³ Very different from Irenaeus in the late second century, who teaches history as a gradual development towards final salvation, history in *Barnabas* is an open project, while at the same time it is neither a purely dualistic nor an antithetic battle as, for example, in Marcion. The testament of Scripture and all the promises given in it bind together yesterday, today and tomorrow. It is a prophetic history of promise rather than one of delivery.²⁴⁴ Only at the end of time will we be again what we were in the beginning. *Barnabas* quotes a Lord’s saying, unknown from any of the Gospels: ‘The Lord said: *Behold I make the last things as the first.*’²⁴⁵

Between end and beginning, future and past, God has offered his love, which Israel did not understand and, as a result, God had to endure and to die. Hence, history is clearly structured into three stages of past, present and future.

In the past, God had spoken to Israel that he loved, but Israel had been deceived by a wicked angel, did not understand the spiritual meaning of the commandments, and sinned. Sin and error apply even to the Apostles, which shows the extent to which Christians are seen as being fully part of Israel. God had abandoned Israel, in order to convert not the just, but sinners.²⁴⁶

The present is a time of uncertainty and vanity. In the now, nothing is pure, or fulfilled. This world is made of ‘evil days’, reigned over by ‘the Black One’.²⁴⁷ In a word, these are the ‘last days’;²⁴⁸ a way towards the potential rescue, a dreadful steering into total darkness.²⁴⁹ The Lord coming into this threatening world ‘had

²³⁸ R.A. Kraft, *Barnabas* (1965), 29.

²³⁹ *Barn.* 4:13.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1:4; 4:10; 10:11; 16:7–10; 18–20. On *Barnabas* and the ‘two ways’ see L.W. Barnard, *Studies* (1966); *id.*, ‘Judaism’ (1959); *id.*, ‘Dead Sea Scrolls’; W. Rordorf, ‘Un chapitre’ (1972), 109–29.

²⁴¹ *Barn.* 2:10; 3:6; 4:1–2,6; 5:4 etc.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 16:9; 5:6; 6:7,9,14 etc.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1:7; 2:4; 1:7; 5:3; 17:2; 15:5–8; 16:4–5.

²⁴⁴ See P. Meinhold, ‘Barnabasbrief’ (1940), 257; W. Kinzig, *Novitas* (1994), 172.

²⁴⁵ *Barn.* 6:13.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 5:8–9; 9:4; 18:1; 10:9,12; 2:9.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 4:9,13; 2:10; 21:3; 15:5; 18:1.

²⁴⁸ K. Wengst (ed.), *Didache* (1984), 197; *Barn.* 4:1–6,9–10.

²⁴⁹ See J. Weiss, *Barnabasbrief* (1888), 80; P. Prigent, ‘Introduction’, in *Barnabé* (1971), 35.

to endure to deliver His flesh unto corruption' to cleanse us 'through the blood of His sprinkling'. His suffering starts with his incarnation and his death is but its consequence.²⁵⁰ The new or second creation will be given only in one symbol: the cross. 'The kingdom of Jesus is on the cross', and all those who want to gain eternal life have to 'set their hope on Him', the one on the cross. Only then 'they shall live for ever'.²⁵¹ The Lord's reign in this world is not yet a glorious journey, but is expressed in 'the wool and the hyssop' of the cross.²⁵²

We are only living towards the future, the end of days when the Lord is coming back to His heritage. The time of milk and honey has not yet come, only the promise on which we have to set our faith and hope.²⁵³ There are few signs of eschatological joy that could give a taste of what is to come. Fear and anxiety 'make the task of parenthesis all the more important and urgent'.²⁵⁴ The choice of the right path is part of an end-drama.²⁵⁵ Embedded into this dramatic world view is *Barnabas'* message of the resurrection of the dead as part of the prophetic promises.²⁵⁶

Even where *Barnabas* talks about the eschatological resurrection of the dead, he does not refer to Christ's Resurrection, but to his endurance that 'might destroy death and show forth the resurrection of the dead', the condition for which he was 'manifested in the flesh'. *Barnabas* continuously emphasizes the Lord's endurance, suffering and death as the salvific preparatory acts for the coming future and the resurrection of the dead.²⁵⁷ These are not acts of weakness, but powerful demonstrations of the coming triumph over darkness. Where the term 'resurrection' appears,²⁵⁸ it is connected with 'judgement' and 'reward', a context that 'makes plain the reference to our resurrection, not to the Resurrection of Christ'.²⁵⁹

To put the paradox into a question: how can God, the Saviour, subject himself to those whom he wants to redeem? *Barnabas* answers: The Lord was like 'a hard stone', 'ordained for being crushed'.²⁶⁰ If this elect and chief cornerstone is brought to death, the difficult question arises, where shall we place our hope? As if resisting the temptation to solve the paradox and point to Easter, the author remains adamant, quoting the Scriptures:

²⁵⁰ *Barn.* 5:1; 7:2; 14:4.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 8:5.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 8:6.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 12:9; 6:17.

²⁵⁴ R.A. Kraft, *Barnabas* (1965), 27.

²⁵⁵ *Barn.* 1:7; 21:3.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 5:6–7; see M. Vinzent, 'Barnabas' (1995).

²⁵⁷ See E. Reuss, *History* (1874), II 279. 285; W. Haller, 'Lehre' (1892), 296; P. Meinhold, 'Barnabasbrief' (1940), 276.

²⁵⁸ *Barn.* 5:6–7; 21:1.

²⁵⁹ J. Sprinzl, *Theologie* (1880), 156–7.

²⁶⁰ *Barn.* 6:2.

It is because the Lord has set His flesh in strength. For He said: And He set Me as a hard rock. And the prophet said again: The stone which the builders rejected, this became the head and the corner. And again He said: This is the great and wonderful day, which the Lord made.²⁶¹

Is the author talking about the Lord's day, Sunday, or Easter? No, he is pointing to the crucifixion:

The assembly of evildoers gathered around Me, they surrounded Me as bees surround a comb; and: For My garment they cast a lot.²⁶²

For Barnabas there is no celebration until the end of time, taken in a physical sense. To the author, Sabbath, temple, circumcision and food were abolished. Eternal life is linked to baptism and the cross, not to the Resurrection.²⁶³ The paradox of life in and through death is exemplified by Moses and the serpent. Using this comparison the author describes the Lord as the Saviour, as the one who has died *and is dead*:

The Spirit said to the heart of Moses, that he should make a type of the cross and of Him that was to suffer, that unless, said He, they shall set their hope on Him, war shall be waged against them for ever. ... Moses made a type of Jesus, a brazen serpent, and set it up conspicuously, and summoned the people by proclamation ... Whosoever, said he, one of you shall be bitten, let him come to the serpent which is placed on the tree, and let him believe and hope that the serpent *being itself dead can make alive*; and forthwith he shall be saved. And so they did.²⁶⁴

As the one who is dead, Jesus makes alive – this highly paradoxical example illustrates *Barnabas*' extraordinary soteriology. There is no easing out, no dissolving of the paradox, the *crux* of the cross remains. Between Jesus' death and his coming back in glory, there is no other key to salvation than suffering and dying with the Lord.²⁶⁵

The importance of death and incarnation is similar to 1 and 2 *Timotheus*, also to Irenaeus. Irenaeus, however, refers to Paul, builds the Resurrection into his theological reasoning, but in *Barnabas* we are not at that stage of the discussion. The only clear reference to Christ's Resurrection is a liturgical allusion²⁶⁶ that, if

²⁶¹ Ibid., 6:4–5.

²⁶² Ibid., 6:6, 19.

²⁶³ Ibid., 9:3; 10:9; 11:10–12:1.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 12:2, 5–7.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 7:11; 16:9.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 15:8: 'Therefore, we keep the eighth day as a day of joy, on which also Jesus rose from the dead, and after he had appeared ascended unto heaven.' On this text

it is not a later gloss or addition and reflects a lived practice, must refer to a rather recent innovation, as it had not left a trace in the theology of the epistle.

Having moved away from Paul into the Pauline world, we have discovered the huge distance and difference with regard to how theologically central the Resurrection was for Paul and his understanding of salvation. Noticeably, other topics have overtaken Paul's insistence upon the Resurrection, have moved this source of revelation, knowledge and salvation, this foundation of faith, authority and Church, and this ignition of early Christian missionary activities to a mere testimony. Often the Resurrection topic is replaced by tenets that are part of the post-temple Jewish debates: the questionable place of the temple, of sacrifice, circumcision, the law, ethics, eschatological judgement, authority and politics.

Christian Communities in Paul's Cities of Rome and Corinth

What did Christians believe in cities that played a central role in Paul's life, such as Rome and Corinth? Let us look first at Rome.

Christian preaching began in Jewish synagogues at Rome in the 40s of the first century,²⁶⁷ but soon the members of the Christian communities, together with other Jews,²⁶⁸ were noticed by Roman officials, and 'key persons' were expelled by Emperor Claudius in 49 AD. Christians seem to have re-assembled 'on their own' 'in the second half of the 50s' when Paul wrote his letter to them. 'The majority of Roman Christians now were Gentile, although many of these Gentiles may, before their baptisms, have been loosely connected with Jewish synagogues' as their sympathizers, but they were distinguishable as Christians, for example for Nero in 64 AD. Despite the differentiations, 'social contacts between Christians and Jews in the city continued, as Callistus still demonstrated at the end of the second century, and still in the second century, a group of Jewish Christians observed the Torah, withdrawing fellowship from other Christians who did not, but probably maintaining contact with non-Christian Jewish synagogues'.²⁶⁹

Nevertheless, thinking among these Christians had drastically changed, compared to what we read in Paul. There are two writings that are still preserved from Rome: the *Shepherd of Hermas* and the *First Letter of Clement*. We can also compare the so-called *Second Letter of Clement*. In *Hermas* as in *2Clement* the Resurrection is absent, while in *1Clement*, sent to Corinth, the development of Pauline theology is attested: the Resurrection becomes remote and ranges as one among other testimonies for God's salvific act, which is closely linked to Christ's sacrificial death. How common was the sheer absence of the Resurrection topic in Pauline communities will be shown by looking at these Christian texts.

see below.

²⁶⁷ See on this and the following P. Lampe, 'Early Christians' (2004), 22.

²⁶⁸ See Suet., *Divus Claudius* 25,4; M.H. Williams, 'Shaping' (2004), 39.

²⁶⁹ P. Lampe, 'Early Christians' (2004), 22.

Hermas' core question is: 'How can I be saved?' The protagonist is introduced as a devout Christian, somebody who had formerly been a slave, but had made a fortune. Sold to an unknown Rhode in Rome, he must have bought his freedom and assembled a large estate, a very wealthy household with his own slaves. One day, according to the narrative, he saw and recognized his old mistress who had brought him up. Instantaneously, he 'began to love her', though 'as a sister'.²⁷⁰ Of course, the harmless introduction only sharpens the incestuous-like development. *Hermas* sees his beloved bathing in the Tiber, and we are to believe that what took place was more than voyeurism. *Hermas* 'gave her' his 'hand, and drew her out of the river' adding: 'The sight of her beauty made me think with myself, "I should be a happy man if I could but get a wife as handsome and good as she is."' This was the only thought that passed through me: this and nothing more.²⁷¹ Who would think of anything else? To him, a Christian, a married man and father, even the sight of her beauty and his possessive thoughts are described as grave sin and impurity. But then, he is also criticized because of his own wealth, his terribly corrupt sons, and his noisy wife.²⁷²

Despite the drastic picture of *Hermas*, he is given a second chance as an example for sinners who sincerely repent.²⁷³

Hermas describes the Church, 'apostles, bishops, teachers, and deacons',²⁷⁴ while, astonishingly for us, the text never mentions 'Jesus' nor 'Christ', neither does it refer to 'Christianity'. The 'Lord' and the 'Son' are central, as is ethics:

Do no evil in your life, and serve the Lord with a pure heart: keep His commandments, walking in His precepts, and let no evil desire arise in your heart; and believe in God. If you do these things, and fear Him, and abstain from every evil thing, you will live unto God.²⁷⁵

No Jew, no ordinary Greek or Roman citizen would have objected to this ethics. It is an assertion of a monotheistic belief, based on keeping God's precepts. New in *Hermas*, however, is the list of twelve commandments, expounded in a long middle section of the text as if replacing the ten of Moses. Precepts are no longer promises given by Moses, but an ecclesiastical message of *Hermas* as spokesman of the Lord. *Hermas* teaches creation and eschaton, when the creation has been completed by the Lord's providential 'holy Church', conditional upon keeping the commandments written down in *Hermas*, the prevention of evil thoughts and the insistence on social responsibility of material wealth.

²⁷⁰ *Herm.* vis. 1:1.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, vis. 1:1.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, vis. 1:2.

²⁷³ See *ibid.*, sim. 8:28.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, vis. 3:5.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, sim. 5:1, trans. ANFa.

Salvation is based on baptism, the joining of the Church and a relentless endeavour in immaculate behaviour.²⁷⁶ Similar to letters of the Pauline tradition, *Hermas* refers to the power of the Lord, although nowhere in his long text does he mention the Resurrection, not even where he talks about eternal life or our raising up from the dead:

Before a man bears the name of the Son of God, he is dead; but when he receives the seal he lays aside his deadness, and obtains life. The seal, then, is the water: they descend into the water dead, and they arise alive.²⁷⁷

Baptism awakens people to life, but there is no hint at the Son's Resurrection. Baptism and ethical life save 'the elect of God', let them inherit eternity through acting 'with vigour, called self-restraint', 'the daughter of Faith ..., Simplicity, Guilelessness, Chastity, Intelligence, and Love'.²⁷⁸ Who lives in this way, will 'be enrolled in the books of the living'.²⁷⁹

In a famous passage, *Hermas* asks the question, 'Why did the Son of God come in the form of a slave?' The answer gives another summary of belief, almost a creed, beginning with the creation, God giving his Son, the Son then appointing his angels and showing the people the paths of life. The Son gives 'them the law which he received from his Father'. The Son is made of the incarnate pre-existent Spirit and the flesh that this Spirit assumed, 'walking religiously and chastely':

Accordingly, after living excellently and purely, and after labouring and cooperating with the Spirit, and having in everything acted vigorously and courageously along with the Holy Spirit, He assumed it as a partner with it. For this conduct of the flesh pleased Him, because it was not defiled on the earth while having the Holy Spirit. He took, therefore, as fellow-councillors His Son and the glorious angels, in order that this flesh, which had been subject to the body without a fault, might have some place of tabernacle, and that it might not appear that the reward [of its servitude had been lost], for the flesh that has been found without spot or defilement, in which the Holy Spirit dwelt, [will receive a reward].²⁸⁰

The flesh will not be lost, because of the immaculate conduct of the flesh and its journey in cooperation with the Spirit. However, the journey continues until the Church is finally built. As in *Barnabas*, the world here and now is still like 'winter', where even the righteous 'do not manifest themselves, because they dwell

²⁷⁶ Ibid., vis. 3:3.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., sim. 8:16.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., vis. 3:8.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., sim. 2.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., sim. 5:5–6.

with sinners'.²⁸¹ *Hermas*, too, gives no indication of a pre-eschatological joy. 'The just, and they who have walked carefully in a pure heart, and have kept the commandments of the Lord' can be assumed to exist, but are not singled out.²⁸² Not yet. In another passage *Hermas* comes back to the explanation of the Son's nature:

The Son of God is older than all His creatures, so that He was a fellow-councillor with the Father in His work of creation: for this reason He is old ... He became manifest in the last days of the dispensation: ... that they who are to be saved by it might enter into the kingdom of God ... A man cannot otherwise enter into the kingdom of God than by the name of His beloved Son ... If you bear His name but possess not His power, it will be in vain that you bear His name ... Having received, then, these spirits, they were made strong, and were with the servants of God; and theirs was one spirit, and one body, and one clothing. For they were of the same mind, and wrought righteousness.²⁸³

The Son of God is the pre-existent fellow-councillor of the Father, a reminiscence of *Gen. 2:4f.* where it is said in the plural that God spoke, 'Let us make ...', one of the few references in *Hermas* to the Scriptures. The text also reminds us of the incarnation, or more precisely the manifestation 'in the last days' of the *oikonomia*, the dispensation. We are in the times of the eschaton, although the eschaton has not ended yet.

Hermas shows no acquaintance whatsoever with Paul,²⁸⁴ quite noticeable for a writing that derives from Rome; and where the text spells out the different names of the Son, 'the Risen' is not among them: Faith, Contenance, Power, Patience, Simplicity, Innocence, Purity, Cheerfulness, Truth, Understanding, Harmony, Love. 'He who bears these names and that of the Son of God will be able to enter into the kingdom of God'.²⁸⁵

Similar to *Hermas* in this respect is another text, a homily, called by convention *2Clement*. Again, neither date nor location can be ascertained (120-60 AD?),²⁸⁶ although it has been suggested that the text is 'addressed to Christian converts, without doubt at Rome in the second quarter of the second century'.²⁸⁷

Christ is called the 'judge of the living and the dead' who 'in His compassion saved us, having beheld in us much error and perdition, even when we had no hope of salvation, save that which came from Him. For He called us, when we were not, and from not being He willed us to be'.²⁸⁸ He is 'rewarding each according to his

²⁸¹ Ibid., sim. 3.

²⁸² Ibid., sim. 8:3.

²⁸³ Ibid., sim. 8:12-13.

²⁸⁴ See A. Lindemann, *Paulus* (1999), 255-6.

²⁸⁵ *Herm.* sim. 8:15.

²⁸⁶ See A.J. Bellinzoni, 'Overview' (2005), 63.

²⁸⁷ E. Puech, *Croyance* (1993), 295.

²⁸⁸ *2Clem.* 1.

deeds'. The reward takes place 'in this world of the flesh', with 'flesh' not designating a body as opposed to the soul, but ascertaining that 'the eternal destiny of man' will be achieved in this world. The preacher exhorts his brothers and sisters for the eschatological coming of Christ: 'Preserve your flesh for taking part in the spirit.' The Spirit, received in baptism, endows the flesh with incorruptibility²⁸⁹ that has to be preserved by confessing, very similar to *Hermas*, and by 'doing that which He said and being not disobedient to His commandments'. We are reminded of the Jewish Shema' Israel, quoted in the Gospel as the first of the two commandments mentioned by Jesus.²⁹⁰ Eternal life will be a gift for those who do 'the will of the Father and keep the flesh pure'.²⁹¹ The ecclesiological presence of Christ is another parallel to *Hermas*. The Church has manifested itself in the flesh of Christ and is Christ's body, while Christ remains as the Church's spirit.²⁹² Even in the doxological praise at the end of the text, the author honours the one, invisible God, the Father of truth, together with 'the Saviour and Prince of immortality through whom also He made manifest unto us the truth and the heavenly life'. The culmination of the homily is this manifestation of truth and heavenly, eternal life, not the Resurrection. The resurrection of the dead is based on the incarnation of 'Christ the Lord who saved us, being first spirit, then became flesh, and so called us'.²⁹³ As we can see, both *Hermas* and *2Clement* represent a set of beliefs that is far from the one that we found in Paul. *2Clement* shares with *Hermas* its unrelativeness to Paul,²⁹⁴ and the absence of the idea of Resurrection. Instead, Peter asks Jesus the question about fear and hope for those who die. Jesus' answer is taken from an unknown source:²⁹⁵ 'Christ's promise is great and wonderful, namely the rest of the kingdom to come, and of everlasting life'.²⁹⁶

1Clement is a further text that, like *Hermas*, surely derives from Rome, as can be read in its opening address. The letter is addressed to Corinth: 'The Church of God which sojourns in Rome to the Church of God which sojourns in Corinth'.²⁹⁷

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 6:9; 9:1–6; 14:3–5.

²⁹⁰ *Mark* 12:29–30; *Deut.* 6:4–5.

²⁹¹ *2Clem.* 8:4.

²⁹² Ibid., 14:4.

²⁹³ Ibid., 9:5. See E. Puech, *Croyance* (1993), 296.

²⁹⁴ See A. Lindemann, *Paulus* (1999), 255.

²⁹⁵ See the collection of texts from this unknown Gospel in D. Lührmann and E. Schlarb, *Fragmente* (2000), 134–7 (the selection could be broadened if one took into account some content descriptions that are given in *2Clem.*).

²⁹⁶ *2Clem.* 5:5.

²⁹⁷ *1Clem.* prol. See A. Lindemann, 'Influence' (2005), 9; the dating before 100 AD is based only on the analysis of the church order and by the fact that the letter does not mention 'any persecution'; the first to ascribe this letter to 'Clement' is Bishop Dionysius of Corinth (ca. 170–174) (who also wrote against Marcion!), in Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* IV 23,11, where he reports that this letter is being read in the Sunday gathering. O. Zwierlein, GFA 140-5 suggests the years 120-5 as date of composition.

Hence, we gain another insight into the communities of Rome and Corinth – both known for their connections with Paul. How much Pauline influence has been retained in this text, how far has his theology been developed?²⁹⁸ Scholars seem to agree that 1 *Clement* ‘never used any of the written gospels’,²⁹⁹ but believe that 1 *Clement* used letters that Paul wrote to the communities at stake, namely *Romans* and 1 *Corinthians*; perhaps it even used *Hebrews*.³⁰⁰ If this were so, 1 *Clement* would be evidence that no collection of Paul’s letters was at hand, but rather single letters were circulated related to particular communities.³⁰¹

1 *Clement* mentions Paul twice by name.³⁰² In the first instance, the sole authority of Paul is lampooned, but he ranks after Peter.³⁰³ The second quote is as important as the first, as 1 *Clement* refers to ‘the *Letter* of the blessed Paul, the Apostle’.³⁰⁴ ‘What did he first write to you in the beginning of the *Gospel*?’ Interestingly, 1 *Corinthians* is equated with the Apostle’s ‘*Gospel*’, the only mention of this term, and it does not yet seem to be a description of a specific literary genus. From the mention of a ‘first’ writing, we can infer that the author probably knew of Paul’s two letters to the Corinthians.³⁰⁵

To what extent is 1 *Clement* keeping to Paul’s message? The combination of Peter and Paul already indicates that we are faced with a developed view in which Paul is packed together with and only follows Peter,³⁰⁶ contrary to Paul’s self-understanding: Paul sees himself as ‘called to be an Apostle’ neither by human tradition nor by institutional authority – certainly not secondary behind Peter – but by ‘Christ Jesus’. To Paul, the main content of his gospel is the Son’s descent from David ‘with reference to the flesh’, and more importantly, the Son’s appointment as ‘Son-of-God-in-power according to the Holy Spirit’ – the latter happening ‘by the Resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord’.³⁰⁷ *Romans* reads as if the Son’s names, Jesus Christ, our Lord, were a reference to the Son being raised from the dead. Paul’s title of ‘Apostle’ is linked to the Son’s appointment as Jesus Christ in his Resurrection.

²⁹⁸ On 1 *Clem.* and Paul see the parallels in: A.E. Barnett, *Paul* (1941), 88–104.

²⁹⁹ A.J. Bellinzoni, ‘Overview’ (2005), 54.

³⁰⁰ See A. Gregory, ‘1 *Clement*’ (2005); K. Aland, ‘Bemerkungen’ (1979), 33–6.

³⁰¹ See C.F.D. Moule, *Birth* (1966), 260.

³⁰² 1 *Clem.* 5:5–7; 47:1.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 5:4, see A. Lindemann, *Clemensbriefe* (1992), 36–40, 38; *id.*, ‘Influence’ (2005), 10 indicates that ‘the author obviously employs the rhetorical device of “Achtergewicht” – the most important person is not Peter but Paul’, against K. Beyschlag, *Clemens* (1966), 280.

³⁰⁴ 1 *Clem.* 47:1.

³⁰⁵ *Pace* A. Lindemann, *Clemensbriefe* (1992), 138 who interprets ‘first’ as ‘most important’ – but this is already indicated through ‘in the beginning’.

³⁰⁶ So A. Lindemann, ‘Influence’ (2005), 13.

³⁰⁷ *Rom.* 1:1–5.

By now, the reader will not be astonished to find none of these features in *1Clement*. Moreover, where the letter mentions the 'Apostolic succession', Paul is missing; instead, 'the Apostles' in the plural are the receivers of the Gospel 'from the Lord'.³⁰⁸ Even, if, as some scholars assume, Paul were subsumed among these Apostles (if so, why is his name missing?), he has become one amongst others.³⁰⁹

From early on in the letter, the author is occupied with 'our salvation', which he sees as being brought about by Christ's sacrifice.³¹⁰ At the end of a long midrash (similar to Stephen's speech in *Acts*) running through the books of Moses, selecting the splendours of God's saving acts and choice of actors and prophets, the author summarizes the first 20 chapters of this letter, confessing that 'we have taken refuge in his [God's] compassionate mercies'.³¹¹ Only a little later, the author has to respond to people who had been waiting for the Lord's return, but who disappointedly turned away saying: 'These things we did hear in the days of our fathers also, and behold we have grown old, and none of these things has befallen us.'³¹² The author of *1Clement* retorts with an eschatological outlook that 'the Master continually shows to us the resurrection that shall be hereafter'³¹³ and points to Paul's timeline in *1Cor.* 15:20:³¹⁴ 'The Lord Jesus Christ' has been made 'the first-fruit, when God raised Him from the dead',³¹⁵ a 'depressive',³¹⁶ 'almost marginal mention of the Resurrection of Christ'³¹⁷ without reference to Paul's Resurrection message from the beginning of the same chapter in *1Cor.* 15. 'No word from the Resurrection narratives of the Gospels resp. no mention of them, neither quote nor even a reference nor even a hint to one of the related terms or stories'.³¹⁸ To back the reality of the resurrection of the dead, the author launches, instead, an 'apology for the reality of the future resurrection'³¹⁹ with a whole variety of samples and arguments: the changing seasons, the falling of night and coming of daybreak, the sowing of fruits, the phoenix, followed by three testimonies from the Jewish

³⁰⁸ *1Clem.* 42:1–4. See A. Lindemann, 'Influence' (2005), 11; id., *Clemensbriefe* (1992), 125–6.

³⁰⁹ *1Clem.* 42:1–2; see more on this below.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7:4.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 20:11–12; R.M. Hübner made me kindly aware that the merciful saviour in *1Clement* is always God, not Christ.

³¹² *1Clem.* 23:3; see also *2Clem.* 11:2–4; a similar question was also raised by *2Peter* 3:4: 'Where is his promised return? For ever since our ancestors died, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation.'

³¹³ *1Clem.* 23:5; 24:1.

³¹⁴ 'Now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep', see also *Col.* 1:18: 'The firstborn from among the dead'.

³¹⁵ *1Clem.* 24:1.

³¹⁶ K. Aland, 'Bemerkungen' (1979), 30.

³¹⁷ R. Staats, 'Auferstehung II/2' (1979), 517.

³¹⁸ K. Aland, 'Bemerkungen' (1979), 30.

³¹⁹ H.E. Lona, *Auferstehung* (1993), 23.

Scriptures.³²⁰ We encounter the earliest testimony for a corporeal resurrection of the dead in Christian literature,³²¹ but there is no further allusion to Christ's bodily Resurrection or his appearances to substantiate that corporeality.³²²

Despite reference to *1 Corinthians*, *1 Clement's* eschatological interim is different from Paul's. 'Even if it is true that the wonderful gifts of God are already reality in the present time',³²³ the appearance of the kingdom of Christ is something to come.³²⁴ Jesus is no longer an essential turning point in the history of salvation. Instead, the prototypes of the Old Testament have become role models. God is the heavenly Lord and King of the aeons,³²⁵ upon whom the entire order of the creation, even the political, depends. His eschatological reign is still expected.³²⁶ The Resurrection has been reduced to support the reality of the resurrection of the dead, but the gap between Paul's realized eschatology and the stretched time of the non-eschatological present with an outstanding eschatological future is widening. Salvation becomes a liturgical rite: 'Even Jesus Christ the High Priest of our offerings, the Guardian and Helper of our weakness', is shown in 'the sacrifice of praise'.³²⁷ This sacrifice, however, does not refer to the Eucharist, but is based on 'the sacrifices and services' that are offered 'at the appointed times' in the temple of Jerusalem as 'things the Master has commanded us to perform'.³²⁸ *1 Clement* re-ritualizes Paul's gospel, contrasted only 'a few decades later ... in Ignatius, Barnabas and Justin' with not only 'the opposite attitude toward Jewish institutions, but also the first timid references to the resurrection, which is presented as an added or secondary reason for Sunday worship'.³²⁹

In *1 Clement*, Christ's Resurrection is known, but no longer serves to secure Paul's authority over and against the 'other apostles'; it now assures precisely the authority of these very apostles, no longer that of Paul. They are the one who preach 'everywhere in country and town' – there is no division between a mission to the Jews and another to the Gentiles:

The Apostles received the Gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ was sent forth from God. So then Christ is from God, and the Apostles are from Christ. Both therefore came of the will of God in the appointed order. Having therefore received a charge, and having been fully assured through the Resurrec-

³²⁰ First a combination of *Ps.* 27:7b and *Ps.* 87:11 (LXX), second a combination of *Ps.* 3:6 and *Ps.* 22:4b; and third *Job* 19:26.

³²¹ See H.E. Lona, *Auferstehung* (1993), 23–4.

³²² *1 Clem.* 24:2–25:5.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 35:1.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 50:3; see 42:3.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 61:2.

³²⁶ H.E. Lona, *Auferstehung* (1993), 26.

³²⁷ *1 Clem.* 35:4, 12–36:1.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 40:2–4. See S. Bacchiocchi, *Sabbath* (1977), 79.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 80.

tion of our Lord Jesus Christ and confirmed in the word of God with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they went forth with the glad tidings that the kingdom of God should come. So preaching everywhere in country and town, they appointed their firstfruits, when they had proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons unto them that should believe.³³⁰

Contrary to Paul's message, the charismatic dispensation of the Spirit is replaced by an appointed, hierarchical order (God – Christ – Apostles – bishops and deacons), a form of 'Apostolic succession' with an institutionalizing tendency, reassured through the Resurrection, dispensing of Paul. 1 *Clement* 'lacks a real sense for the Resurrection',³³¹ and does not 'show signs of an intensive interest in an explicit use of Paul, either of his letters or of his theology', nor does the letter 'demonstrate an interest in a "critical discussion" of Pauline theology'.³³²

Sacrifice and Eternal Life in non-Pauline Writings

Although in a very different vein than Paul,³³³ the three Johannine letters (1–3 *John*) endorse a trajectory in which salvation and eternal life are connected with the Lord Jesus Christ, but where, as mentioned above on *John*, the significant role is played not by the Resurrection, but by other theological elements: incarnation, revelation and the communion of love.³³⁴ Jesus Christ as incarnate λόγος (Logos) 'is eternal life'.³³⁵

1–3 *John* locate themselves in a post-Easter environment, hinting at the scenario when Jesus revealed himself to his disciples, and especially to Thomas: 'We proclaim to you: what was from the beginning', a reference to the opening of *John* (1:1) and *Genesis* (1:1), 'what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and our hands have touched'. We are on the post-Resurrection stage with a background noise of *John*, the word of life, 'and life was revealed, and we have seen and testify and announce to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us'.³³⁶ The good news centres on the God of light and the darkness of sin, but also the cleansing power of Jesus' blood in his sacrifice:

³³⁰ 1 *Clem.* 42:1–3.

³³¹ H. Lietzmann, *Geschichte* (4th 1975), I 207.

³³² A. Lindemann, 'Influence' (2005), 24.

³³³ Although see the parallels between the *Letters of John* and Paul's letters in: A.E. Barnett, *Paul* (1941), 142–52.

³³⁴ See J. Terence Forestell, *Cross* (1974), 169.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

³³⁶ 1 *John* 1:1–2.

The one who does not love remains in death. Everyone who hates his fellow Christian is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him. We have come to know love by this: that Jesus laid down his life for us; thus we ought to lay down our lives for our fellow Christians.³³⁷

The brutal reality of a bloody sacrifice is the opening of the more consoling message of love that today is more often quoted than its precondition:

The person who does not love does not know God, because God is love. By this the love of God is revealed in us: that God has sent his one and only Son into the world so that we may live through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.³³⁸

The contrast, if not paradox, is made of light that shines in the darkness or life through the sacrifice of death – topics strongly reminiscent of the letters of *Hebrews*, *Barnabas*, *James* and *Jude*:

Now this is the gospel message we have heard from him and announce to you: God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all ... If we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.³³⁹

As in *Jude*, *1John* can summarize this message with ‘eternal life’.³⁴⁰ Of course, we are not far away from the idea of the Resurrection, but the text speaks of promise, hope, perseverance, not of this one step beyond death.³⁴¹ It seems a tiny divide, but it makes all the difference with the insistence on life, burdened by sin on this side of the eschaton, life under the auspices of the final day and this definite future, where Christians are aware that not only Christ, the Messiah, is coming, but also ‘the antichrist’, and the ‘many antichrists’.³⁴² ‘The inner relationship between revelation, eternal life, and faith in the person of Jesus is much closer in the epistle than in the gospel. ... As in the gospel, so too in the epistle, eternal life is a communion of Father, Son and disciples in knowledge and in love. God has given us this life by giving us his Son, Jesus Christ.’³⁴³

³³⁷ Ibid., 3:14–6.

³³⁸ Ibid., 4:8–10.

³³⁹ Ibid., 1:5–7.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 2:25.

³⁴¹ Ibid., 3:2.

³⁴² Ibid., 2:18.

³⁴³ J. Terence Forestell, *Cross* (1974), 171–2.

After Paul,³⁴⁴ *Revelation* is our oldest canonical witness to the Lord's day,³⁴⁵ a very special day too, as it was on that day that the author experienced his revelation and was asked to write down his vision in a book.³⁴⁶

Compared to other apocalyptic writings, *Revelation* opens with a breathtaking vision 'in the Spirit on the Lord's Day' – the voice that spoke to John, the voice of the 'one like a son of man' with all the glamorous garments, 'a robe extending down to his feet', 'a wide golden belt around his chest', with his head and hair 'white as wool, even as white as snow', but also the frightening elements of 'a loud voice like a trumpet' and 'his eyes like a fiery flame', the 'sharp double-edged sword extended out of his mouth'. No other New Testament writer provides us with such a detailed description of the eschatological revelation of Jesus Christ, who 'is returning with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes on the earth will mourn because of him'.³⁴⁷ The supernatural, luminous form of the crucified reminds us of how *Acts* 9:3–7 describes Paul's revelatory vision.³⁴⁸ Christ is the one to whom God gave the revelation 'to show his servants what must happen very soon', 'because the time is near!'³⁴⁹

The vision of the eschatological figure that looked 'like a son of man' and is later called the 'Son of God'³⁵⁰ is a message from the Lord God, the 'one who is, and who was, and who is still to come – the All-Powerful', who said 'I am the Alpha and the Omega', a message and testimony about Jesus Christ. He is 'the faithful witness, the firstborn from among the dead, the ruler over the kings of the earth'.³⁵¹ The notion of the 'firstborn from among the dead' embedded in an eschatological context as in *Colossians* (1:18) is reminiscent of rebirth, eternal life, but is not further developed into a Resurrection imagery. On the contrary, the setting is sacrificial, 'the cost of his own blood', he is 'the Lamb who was killed' and to whom the 'book of life belongs'.³⁵² Death brings life and is the salvific act,³⁵³ death that we do not need to fear: 'Do not be afraid!', because he is alive: 'I am the first and the last, and the one who lives! I was dead, but look, now I am alive – forever and ever – and I hold the keys of death and of Hades!'³⁵⁴ Christ who saved us

³⁴⁴ 1Cor. 11:20; *Phil.* 1:6,10; 2Cor. 1:14; 1Cor. 16:2; see R. Bauckham, 'Lord's day' (1982), 222–3, who speaks of the 'rarity of the word ('the Lord's' or 'the Lord's day') in the New Testament'.

³⁴⁵ *Rev.* 1:10.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1:10–20.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1:7.

³⁴⁸ See E.H. Pagels, 'Visions' (1978), 419; on the relation between Paul's letters and *Rev.* see A.E. Barnett, *Paul* (1941), 41–51.

³⁴⁹ *Rev.* 1:1.3.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 2:18.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1:4–6.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 13:8.

³⁵³ See also the parallel in *ibid.*, 5:9–14.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:17–8.

through his death appeared to its author John.³⁵⁵ He is the living Christ, ‘the Holy One, the True One, who holds the key of David, who opens doors no one can shut, and shuts doors no one can open’.³⁵⁶ This sounds like an allusion of *Revelation* at the encounter scene in *John* between the Risen Christ and the disciples who had locked themselves in, ‘on the evening of that day, the first day of the week’,³⁵⁷ an encounter in which the disciples are sent to ‘forgive anyone’s sins’.³⁵⁸ It is the parallel story to *Luke* 24:36–43 that we shall discuss in more detail below. Yet, it is not the Resurrection but Christ’s death that is core, his blood that makes living be ‘forever and ever’.³⁵⁹ When John paints the picture of a ‘woman clothed with the sun, and with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars’,³⁶⁰ he continues that ‘the woman gave birth to a son, a male child, who is going to rule over all the nations with an iron rod’. Her child did not rise from the tomb, but was ‘suddenly caught up to God and to his throne’,³⁶¹ similar to *Hebrews* in an ascension rather than a Resurrection.

Having received this personal revelation about the eschatological future in Patmos on a particular day, the Lord’s day, John became endowed with authority comparable to that of Paul drawn from his apocalyptic experience of the Lord.³⁶² The author deduces from this encounter an immediate criticism of those ‘who refer to themselves as Apostles (but are not), and have discovered that they are false’, put ‘to the test’ by the Lord.³⁶³ Why are they criticized, if those who called themselves ‘Apostles’ persisted, perhaps even suffered martyrdom? John relates:

I have this against you: You have departed from your first love! Therefore, remember from what high state you have fallen and repent! Do the deeds you did at the first; if not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place – that is, if you do not repent.³⁶⁴

John is not referring to theological errors, but to ethical misbehaviour, eating food sacrificed to idols or worshipping the temple, whereas the eschatological new Jerusalem will be without any such building, ‘because the Lord God – the All-Powerful – and the Lamb are its temple’.³⁶⁵

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 1:17–9.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 3:7.

³⁵⁷ So *John* 20:19.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 20:23.

³⁵⁹ See *Rev.* 11:15.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 12:1.

³⁶¹ Ibid., 12:5. See G. Bertram, ‘Himmelfahrt’ (1927).

³⁶² *Rev.* 2:8.

³⁶³ Ibid., 2:2.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 2:4–5.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 21:22, see 2:20–21.

As with many other texts that we have discussed so far, unfortunately, it is equally unclear when and where the canonical epistles of *James* and *Jude* were written, although there are good reasons to believe that they stem from the second century, because of their non-acquaintance with canonical Gospels. They inform about salvation, but do not refer to the Resurrection.

A first example is the canonical letter of *James*. Who was James? The writer does not make an explicit link to the historical Jesus, nor does he play on his namesake's sibblingship to Jesus, nor to the Christian Jewish community of Jerusalem, all of which makes it quite unlikely that the author consciously or even unconsciously used a pseudonym to enhance the authority of the letter or to play the James trump card. On the contrary, consistent with his message that the humble must take pride in his humility, which will turn into a 'high position', James praises himself for being a 'slave of Christ'.³⁶⁶ Although he indirectly admits that he is a teacher, he warns his fellows of even aspiring to become teachers, because 'you know that we [the teachers] will be judged more strictly'. Teachers, as he concedes, do not have more wisdom or knowledge, as 'all stumble in many ways'. Just as one directs horses by putting bits into their mouths to get them to obey, or as one steers ships against 'harsh winds ... by a tiny rudder', so 'the tongue' as a small part of the body 'has great pretensions'.³⁶⁷ The paradox of being both humble and proud, poor and rich, teacher and audience, also applies to life and death.

For the sun rises with its heat and dries up the meadow; the petal of the flower falls off and its beauty is lost forever. So also the rich person in the midst of his pursuits will wither away. Happy is the one who endures testing, because when he has proven to be genuine, he will receive the crown of life that God promised to those who love him.³⁶⁸

What then, we might ask this teacher, is the crown of life that we gain through enduring – an indication of a theology of martyrdom? He points to the 'message of truth' from 'the Father of lights'³⁶⁹ – for us today a strange sounding name for God, but more familiar to Jewish ears as they conceived of God as the one who cares for us through his radiating light, the *Shehina*. Creation and re-creation are one act, as God's plan changes as little as he himself is subject to change. The lesson from this paradoxical plan is that little people are big and Abraham is judged on the same basis as the prostitute Rahab.³⁷⁰

The canonical letter of *Jude* is in many ways similar to and relies on *James* (with clear parallels with and most likely a source for *2Peter*³⁷¹). The author plays

³⁶⁶ *James* 1:9.1.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 3:1–5.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1:11–12.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1:17–18.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 2:23–5.

³⁷¹ See G.H. Boobyer, 'Indebtedness' (1958), 34.

on the name of James and his brotherly relation to him, and draws from James his own authority. The apostolization has clearly developed since the writing of James and explains not only the parallel openings of *Jude* and *James*, but also some more references to *James*. When *Jude* warns against enemies, he quotes the same nautical and weather imageries found in *James*, and underlines that his own letter stands in the same apostolic tradition. *Jude* read *James* against the background indicated by its author's name, namely the family connection to Jesus:

From Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who are called, wrapped in the love of God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ.³⁷²

Jude's first topic is 'our common salvation', which he has to defend against unknown 'ungodly men who have turned the grace of our God into a license for evil and who deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ'.³⁷³ From the rather short letter of *Jude* we cannot gain a profile sufficient to get a clearer picture of those men. They surely were baptized Christians, as they had received 'the grace of our God', although they must have sinned badly for *Jude* to call them 'ungodly'. He threatens them with the example of Jesus' blow against the unbelieving Egyptians. A few characteristics are given: 'These men, as a result of their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and insult the glorious ones.' Again, we do not know what kind of nightly visions are meant, what kind of sexual sins, whose authorities they did not accept, although it seems that they were not unsuccessful teachers as they gave 'bombastic speeches, enchanting folks for their own gains'.³⁷⁴ More important for our purpose is *Jude's* counter-message when he points to the Holy Spirit:

You, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith, by praying in the Holy Spirit, maintain yourselves in the love of God, while anticipating the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that brings eternal life.³⁷⁵

Prayer, love and anticipation of mercy bring eternal life. As in *James*, there is no reference to the Resurrection.³⁷⁶

The *Didache* is our oldest extant catechism, although we do know neither for which community, nor when it was written. 'Few today would date the text much later than the middle of the second century CE.'³⁷⁷ It is certainly 'one of the most

³⁷² *Jude* 1:1–2.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 1:3–4.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:5.8.16.

³⁷⁵ *Jude* 1:20–21.

³⁷⁶ See also the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* I 27–71 where James is prominent at the expense of Paul: see F. Stanley Jones, *Source* (1995), 166–7.

³⁷⁷ C.M. Tuckett, '*Didache*' (2005), 86¹⁸; on the *Didache* (text, study and literature) see *La Doctrine des Douze Apôtres (Didachè)*, ed. Rordorf/Tuilier (1978).

suggestive texts of Christian antiquity',³⁷⁸ and provides a good lead into the question of what of Paul's gospel had been preserved in a Christian community. The *Didache* introduces its readers to beliefs, customs (purity, baptism, fasting, the Lord's prayer, the Eucharist, the Lord's day, eschatological judgement), posts and people (teachers, apostles, prophets, guests, travellers, bishops, deacons) of the growing Church. Most scholars assume that the text originates not from Rome, but rather from Syria. While *Barnabas* closes with a teaching about the two ways, the *Didache* opens with it, in parts literally parallel to *Barnabas*. No canonical writings seem to be known.³⁷⁹

The text speaks about the resurrection of the dead, but 'contrary to Paul, the author does not make any link' to Christ's Resurrection.³⁸⁰ This is all the more surprising as the *Didache* writes about the Lord's day and quotes the thanksgiving prayers of the Eucharist.³⁸¹ 'The broken bread' is thanked 'for the life and knowledge which God made known to us through his Son Jesus'. Knowledge is the key of life, embedded in a Church that as the 'broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and being gathered together' has 'become one', so that 'the glory and the power through Jesus Christ' is given 'for ever and ever'.³⁸² Reference is made to Jesus and his holy name that resides in the hearts, and provides knowledge, faith and immortality.³⁸³ The broken and scattered bread is ecclesiastically brought together in the celebration of the community, but there is no allusion to his Resurrection.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 11.

³⁷⁹ See *ibid.*, 84 (with further lit.).

³⁸⁰ E. Puech, *Croyance* (1993), 294; S. Bacchiocchi, *Sabbath* (1977), 78–9.

³⁸¹ See C. Claussen, 'Eucharist' (2005); see more on the *Didache* and the Lord's day below.

³⁸² *Did.* 9.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 10.

Chapter 2

Paul and the Resurrection Rediscovered

The Pauline heritage of belief in the Resurrection of Christ had faded over time.¹ Fathers of the first and second century ‘remained reluctant’ towards Easter stories, indeed many ‘are silent about them’; for a long time, however, it has been seen that authors who wrote later in the second century placed the Resurrection right in the centre of their thinking.² Similarly, up to the mid-second century, the celebrations of Sunday and Easter did not focus on Christ’s Resurrection, as we shall see in the next chapter, but were celebrations of his salvific sacrificial death, while in the second half of the second century evidence for a first reticent and later more wholehearted inclusion of the Resurrection theme in both forms of worship can be noticed.³ What happened around the mid-second century that can explain this development in belief and ritual?

Marcion of Sinope,⁴ a *Paulus redivivus* and certainly the greatest Christian thinker of the second century, was instrumental in the rediscovery of Paul that also gave rise to the belief in the Resurrection of Christ. ‘Immediately after Marcion, the Church did not only factually embrace the Pauline tradition, but now, it did so too on the basis of a theoretical foundation’.⁵

The instantaneous reaction of the Church comes as no surprise. So far, we have drawn up a fractured picture of the Pauline heritage, with people either entirely ignorant of him, or heirs of varying loyalty to him. There were those who cared and debated the precise nature of his literary heritage, who transmitted, copied and interpreted his letters, while others disputed the authenticity of particular letters, or created pseudonymous ones in his name to seem more Pauline than Paul. But we have to wait for Marcion to find a rigorous disciple of Paul who tried to relate his entire Christian belief to the Apostle.

Born in Pontus, in the north of what today is Turkey, presumably in the city of Sinope,⁶ the eastern main port and headquarters of the Roman Navy and also ‘the home town of the famous Cynic philosopher, Diogenes’,⁷ Marcion was a rich

¹ W. Schneemelcher, ‘Paulus’ (1964), 3–4, 13–20.

² R. Staats, ‘Auferstehung II/2’ (1979), 522–3.

³ On Sunday and Easter see more below.

⁴ See now S. Moll, *The Arch-Heretic* (2010).

⁵ A. Lindemann, *Paulus* (1979), 378.

⁶ See S. Moll, ‘Three’ (2008), 177.

⁷ H. Räisänen, ‘Marcion’ (2005), 102.

mariner, an influential shipowner and international merchant.⁸ He grew up in a region of learned Judaism, where Jewish communities had long existed. Aquila, Paul's co-worker, came from this area,⁹ 'as did his later namesake, the proselyte Aquila, who became known as translator of the Hebrew Bible (and was actually a contemporary of Marcion).'¹⁰

When after 140 AD Marcion moved to Rome and joined the local Christian community to become a teacher there,¹¹ he endowed the Church with 200,000 sesterces,¹² roughly the annual salary of the head of the Roman navy in Sinope.¹³ Rome was a city of Greek, Roman, Jewish and Christian diversity. Communities were independent and congregated in private homes, 'in these small circles' with 'diverse opinions'¹⁴ Marcion set up his own classroom¹⁵ and, as was typical for intellectual bold thinkers, engaged in discussions with fellow teachers. The influx and outgoings of commercial people, soldiers, civil servants, tourists, teachers, students, emigrants and immigrants were quite the norm in the Roman capital.¹⁶ Justin Martyr (originally from Samaria),¹⁷ for example, who had gone through the most important philosophical schools, arrived there around the same time and established a Christian philosophical classroom. The Christian Valentinus had come shortly before Marcion and did likewise.¹⁸ Teachers were keen to attract pupils: Marcion won Apelles, Potitus, Basiliskus and Syneros, to name a few we still know of;¹⁹ Valentinus attracted pupils such as Ptolemy and Heracleon; Justin was joined by Tatian, who called his master 'the most admirable'²⁰ and

⁸ See Rhodon, in: Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* V 13,3; on this topic see G. May, "'Schiffsreeder'" (1989); his business means that he was well placed in the city of Sinope with its prime port.

⁹ *Acts* 18:2.

¹⁰ H. Räisänen, 'Marcion' (2005), 102.

¹¹ Marcion's letter (Tert., *Adv. Marc.* I 1,6, IV 4,3; *De carne* II 4) might relate to his coming to Rome. Then, Tertullian's whole argument that (a) Marcion's pupils did not acknowledge the letter, and (b) that the letter is a proof for Tertullian that Marcion once belonged to the Roman community, makes better sense, *pace* S. Moll, *The Arch-Heretic* (2010), 115–18.

¹² Tert., *De praesc.* 30.

¹³ See B. Aland, 'Marcion/Marcioniten' (1992), 90.

¹⁴ H. Räisänen, 'Marcion' (2005), 102.

¹⁵ G. Kretschmar, 'Passa' (1972), 314 shows that the differentiation between 'school' and 'community' is blurred during the 2nd cent. AD.

¹⁶ See M. Vinzent, 'Rome' (2006); P. Lampe, 'Early Christians' (2004).

¹⁷ For more on him and other teachers competing with Marcion at Rome, see below.

¹⁸ See Iren., *Adv. haer.* III 4,3; Irenaeus does not know of his Egyptian background, which is only reported later in the fourth century by Epiph., *Pan.* XXXI 7–12, see I. Dunderberg, 'Teachers' (2004); C. Marksches, *Valentinus* (1992).

¹⁹ See the report in Rhodon, preserved by Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* V 13,4.

²⁰ Tat., *Or.* 18; Iren., *Adv. haer.* I 28,1; on Tatian, see W.L. Petersen, 'Tatian' (2005).

generated his own pupil Rhodon.²¹ Other cities of learning had developed similar philosophical schools;²² we need only mention Alexandria, with the famous Basilides and his pupil and son Isidorus.²³ Marcion, however, is called ‘the older amongst his younger contemporaries’.²⁴

The range of teachers was prone to create rifts, but a picture that emphasizes intellectual battles without acknowledging the daily norm of intellectually stimulating exchange is anachronistic. Recently, scholars have given more attention to knowledge transfer between classrooms.²⁵ As in today’s academic worlds, the most inventive masters were not only the most disputed but also the most stimulating and trend setting, those whom others spoke of and learned from most, despite or rather in the midst of controversies. ‘Rivals often influence one another to a much greater extent than they’ – and scholars – ‘are aware’.²⁶ And, conversely, ‘acrimony blooms between those who would otherwise have been allies’.²⁷ Even Irenaeus in faraway Gaul still engaged with his Roman opponents and read their books.²⁸

Another master who was both divisive and indebted to those whom he opposed was the above-mentioned Justin. He fell out primarily with Marcion,²⁹ but his pupil Tatian continued the debate even into the second generation. Both were deeply influenced by their target. Justin had adopted Marcion’s concept of written Christian scriptures and had departed from relying on oral tradition.³⁰ Tatian – like Marcion – ‘would do away with the law, as originating from another God’,³¹ but embraced the ‘imagining of certain invisible Aeons like those of Valentinus’.³² No wonder that he was called a pupil of Valentinus’ school,³³ but also accused of

²¹ See Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* V 13,1.

²² See Iren., *Adv. haer.* I 24,1.

²³ See Justin, *Dial.* 35,6; W. Löhr, *Basilides* (1996).

²⁴ Clem. Alex., *Strom.* VII 16,107,1.

²⁵ See H. Langerbeck, ‘Auseinandersetzung’ (1956 = 1967); M. Edwards, *Catholicity* (2009). According to J. Lieu, ‘Christ’ (2010), Tertullian and Marcion have ‘much in common’ both in ‘style and ethics’ (*ibid.*, 46) and ‘exegetical method’, interpreting ‘Paul by Paul’ and ‘drawing out from the Pauline text the activity of God’ as Creator (*ibid.*, 57). On philosophical classrooms (incl. Christians) see C. Marksches, ‘Lehrer’ (2002) with further lit.

²⁶ G.N. Stanton, *Jesus* (2004), 54.

²⁷ M. Edwards, *Catholicity* (2009), 43.

²⁸ See Iren., *Adv. haer.* I praef.; see I. Dunderberg, ‘Teachers’ (2004), 157; Hippol., *Ref.* VI 42,1; N. Förster, *Marcus Magus* (1999), 28–9.

²⁹ P. Lampe, *Paul* (2003), 387–91.

³⁰ H. Koester, *Gospels* (1990), 37.

³¹ Clem. Alex., *Strom.* III 82,1–3; on Tatian’s inclination to Valentinian teaching see W.L. Petersen, ‘Tatian’ (2005), 148–9.

³² Iren., *Adv. haer.* I 28.

³³ Clem. Alex., *Strom.* III 13,92,1.

sharing with Marcion asceticism and encratism.³⁴ Nevertheless, Tatian's own pupil Rhodon became noted as an opponent of Marcion.³⁵ Sharing and developing, even across schools, were features of antique philosophical education, of which Christians were an integral part.³⁶

The year 144 AD marks a crucial date in the development of early Christianity. After some years of teaching in Rome, Marcion left his particular community, got back his endowment, and founded his own community. Though important, the departure was far from being a spectacular event. Moving classroom or creating one's own at a time when institutions were only just emerging was less extraordinary than it would be a few decades later, when hierarchical church structures with a single bishop had been established. Apparently, Marcion taught with great success into the times of the Roman bishop Anicet (154–165 AD).

Understanding Marcion is hindered by the same factors that impede our understanding of all those authors whose works are only preserved in fragments and transmitted by those who opposed them. If we were to uncritically follow their agenda, we would see in Marcion nothing but an ascetic arch-heretic who believed in two Gods, despised Judaism, rejected their scriptures, corrupted the New Testament and did not believe in Jesus' birth:³⁷ we are told that he taught 'to pay honour to a different god, greater than the Creator'³⁸ and that his disciples 'denied the God who made this universe'.³⁹ He 'developed his doctrine with shameless blasphemy of the God of whom the Law and the Prophets speak, saying that he is the creator of evil things'.⁴⁰ He postulated not just two, but 'three universal principles, the good, the just, and matter'.⁴¹ All this information is well known to scholars of late antiquity. Tertullian, the first important Latin author of Christianity at the turn of the second- to the third century, wrote extensive works against Marcion, of which some are preserved. In Rome, Tertullian would have had direct access to Marcion's works.

However reliable we rate the given information, we have to start from the perspectives of his opponents. Marcion was a rigorous monotheist, a Scripture-orient-

³⁴ Iren., *Adv. haer.* I 28.

³⁵ See Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* V 13,1.

³⁶ See C. Marksches, 'Lehrer' (2002), 116–17.

³⁷ See Justin's *Apology*, Irenaeus' *Against the heresies* and Hippolytus' *Refutation*; similarly Tertullian's major work *Against Marcion*, Adamantius' dialogue *On Right Faith in God*, and Epiphanius' well-known *Panarion*; see C. Marksches, 'Gnosis' (2002). Initial observations on what follows have been published in my earlier paper: 'Christ's resurrection' (1997).

³⁸ J. Lieu, 'Christ' (2010), 54 suggests that Marcion coined the term 'Creator'.

³⁹ *1Apol.* 26.

⁴⁰ Iren., *Adv. haer.* I 25,1; see Hippol., *Ref.* VII 29–31.

⁴¹ Hippol., *Ref.* X 19.

ed Christian.⁴² Even if before him a growing number of non-Jewish Christians no longer regarded the Jewish scriptures as authoritative, no Christian had replaced those with Christian books as ‘the only authentic and normative documents of Christianity and then used those documents as the basis of Christian doctrine and preaching’; Marcion made this daring step. He centred his entire thinking not on oral traditions, hearsay, liturgical or catechetical teachings, but on literature alone. He did not reject the Old Testament, but read it as the record of a disastrous world and its evil creator god, which stood in every possible way against the God of Paul’s gospel, expressed in the sayings and written narratives of Christ.⁴³

There are parallel developments in the Jewish community, where Rabbis had started to record sayings and narratives in collections, as can be seen from the discovery close to the settlement of Qumran (2nd cent. BCE – 68/73 CE)⁴⁴ of over 900 text scrolls (‘The Dead Sea Scrolls’). Or we can compare the emphasis on bringing together oral traditions in written form in the so-called Tannaitic writings such as the *Pirkei Avot*.

Literarization processes had a long history in Judaism with the slow growth of the Bible, and they continued during the time of early Christianity. As in the centuries before, both living voice and oral tradition went hand in hand with recurring attempts to preserve them in wisdom literature, poetry and historical accounts, edited on papyrus, parchment, wood, stone or other material, to hand down knowledge to later generations. Some of these writings were eventually added and integrated into what gradually formed the Hebrew *Tanak*. Luke seems to refer to this collection when he mentions in the Emmaus story that the Risen explained to his disciples the fate of the suffering Messiah: ‘Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things written about himself in all the scriptures.’⁴⁵

Together with Jewish and non-Jewish collecting and discussing of earlier writings, there existed a debate about the correct wording and authority of individual writings. It is therefore less astonishing that Christians, too, engaged in the correct transmission and understanding of authoritative texts that were meant to be read by individuals and communities, then exchanged and read by others. In what is believed to be the first preserved letter by Paul, *1Thessalonians*, it is stated that it should be read to *all* brothers (and sisters).⁴⁶ *2Corinthians* could be a collection of

⁴² A. Gregory, *Reception* (2003), 210; see also C. Marksches, ‘Gnosis’ (2002), 172–3, who shows that Marcion might even have influenced the discussion of principles in the similarly monarchian Valentinians (who, again, have been seen undeservedly as Dualists or people who believed in multiple principles).

⁴³ See the note in Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* III 11,7; D.L. Balas, ‘Use’ (1992), 38; B. Aland, ‘Marcion’ (1973), 429–33.

⁴⁴ As we know from C14-carbon analysis. On the resurrection in Qumran, see E. Puech, *Croyance* (1993).

⁴⁵ *Luke* 24:27. So A. Lindemann, ‘Brief’ (2009), 265.

⁴⁶ *1Thess.* 5:27.

Paul's letters. From *Colossians*, we have explicit reference to the practice of reading letters to different audiences and exchanging of letters between communities in Christianity:

Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters who are in Laodicea and to Nympha and the church that meets in her house. And after you have read this letter, have it read to the church of Laodicea. In turn, read the letter from Laodicea as well.⁴⁷

Potentially on the basis of an already-existing anti-Jewish collection of Paul, Marcion published his collection of ten Pauline letters (*Gal.*, 1–2*Cor.*, *Rom.*, 1–2*Thess.*, *Laodiceans* = *Eph.*, *Col.*, *Phil.*, *Philem.*)⁴⁸ and added a single Gospel, a text that has almost no other readings – although fewer verses – than those of today's canonical *Luke*. Marcion regarded his Gospel as a genuine instrument that gave light to Paul,⁴⁹ and called it not after the Lord, but after Paul through the combination of *The Gospel* with *The Apostle's*.⁵⁰ The Gospel supported the heritage of Paul, who had himself provided references to 'my Gospel' and 'our Gospel'.⁵¹ 'There is no evidence that anyone before Marcion called' a text 'Gospel', 'but all reports about Marcion agree' that he was the first to do so.⁵²

To his collection Marcion added the *Antitheses*, which he had written first or which served as his introduction⁵³ to sharpen the contrast of his 'New Testament'

⁴⁷ *Col.* 4:15–16.

⁴⁸ Note the sequence in which these letters are commented on in Tertullian, representing that of Marcion's collection; on this order (and the minor alteration in Epiphanius), see W. Schmithals, *Paul* (1972), 267–70. A similar sequence is found in the Syrian *Canon Sinaiticus* (complemented by *Hebr.* after *Rom.* and 2*Tim.* and *Tit.* after 2*Thess.*): see G. Quispel, *Marcion* (1998), 354; U. Schmid, *Marcion* (1995), 311; E.M. Becker, 'Marcion' (2002), 95, however, calls the assumption of a pre-Marcionite collection of Paulus 'speculation'.

⁴⁹ See A. Gregory, *Reception* (2003), 196–206; M. Klinghardt, "'Gesetz'" (2006), 99; J. Knox, *Marcion* (1942), 76–157.

⁵⁰ Tert., Adv. Marc. II 5, IV 3. Therefore, the later theory by Megethius in Adam., Dial. I 8 that the Gospel was 'co-written' by Christ and Paul may have some historical basis in Marcion's teaching, pace S. Moll, *The Arch-Heretic* (2010), 90.

⁵¹ 'My Gospel' in *Rom.* 2:16 (see also *Rom.* 16:25); 'our Gospel' in 2*Cor.* 4:3; 1*Thess.* 1:5; 2*Thess.* 1:8; 2:14; see also *Gal.* 1:11; H. Koester, 'Kerygma-Gospel' (1986), 376.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 376.

⁵³ See *ibid.*, 114 and the problem of translating 'praestrueudo'.

in opposition to the Jewish Old Testament.⁵⁴ In this sense, the Old Testament provided the negative basis on which Marcion built his collection.⁵⁵

Unfortunately we do not know from where Marcion got his collection of Paul's letters and the Gospel,⁵⁶ nor how widespread were the writings of Paul and other Christian authors at this time. Marcion is our first witness for and, in all likelihood, the trigger that sparked the concept of the 'new heritage' set against the 'old heritage' of Israel. Tertullian, our key source, reports in his *Against Marcion* (IV 6,1):⁵⁷

Certainly the whole of the work he has done, including the prefixing [or the prior writing/publication] of his *Antitheses*, he directs to the one purpose of setting up opposition between the *Old Testament* and the *New*, and thereby putting his Christ in separation from the Creator, as belonging to another god, and having no connection with the Law and the Prophets.

Marcion seems to have coined the title 'New Testament' for his collection, for which he was at least the editor and publisher and, as we shall see, probably more:

Given the importance ... which the Marcionite definition of Christianity as a 'new' religion played in the *Antitheses*, it appears ... quite likely that the 'opposition between the Old Testament and the New' in this work to which Tertullian refers was not only one of content, but also of terminology. Hence Marcion himself probably spoke explicitly of the opposition of the 'New Testament' and the 'Old'. Now one of the main characteristics of Marcion's exegesis was its literalism. And since ... [testament] referred, therefore, to a written document, there is a strong case for suggesting that Marcion ... thought of ... such a document.⁵⁸

Indeed, Tertullian

only makes sense, if he was aware of the existence of two bodies of writings called 'Old Testament' and 'New Testament'. He feels uneasy about these designations, because they seem to imply a difference in authorship (as Marcion indeed claimed). Here, however, he could not avoid dealing with them (as he does in so many other places when referring to the Bible) because Marcion himself spoke of his canon as a 'New Testament' to underline the gulf that separated

⁵⁴ Tert., *Adv. Marc.* IV 3; more precisely between the Gospel and the Old Testament, as Tertullian does not refer to the *Antitheses* with regard to Marcion's interpretation of Paul, see J. Lieu, 'Christ' (2010), 47.

⁵⁵ See one of the core theses of S. Moll, *The Arch-Heretic* (2010). I cannot follow, however, the idea that the importance of the Old Testament minimizes the role of Paul and the Gospel in Marcion.

⁵⁶ See U. Schmid, *Marcion* (1995), 284–305.

⁵⁷ See W. Kinzig, 'Κατινή διαθήκη' (1994).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 538.

the creator God from the God of Christ ... Tertullian never used *testamentum* in this sense before he wrote his anti-Marcionite work. This is precisely because he adopted this manner of referring to the Bible [from Marcion].⁵⁹

In referring to a 'New Testament' or the 'Gospel',⁶⁰ Marcion had only developed Paul's own terminology further: 'For to this very day, the same veil remains when they hear the *old covenant* read. It has not been removed because only in Christ is it taken away.'⁶¹ Because of the Marcionite promotion of these titles, 'Gospel', 'New' and 'Old' Testament', they were only reluctantly accepted by other teachers.⁶² Can we find out more about this first witness, editor and publisher of the 'New Testament'?⁶³

The Making of the New Testament

Let us start with an odd fact: Paul, who, as we know, wrote letters around the middle of the first century, appears by name and is quoted and sometimes criticized in the extant early Christian literature prior to Marcion. Although his theology is not fully grasped, he himself and his written works are still remembered, and even directly referred to, albeit that he was certainly not an author who dominated Christian literature at that time.

In contrast, recent scholarship on the reception of the later canonical Gospels and Acts up to Irenaeus (ca. 177/180 AD) shows that neither these texts, nor any of their narratives (the miracles, for example), nor their authors, were ever quoted, acknowledged or referred to by any author prior to Marcion; and even after Marcion, Justin, for example, who clearly knows so-called Gospels, uses only sayings of the Lord, not the Gospels' narratives.⁶⁴ When Justin comes to explain Jesus' passion, he mixes Jesus' sayings with Old Testament quotes to construct narrative interjections himself. Only in his 'intellectual response to Marcion' does Irenaeus, who had links to Rome and knew Justin, begin to quote the four Gospels, *Acts* and Pauline letters.⁶⁵ After Irenaeus, it is Justin's pupil Tatian, who in Rome had links with Marcionites and Valentinians, who brings together 'the four Gospels

⁵⁹ Ibid., 539–40.

⁶⁰ *Gal.* 1:6.

⁶¹ *2Cor.* 3:12–16.

⁶² Justin, Melito, Tertullian, Origen et al. See on the importance of the 'one' Christian gospel against the background of 'the gospels' of the Caesars G.N. Stanton, *Jesus* (2004), 11, 35–46.

⁶³ H. Lietzmann, *Schriften* II (1958), 17, calls the question of the making of the New Testament the 'most complicated part of church history', and what follows can only be a short sketch of what will need further details and investigations.

⁶⁴ See W. Schneemelcher, 'Paulus' (1964), 3–4.

⁶⁵ C. Mount, *Christianity* (2002), 15; B. Aland, 'Rezeption' (1989).

that were known in Rome in those days' into a single Gospel harmony, his *Diatessaron*.⁶⁶

At the turn of the second- to the third century the writer of the so-called *Unknown Gospel* (PEgerton 2), interested 'in describing Jesus as a pious Jew' but also open 'to a higher christology',⁶⁷ still treats traditions or texts of *Luke* and *John* 'very freely and not as sacrosanct texts' or 'untouchable holy book[s]'.⁶⁸ The Gospel of *P.Oxy.* 840, extant in a fragment from the years 300–350 that describes 'how Jesus positioned himself to the Levitical purity',⁶⁹ knows of our four canonical Gospels, but is not bound to them.⁷⁰ Irenaeus, and in the early third century Origen, know of rich productions of Gospels,⁷¹ and of an austere selection made by the churches. In his homily on the prologue of *Luke*, Origen first accepts Marcion's criticism of the Jewish prophets, but then balances this criticism by asserting that 'others were true prophets'. He draws from this distinction that with regard to the New Testament

many have tried to write *Gospels*, but not all have found acceptance. You should know that not only four *Gospels*, but very many, were composed. The *Gospels* we have were chosen from among these *Gospels* and passed on to the churches.⁷²

Irenaeus' reliance on Christian Gospels and Paul indicates that he was prepared to accommodate more of Marcion's position and terminology than, for example, Justin, who as a contemporary of Marcion remained reticent towards the Gospel narratives and towards Paul.⁷³

How can we explain this discrepancy between the reception of Paul and that of the Gospels? Is the lack of acceptance of a Gospel narrative due only to the difference between the literary genres of Gospels and letters, the latter being sent to and from addressees with copies being circulated, while the Gospels remained restricted to a particular community? Yet Paul's letters, too, were community related.

Since the Romantic turn in the mid-nineteenth century, scholarship has gradually assumed that Marcion is a witness to an earlier existing Gospel, *Luke*, and re-

⁶⁶ T. Baarda, 'Gospels' (1989), 332.

⁶⁷ T. Nicklas, M.J. Kruger and T.J. Kraus, *Fragments* (2009), 112.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 100; a dating of this gospel to 'the first decades of the second century' (113) depends on an early dating of *John*, which seems questionable.

⁶⁹ A. v. Harnack, 'Evangelienbruchstück' (1911), 244, trans. by T. Nicklas, M.J. Kruger and T.J. Kraus, *Fragments* (2009), 164.

⁷⁰ Similar liberty in dealing with synoptic material can be seen in many other gospels; see below.

⁷¹ See Iren., *Adv. haer.* III 11,9.

⁷² Orig., *Hom. 1 in Lc.*, trans. J.T. Lienhard, *Origen* (1996), 5–6.

⁷³ 'There is not a single quote from the Pauline Corpus in Justin's writings, nor is the apostle ever mentioned' – H. Koester, 'Kerygma-Gospel' (1986), 380.

placed the idea that he relied on a form of (pre-)Luke. Whereas the former solution is now dominant, recently a heated debate has refocused on the second, asking the question, did Marcion use and cut down an already existing *Luke*-text, or had he access to an anonymous Gospel, so that *Luke* was the result of an anti-Marcionite redaction and expansion of (pre-)Luke?⁷⁴ The question could be quickly settled if we knew that *Luke* had already existed prior to Marcion. Marcion, however, is the first witness for (pre-)Luke.⁷⁵

In the case that either (pre-)Luke or *Luke* existed prior to Marcion, the question must be addressed as to why Marcion used this text, but none of the other Gospels? Did he, as has been suggested, assess the four later canonical Gospels and choose *Luke* for theological reasons, or did he make use of the Gospel that was known to him from the community in the Pontus in which he grew up?⁷⁶ Is there a connection between Paul and *Acts* that can be deduced from the emphasis that *Acts* puts on Paul? *Acts*, however, was not accepted by Marcion, and we are unsure even whether he knew *Acts* at all. Did Marcion add (pre-)Luke to Paul's letters because Paul was prominent in the *Lukan* tradition and vice versa, as can be seen from *Colossians* mentioning Luke the physicist in the entourage of Paul?⁷⁷ If Marcion knew of Luke as author of this Gospel, why did he not convey the author's name? Did he delete the name from it?

Marcion shared Paul's opinion that the Gospel was not of human origin and that there should be no other Gospel than that which Paul himself taught.⁷⁸ *Luke* places so much emphasis on the law that this fact alone would have been a major stumbling block for Marcion, as Tertullian seems correct when he makes the accusation that 'the separation of the Law and the Gospel was Marcion's main work'.⁷⁹

With these questions in mind and the noticed discrepancy in the reception of Paul and the non-reception of the Gospel narratives, we suggest taking the discussion one step further and ask, might it be the case that Marcion neither found, nor used, nor edited the Gospel, but produced it in his Roman classroom? Such a hypothesis is supported by both positive and negative evidence.

To begin with the positive evidence: an anonymous Syrian Gospel commentary knows of a Proto-Gospel written by Marcion, even giving its opening: 'O

⁷⁴ See M. Klinghardt, "'Gesetz'" (2006) and 'Markion' (2006), esp. 487; id., 'Gospel' (2008); J.B. Tyson, *Marcion* (2006); J. Knox, *Marcion* (1942) (with older lit.); criticism in D.T. Roth, 'Gospel' (2008); id., 'Texts' (2008).

⁷⁵ While scholars disagree on the use of *Matthew* in the so-called Apostolic Fathers, they substantially agree on the non-use of *Luke* before 150 AD: see A.J. Bellinzoni, 'Overview' (2005), 65–6; H. Koester, 'Kerygma-Gospel' (1986).

⁷⁶ So suggested by J.B. Tyson, *Marcion* (2006), 40, following, of course, A. Harnack; on him see A. Gregory, *Reception* (2003), 201.

⁷⁷ *Col.* 4:14.

⁷⁸ *Gal.* 1:11. See Tert., *Adv. Marc.* IV 2,3.

⁷⁹ See Tert., *Adv. Marc.* I 19,4; see M. Klinghardt, *Gesetz* (1988); id., 'Gesetz' (2006), 99.

wonderful wonder, delight, power and astonishment that we cannot speak about it [i.e. faith], think about it [i.e. faith], or compare it [i.e. faith] with anything'.⁸⁰

Throughout his books against Marcion, Tertullian again and again refers to Marcion as the *writer* of the text of his Gospel, not a Judaic but a Pontic, and the one who sets on paper the letters of Paul.⁸¹ He even gives Marcion the name 'gospel-author', or, as E. Evans translates *evangelizator* as 'gospel-maker', which accords with the Syrian commentator.⁸² Tertullian adds:

If that *Gospel* which among us is ascribed to Luke ... is the same that Marcion by his *Antitheses* accuses of having been falsified by the upholders of Judaism with a view to its being so combined in one body with the Law and the Prophets that they might also pretend that Christ had that origin, evidently he could only have brought accusation against something he had found there already. No one passes censure on things afterwards to be, when he does not know they are afterwards to be. Correction does not come before fault.⁸³

Tertullian admits that Marcion accused 'upholders of Judaism' of having falsified his Gospel to make it fit to be combined with what Marcion regarded as Old Testament, the Law and the Prophets. Marcion had neither 'found' nor abbreviated it. Tertullian, however, inverts Marcion's accusation of falsification and rhetorically retorts that *he* was passing 'censure on things'. Corrections, Tertullian concluded, would indicate that they were made on something prior, not something 'afterwards to be' (Marcion's opinion!). He draws the conclusion that his opponent should agree (which he does not!) that *Luke* was prior to Marcion's Gospel. The contrary is, of course, the basis for Tertullian's argument. Marcion, in contrast, held that, while Paul provided him with the true Gospel, which had no other name attached to it, the Judaizers had given this Gospel the name of *Luke* and 'falsified it in respect of its title' to make it 'belong to the Apostles'.⁸⁴ Rightly, Tertullian calls Marcion the one who 'has put together' the Gospel, 'a new thing of his own':

And so, by making these corrections, he assures us of two things – that ours came first, for he is correcting what he has found there already, and that that other came later which he has put together out of his corrections of ours, and so made into a new thing of his own.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ In J. Schäfers, *Erklärung* (1917), 4–5 (own trans.); S. Moll, *The Arch-Heretic* (2010), 119–20 has added good reasons that this commentary refers to Marcion's Gospel.

⁸¹ See, for example, Tert., *Adv. Marc.* IV 2.

⁸² *Ibid.*, IV 5,4.

⁸³ See his argument in *ibid.*, IV 5.

⁸⁴ Clearly spelled out later in *ibid.*, IV 4–5.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, IV 5,4.

Tertullian's report makes it plain that in response to Marcion's Gospel others had forged a Judaized version of it. Tertullian, following Irenaeus, however, turned Marcion's argument upside down and claimed not that Marcion's opponents had 'judaized', but that Marcion had 'circumcised' Scripture.⁸⁶ From this battle of words where even the terminology indicates the historically original sequence, we need to conclude that the following line of events had occurred:

1. Marcion produced a Gospel of sayings and narratives (without birth story and ascension), presumably based on documents and oral traditions available in Rome that fitted and supported Paul's letters, using or producing 'many of the things written', mentioned by a contemporary Roman teacher, Valentinus, who tells us that some publicly available books made their way into the 'writings in the church'.⁸⁷
2. Marcion circulated amongst his students his *Apostle's* as a standalone New Testament without the Old Testament.
3. As one would expect in competing classrooms in a city, Marcion's venture was soon replicated by other teachers who contributed, altered, broadened or nuanced both the letters and the Gospel according to their respective needs and interests. A discussion arose with regard to the precise nature of what Christian literature entailed. In response to Marcion, others relying on him and on each other's texts and knowledge reworked Marcion's text, produced *Mark* (like Marcion's Gospel without birth story and ascension), *Matthew* (with a birth story), *Luke* (close to Marcion's text, but reordered, with a different birth story, ascension, then *Acts*), all with references to the added Old Testament.
4. Marcion's accusation that his Gospel had been 'combined in one body' with the Law and the Prophets by 'Judaizers' indicates that colleagues who responded to him had, in the meantime, published their own version as a combination of the Law, the Prophets and the Gospel.

Let us add some supportive (partly negative) evidence for our hypothesis:

1. Those narrative lines present in Marcion's Gospel, namely Jesus' life from adolescence to death, are those most closely followed by other Gospels and in which these Gospels show the least differences, whereas those parts not provided by Marcion vary considerably in other Gospels (for example, the birth stories and the ascension), as do the Resurrection scenerios,⁸⁸ which were central for Marcion, but highly contentious.
2. None of the early authors who wrote against Marcion accuses him of falsifying or even using a previously existing Gospel. Polycarp knows of

⁸⁶ Ibid., III 11,7.

⁸⁷ Clem. Alex., *Strom.* VI 6,52,3–4.

⁸⁸ See J. Hartenstein, 'Geschichten' (2010).

a teacher, probably Marcion, who tortuously interprets the sayings of the Lord, but he does not accuse him of textual excisions.⁸⁹ Neither Justin nor Rhodon ever mention this topos. The first to make such a claim is Irenaeus, about thirty to forty years after Marcion. He, however, links Paul and Luke, bases his view of Paul predominantly on *Acts*,⁹⁰ which he claims is written by Luke, and benchmarks Marcion's text against a four-Gospel set of *Luke*, *Mark*, *Matthew* and *John* and the recognition of the Jewish scriptures, writings that have all been preserved by the Christian community of Rome.⁹¹ Irenaeus even invents a continuous list of bishops of this Roman community from Linus down to Euleutheros, showing that this community was heavily Pauline oriented as its first bishops are those mentioned in 'Pauline' literature: Linus (*2Tim.* 4:21), Anacletus/Anencletus (seems to be a fiction based on *Tit.* 1:7), Clemens (*Phil.* 4:3).⁹² He reports that Marcion himself was 'proud in having part in the *Gospel*',⁹³ but blames him as being 'the only one who has dared openly to circumcise' the Gospel and Paul's letters and to have cut off the Law and the Prophets.⁹⁴ If Marcion was the only one who did so 'openly', then either Irenaeus reckons with others who had not published their own version of these texts, or his accusation is a reflexion of Marcion as the first to go public with his New Testament.

3. Authors prior to Marcion do not refer to any Gospel 'as a sequence of events or a "story"'. Nowhere are fixed credal formulations called "Gospel".⁹⁵ The famous New Testament scholar Kurt Aland calls this phenomenon 'nightmarish'.⁹⁶
4. All authors who during the first decades after Marcion, mostly in direct response to him, discuss the Gospel(s), are reluctant and sceptical in using

⁸⁹ See *PolPhil.* 7:1; see below.

⁹⁰ There are exceptions where Irenaeus follows Paul's own view, so with regards to *Gal.* 2:1–10, but only to turn the interpretation against Marcion (according to Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* III 13,3 Paul accepts the Twelve); on this and other cases see R. Noormann, *Irenäus* (1994), 42–7, 51 n70. Noormann sees *Acts* as 'the source' for Irenaeus.

⁹¹ To Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* I 1,23–4, *Luke* becomes the Gospel that Paul preached and, after his death, his companion Luke wrote down.

⁹² See O. Zwierlein, *Petrus* (2010), 157–8. It seems that Irenaeus, who created the Peter/Paul-myth of Rome, did so to accommodate Marcion, but also to counterbalance him.

⁹³ *Iren.*, *Adv. haer.* III 11,9: *partem gloriatur se habere Evangelii*; this was such a contentious claim that a number of editors (as early as Erasmus) altered Irenaeus' text.

⁹⁴ See *Iren.*, *Adv. haer.* I 27,4 (see also I 27,2 and III 11–12).

⁹⁵ H. Koester, 'Kerygma-Gospel' (1986), 366, especially with regard to the deutero-Pauline Epistles and *Acts*, but also to Ignatius – something that we can broaden, as shown above.

⁹⁶ K. Aland, 'Bemerkungen' (1979), 29.

both the narratives of these texts⁹⁷ and the term 'Gospel'.⁹⁸ The scriptural principle of Marcion has finally been accepted only on the basis of balancing and correcting the theology of Paul and (pre-)Luke in a broader re-setting, adding *Acts* and other writings and publishing the widened set in combination with the Old Testament. If the later canonical Gospels had already existed in Christian communities prior to Marcion and carried some authority, the disinclined and unenthusiastic early responses, particularly to 'Gospels', would be difficult to explain.

Marcion's novelty, his *Apostle's*, fired up frenetic reactions. His fresh principle of an authoritative Christian collection of writings was hesitantly, though in principle positively, received.⁹⁹ His antithetical positioning of Old and New Testament made some teachers sceptical of the Jewish scriptures, while others emphasized that these were also revelations of the Christian God. But many gave up relying on oral traditions, while at the same time Christian prophetism grew stronger. Perhaps because Marcion himself had accepted the very Rabbinic fashion of his days and focused on contemporary writings rather than, as the Sadducees would have wanted, referring the revelation exclusively to the *Torah*, he had little difficulty in establishing firmly his idea of a written Christian corpus. Of course, Marcion had gone a significant step further than anybody else before him – he branded the Old Testament a proof text of the creator and this world, not of wisdom and truth, and he regarded all attempts of non-Pauline writings as products of Jews or judaizing brothers.¹⁰⁰

Already prior to Marcion having published his *Apostle's*, this together with the embedded Resurrection narrative became a topic of debate. In abandoning

⁹⁷ The presbyter, a disciple of apostles (in the plural!) who writes 'syntheses' against Marcion's *Antitheses*, uses only Paul's letters and sayings of the Lord (see *Matth.* 7:1–2, 10:24, 18:8–9, 20:16, 22:14, 25:41; *Luke* 18:7–8), see Iren., *Adv. haer.* IV 27,4–32,1; A. v. Harnack, 'Presbyter–Prediger' (1907).

⁹⁸ Even *Luke* does not use the term 'Gospel' for his text, and in *Acts* (15:7, 20:24) the term is not 'clearly defined', so H. Koester, 'Kerygma-Gospel' (1986), 367. Different are *Mark* and *Matthew*, but still, Koester concludes, 'there is no indication whatsoever by any of the authors of the New Testament Gospels that εὐαγγέλιον would be an appropriate title for the literature they produced' (*ibid.*, 370).

⁹⁹ 'Justin adopts Marcion's concept of a written gospel and distances himself from the oral tradition' – *ibid.*, 380.

¹⁰⁰ See H. v. Campenhausen, 'Das Alte Testament' (1963), 170; Marcion uses the Old Testament to counter its allegorical reading and application by Christians who wanted to find Christ's coming announced in it, as can be seen from the discussion of Is. 7:14 and 8:4 in Tert., *Adv. Marc.* III 12,1. I would not deduce from here that Marcion 'evidently believed in the authority of the Hebrew Scriptures and accepted Isaiah and the other prophets as trustworthy predictors of the future', so J.B. Tyson, *Marcion* (2006), 33; similarly S. Moll, *The Arch-Heretic* (2010).

an anti-Pauline Jewish-Christianity,¹⁰¹ ‘at one stroke with Marcion and only with Marcion’, ‘Christian writings’ were brought to the fore in a community where previously ‘still absolutely no “New Testament” existed which might have been placed alongside the “Old Testament” as a collection of documents of similarly binding force. The ancient Jewish Bible was and at first remained the single scriptural norm of the Church.’¹⁰² Although Paul had advocated that ‘Christ is the end of the Law’, prior to Marcion neither Paul nor other authors saw ‘any demand’ for scriptures to rival the Jewish Bible. Why? Christians thought that ‘by introducing into the ancient Scriptures themselves the distinction, indeed the opposition, between the Law and the Gospel ... they already possessed the written document of the new message of salvation’.¹⁰³

The reaction to Marcion was varied and at first uncoordinated, presumably beginning with colleagues of contemporary schools at Rome. Only with Irenaeus and Tertullian did scholars begin to develop a more systematic anti-Marcionite response.

To understand the mixed and often ambiguous reaction to Marcion, we must read it against the background of existing school relations at Rome. The scenario of competing and cooperating schools around the middle of the second century is still difficult to trace, as some of the masters were later stamped ‘heretics’ and placed into various heretical genealogies and categories. Scrutinizing the debates allows for a fascinating, almost archaeological, reconstruction of a lost, often nuanced and constructive jigsaw of debates between various teachers,¹⁰⁴ with their subtle disagreements, mutual influences and refinements. It was a continuous flow of oral and written interactions with the creation of intra- and interschool knowledge, literature and traditions. How cooperation and competition worked, we shall see in Papias. Although inclined towards the older Jewish and Christian living voice rather than trusting written words, Papias bows down and joins the crowd of writers, hoping for success and writing his own collection of the Lord’s oracles. Although Papias downplays the nature and authority of what has been written and published, he too writes narratives. Sayings were not directly received from the Lord (something Marcion had claimed with reference to Paul’s revelation) but handed down by elders. No wonder, therefore, that Papias describes Mark simply as a translator of Peter who got the order of the oracles wrong; this needed to be corrected by Matthew.

Others, like Justin, took a slightly different stance. He, too, accepted the principle that Christians relied on writings. But while Marcion emphasized his New Testament, Justin spoke only of the so-called ‘Gospel’, replacing the singularity

¹⁰¹ Its existence can easily be seen from literary and archaeological evidence; see, for example, F. Stanley Jones, *Pseudo-Clementines* (2005) (lit.).

¹⁰² H. v. Campenhausen, *Formation* (1972), 148.63 (Engl. trans. slightly altered).

¹⁰³ A. v. Harnack, *Origin* (1925), 14.

¹⁰⁴ See, for example, the nuanced description in B. Pouderon, ‘Réflexions’ (1998).

by the plurals of Apostles and their memoirs, and combining these with Jewish scriptures.

It would be only natural if the later canonical Gospels (and some of the letters that complemented Paul's texts, and made it into the later canon) were created in close proximity to each other, in both time and location, most likely at Rome beginning in the 140s.¹⁰⁵ World literature, and that is what has been written with *Luke/Acts*, *Matthew*, *Mark* and *John* – texts that are so similar and intrinsically linked despite their differences –, does not grow naturally in fields as far apart as Rome and Jerusalem, Alexandria and the Peloponnese, Berytus and Antioch,¹⁰⁶ nor does it happen to meander into such similar forms. David Trobisch has shown that the order of the writings in our New Testament is based on one early, consciously published 'canonical edition'.¹⁰⁷

The almost ununpackable interrelations between these canonical Gospels (without speaking of others that, being rather different, were not included in the broadened 'New Testament') have kept scholars speculating for centuries about the synoptic and four-Gospel problems.

The Old and New Testament that, after Marcion, had emerged in a rather short and intensive production process at Rome, reconnected Christianity with the Jewish tradition, reduced Marcion's docetic Christology, and endorsed a more human, fleshly Jesus. The combination emphasized a monarchian identification of Jesus Christ and the God of the Old Testament, and maintained at least some of Paul's radicalisms. *Acts* served as the important bridge between the Apostles and Paul: *Acts* lowered Paul's profile, to some extent domesticated him, and shaped the reading of his letters by harmoniously subordinating him to and complementing him with other apostolic authorities. The Gospel was removed from Paul and, through combining prefaces of *Acts* and *Luke*, put under the name of Luke. *Luke* was then complemented by *Mark* and *Matthew*. Valentinus, together with his pupils Ptolemy and likeminded others, seems to have been part of this process of writing and commenting. This would explain why Ptolemy commented on the prologue of *John*. The rest of this Gospel may not then have existed, while a little later, the other pupil of Valentinus, Heracleon, was able to undertake a first commentary on the whole of *John*, once that Gospel was finished and published.

The production of Gospels and *Acts*, however, was not limited to Rome, nor was it to those synoptic Gospels, *Acts* and *John*. We know of a growing number of early Christian Gospels and *Acts*. Some of these texts still seem to have been written in the wake of Marcion's enterprise, but all display an enormous liberty

¹⁰⁵ See J. Knox, *Marcion* (1942), 152.

¹⁰⁶ See the fiction in Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmina dogmatica* I 12,6–9: 'Matthew wrote the marvels of Christ for the Hebrews, Mark for Italy, Luke for Achaia, but John, the great herald and heaven-wanderer, wrote for everybody'.

¹⁰⁷ D. Trobisch, *Die Endredaktion* (1996), 40–41; M. Klinghardt, 'Markion' (2006), 500; it is still unclear how old our earliest manuscript of a fourfold Gospel codex is – see the recent discussion in P.M. Head, 'Manuscript' (2005).

with regard to the canonical Gospels and *Acts* that existed in the meantime as ‘New Testament’. Moreover, it would be worth a separate study to show the extent to which some texts took part-Marcionite, part-counter positions to his theology, or simply ignored him and produced their own portrait of Jesus’ sayings, life and after-life, as various *Acts* do with Paul and other Apostles.

To read a dramatic example, we can turn to the portrait of Paul in the *Acts of Paul*: Paul is the protagonist, but we can discern a strange mixture of Marcionism and anti-Marcionism. The Apostle in these *Acts* is a preacher of asceticism who demands no less rigour than Marcion; his theological message, however, is summarized in an anti-Marcionite belief in the resurrection of *the flesh* – albeit without Paul’s reference to Christ’s Resurrection¹⁰⁸ – and in the creator God, ‘the living God’, who is a ‘God of revenge, a jealous God’, notions of God on the basis of which Marcion made the distinction between the God of Love of the New Testament and the God of the Old Testament.

The *Gospel of the Hebrews* is another example; its text survives only in a few quotes. It can easily be read as a response to Marcion’s Gospel. The ambiguous character of Marcionite and anti-Marcionite elements still shines through: the text mentions Mary’s pregnancy, which Marcion had rejected, but identifies Mary with God’s incarnate, angelic power Michael (an angelic appearance was taught by Marcion).¹⁰⁹ While ‘in *Mark*, James appears in a critical light since he is listed together with Jesus’ relatives¹¹⁰ who go after Jesus because they think he is out of his mind’,¹¹¹ in this *Gospel of the Hebrews* the Risen appears to his brother James, who is called ‘the Just’, a scene that uses Paul’s key Resurrection text 1 *Cor.* 15:7 to create the only known Resurrection appearance to James.¹¹² This Gospel emphasizes the Jewish connection: a servant of a Jewish priest is present at the tomb; to him the Lord gives his linen. Written in realistic terms, it is James to whom his brother hands the broken bread. The Risen, then, identifies himself with the apocalyptic ‘Son of Man who has risen from the dead’.

Another ‘fascinating’¹¹³ example is the *Gospel of Philip*. Jesus’ names (Father, Son, Holy Spirit, life, light, Resurrection, church and others) all belong to this ephemeral world, whereas Jesus’ sole name, that of his Father, remains unknown and unspoken, except among a few who do not disclose it.¹¹⁴ Like Marcion, the

¹⁰⁸ This is true at least for the preserved fragments. The only hint at the Resurrection can be found in the part of 3 *Cor.* – see below; the fruits of this tendency of an encratite Paulinism (without the Resurrection) can be read in *Ps.-Paulus to Titus*, in W. Schneemelcher and R. McL. Wilson (eds), *Apocrypha II* (2003), 55–74.

¹⁰⁹ In E.A.W. Budge, *Apocrypha* (1913), 60, 637.

¹¹⁰ *Mark* 6:3.

¹¹¹ P. Luomanen, ‘Passion’ (2010), 204; see *Mark* 3:20–21, 31.

¹¹² In Jerome, *De vir. inl.* 2.

¹¹³ See the introductory note by Hans-Martin Schenke in NTAp⁶ 149.

¹¹⁴ *GP* 12a. See K. Koschorke, “‘Namen’” (1973).

author calls the Apostles 'Hebrews', negates Mary's pregnancy,¹¹⁵ and rejects the conventional message of the Resurrection: 'Those who say that the Lord died first and [then] rose up are in error, for he rose up first and [then] died. If one does not first attain the resurrection, one will not die.'¹¹⁶ What is meant by this inversion of Resurrection and death?¹¹⁷ One can only die if one has really lived. Real life, being alive, can only be found 'in the truth', a resurrection that is brought about in this earthly life by baptism yet remains a fragile state.¹¹⁸ The names of Father, Son and Spirit are not simply given in baptism, gained through the chrism of the cross:¹¹⁹ 'If one does not first receive the resurrection while alive, in death one will receive nothing.'¹²⁰ ... Baptism is a great thing, because if people receive it they will live.'¹²¹ And: 'The Lord said, "blessed is he who is before he came into being. For he who is, has been and shall be."¹²² In a fantastic application of the paradise story, the author lets Philip state:

'Joseph the carpenter planted a garden because he needed wood for his trade. It was he who made the cross from the trees which he planted. His own offspring hung on that which he planted. His offspring was Jesus, and the planting was the cross.' But the Tree of Life is in the middle of the Garden, and, it is, indeed, from the olive tree that we got the chrism, and from the chrism, comes the resurrection.¹²³

According to this Gospel, the anointing or the chrism is superior to baptism:

for it is from the word 'Chrism' that we have been called 'Christians', certainly not because of the word 'baptism'. And it is because of the chrism that 'Christ' has his name. For the Father anointed the Son, and the Son anointed the apostles, and the apostles anointed us. He who has been anointed possesses everything. He possesses the resurrection, the light, the cross, the Holy Spirit. The Father

¹¹⁵ GP 17ba.

¹¹⁶ GP 21; see 90. Trans. by Wesley W. Isenberg, in J.M. Robinson (ed.), *Library* (rev. edn 1990) (trans. slightly altered).

¹¹⁷ See A.H.C. van Eijk, 'Gospel' (1971).

¹¹⁸ GP 4, 76.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹²⁰ Irenaeus also knows of other Christians who believed in baptism as resurrection according to which one would no longer grow old and die – see Iren., *Adv. haer.* I 23,5; see also Menander according to Justin, *1Apol.* 26,4; or encratites in Clem. Alex., *Strom.* III 48,1; Valentinus' position in this respect is unclear when he addresses his audience 'you are immortal': see Clem. Alex., *Strom.* IV 89,1–3, on this C. Marksches, *Valentinus* (1992), 118–52.

¹²¹ GP 90b.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 57.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 91–2.

gave him this in the bridal chamber; he merely accepted [the gift]. The Father was in the Son and the Son in the Father. This is the Kingdom of Heaven.¹²⁴

The Resurrection is both of the Lord and of men; it is a restoration that went through the process of alienation during the existence of this world, because creation was a failure or accident.¹²⁵

For he who created it wanted to create it imperishable and immortal. He fell short of attaining his desire. For the world never was imperishable, nor, for that matter, was he who made the world. For things are not imperishable, but sons are. Nothing will be able to receive imperishability if it does not first become a son.¹²⁶

With this distinction between the creator and the son, this Gospel displays another topic of Marcion, and with its teaching on the chrism from the tree of life we find a literal parallel to the so-called Ophites,¹²⁷ who borrowed the Resurrection exegesis of *Luke 24:36ff.* from Marcion.¹²⁸

Picking up the quote from Paul that Marcion used to emphasize the non-fleshly Resurrection,¹²⁹ the Gospel continues to invert the common assumptions by combining Paul with *John*: Man's resurrection will not take place in the flesh, but nakedness is non-nakedness and vice versa:

Some are afraid lest they rise naked. Because of this they wish to rise in the flesh, and they do not know that it is those who wear the flesh who are naked. It is those who [...] to unclothe themselves who are not naked. 'Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God.'¹³⁰ What is this which will not inherit? This which is on us. But what is this, too, which will inherit? It is that which belongs to Jesus and his blood. Because of this he said: 'He who shall not eat my flesh and drink my blood has not life in him.'¹³¹ What is it? His flesh is the word, and his blood is the Holy Spirit. He who has received these has food and he has drink and clothing.¹³²

¹²⁴ Ibid., 95.

¹²⁵ See *ibid.*, 67c, 99.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹²⁷ See in *Orig., C. Cels.* IV 27 where the newly admitted members have to say, 'I am anointed with white chrism from the tree of life'; see also *Ps.-Clem., Rec.* I 45.

¹²⁸ Compare the *Teaching of Peter* and the idea of Christianity as a 'third nation' with *GP* 102.

¹²⁹ *1Cor.* 15:50; see R. Noormann, *Irenäus* (1994), 501–8, who overlooks Marcion.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 15:50.

¹³¹ *John* 6:53.

¹³² *GP* 23.

Again like Marcion, this Gospel differentiates between flesh in the sense of matter, which the Risen Christ does not have, and perfect, true flesh, Christ's flesh. It is this perfect flesh in which man will rise in Christ.¹³³

Other Gospels, sometimes anti-Marcionite, sometimes without reference to him, took similar freedom,¹³⁴ or remained closer to synoptic traditions or to *John*. The *Gospel of the Nazoreans*,¹³⁵ for example, seems to have been a similar alteration of *Matthew* as *Luke* is of Marcion's *Gospel*.

The gospel-writing and -publishing rivalry continues to be reflected in Irenaeus and Tertullian a few decades later, and the order of the Gospels was still either open for debate or, if the entity was already published in codices, not yet fully recognized or accepted.¹³⁶

Papias of Hierapolis

This process of the making of the New Testament and the related knowledge transfer between teachers, schools and bishops is mirrored in Papias, a bishop of Hierapolis (140s AD).¹³⁷ He is the first author to engage explicitly in the debate about the authorship of *Mark* and *Matthew*, but also knows *1John*, *1Peter*,¹³⁸ and perhaps further Johannine literature, *John* and *Revelation*.¹³⁹ He is also actively engaged in the literarization process of the Lord's sayings. From his five books of *Explanations of Dominical Oracles*, sadly, only few fragments survive. Several features place him in the historical scenario around Marcion: Papias does not speak of 'Gospels', nor of the 'New' or 'Old Testament'; he 'ignores Paul', or, just

¹³³ Ibid., 72. I think A.H.C. van Eijk, 'Gospel' (1971), 98, erroneously wants to distinguish between an individualistic understanding of the 'orthodox' theologians (Irenaeus, for example), and the *GP*, as if with the disappearance of the earthly flesh the individual were to disappear.

¹³⁴ See, for example, the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, the *Gospel of the Ebionites*, the *Gospel of Peter*, the unknown Gospel in 2*Clement*; see D. Lührmann and E. Schlarb, *Fragmente* (2000) (ibid. more fragments of unknown sources, potentially Gospels), and also in further Gospels like those preserved in the following fragments: *PVindobG* 2325, *PBerol* 11710, *PCairG* 10735, *PMert* 51, *POxy* 1224, see T. Nicklas, M.J. Kruger and T.J. Kraus, *Fragments* (2009), 217–80; the *Gospel of Thomas* (see below); a fragment from Dura Europos (taken as a fragment from Tatian's *Diatessaron* that, however, could simply be that of an unknown Gospel), in D. Lührmann and E. Schlarb, *Fragmente* (2000), 104–5; *PBerol* 16388, in O. Stegmüller, 'Bruchstück' (1938).

¹³⁵ See R. Cameron, *Gospels* (1982), 99–102.

¹³⁶ See the argument in favour of a four-gospel codex in the years shortly before 150 AD in G.N. Stanton, *Jesus* (2004), 81–6, but now the criticism of this position by J.J. Armstrong, 'Controversy' (2010), who 'maintains that the fourfold Gospel canon did not emerge before Irenaeus'.

¹³⁷ So T. Rasmus, 'Introduction', in id., *Legacy* (2010), 5.

¹³⁸ And potentially of *John*; see C.E. Hill, *Corpus* (2004), 383–96.

¹³⁹ See F. Siegert, 'Papiaszitate' (1980/81).

as importantly, no statement by him about Paul has been preserved.¹⁴⁰ Instead, he reports explicitly on Mark and Matthew as authors of collections of sayings on which he himself comments. Mark is introduced as ‘Peter’s translator’, but Papias derides that he ‘neither heard the Lord nor attended him’ but only ‘later Peter’. Mark is criticized further as the one who ‘wrote all that he remembered accurately, but not in order’, while only ‘Matthew made an ordered arrangement of the oracles’. Instead of endorsing Mark or Matthew, Papias takes a critical stance towards them, and refers both to Peter as mediator,¹⁴¹ an idea that Clement of Alexandria will later pick up.¹⁴² This mediated information conforms to Papias’ idea of tradition and authority, which draws predominantly on ‘the elders’ and Peter, not Paul:

I examined what the Elders said about what Andrew or Peter, Philip, Thomas or James, John or Matthew, or any other of the Lord’s disciples said, and what Aristion and the Elder John, disciples of the Lord, were saying.¹⁴³

While Papias shows the historical distance between himself and the Lord, he considers that the same is true for Mark and Matthew. All writers rely on the authority of elders, the disciples of the Lord, with Peter foremost among them. Tellingly, Papias does not include Paul among these authorities. He reports that the Twelve had ‘to make up for the traitor Judas’, a story known from *Acts* that indirectly excludes Paul from being an Apostle.¹⁴⁴

Papias’ not mentioning *the* authority of Marcion, his insistence upon a distance between the Lord and any author of written accounts, and his avoidance of using Marcion’s newly created catchwords, all contribute to an anti-Marcionite profile.¹⁴⁵ This profile clearly fits with the fact that Papias, as preserved today, is also

¹⁴⁰ W.R. Schoedel, ‘Introduction’, in *The Apostolic Fathers* V (1967), 90.

¹⁴¹ See W. Löhr, *Basilides* (1996), 22–3.

¹⁴² See the report about his *Hypotyposesis* given in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* VI 14,5–7. According to it, the Gospels that contain genealogies had been written or published first, but the Gospel according to Mark was produced as notes of Peter’s preaching in Rome. Clement, too, adds a critical note: ‘When Peter learned of this (the production and publication of the Gospel), he used his powers of persuasion neither to hinder nor to encourage it’, hence neither endorsed nor recommended the text. M.M. Mitchell, ‘Counter-Evidence’ (2005), 50, rightly comments: ‘Peter appears rather oddly disposed to the gospel which Mark wrote on request of his Roman audience ... This text cannot be used as proof for an enthusiastic authorial or patronal dissemination of the gospel.’

¹⁴³ According to Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* III 39 (my own trans.).

¹⁴⁴ According to Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* III 39,10; see *Acts* 1:17–25.

¹⁴⁵ See Papias Hier., Frg. 4. 7 (*cum se in praefatione adserat non varias opiniones sequi, sed apostolos habere auctores*) (100, 12; 106 Hübner/Kürzinger/Siebert). His fragments 21, 23 (124, 128 Hübner/Kürzinger/Siebert) probably reflect an anti-Marcionite position.

silent about *Luke*, precisely the Gospel that in a specific version built the second leg to Marcion's 'New Testament'.

The omission of Marcion's authorities and the strengthening of those references Marcion rejected (the OT, the disciples of the Lord other than Paul, *Matthew*, *Mark*) is hardly a coincidence. Papias displays further anti-Marcionite features. Irenaeus reports that Papias refers to a Lord's saying that interprets *Gen. 27:28f.* with reference to *Gen. 49:12*,¹⁴⁶ and hence interprets the *Dominical Oracles* on the basis of the Jewish *Torah*.

There is yet further support for anti-Marcionite elements in Papias. Eusebius knows that Papias 'made use of testimonies from the first letter of John and likewise from that of Peter'.¹⁴⁷ Both letters have a similar function as have *Mark* and *Matthew* – not only were they not recognized by Marcion, they also counteract Marcion's focus on Paul and a *Luke*-like Gospel. *1John* does not refer to the Resurrection of Christ, a core Pauline topic, and *1Peter* mentions explicitly the prophets' foretelling of the future events of Jesus – a theme that Marcion had counter-argued, and that became one of the central arguments in Justin's *First Apology* against Marcion. Moreover, *1Peter* calls Christ 'the Just', who has suffered 'for the unjust', an allusion to and summary of *Isaiah* (53:1–12), and also a clear stance against Marcion, who equated the 'Just' with the God of the Jews to distinguish him from the true God of Love.

Even if earlier scholarly claims of Papias being Jewish-Christian or even a member of the party of the Ebionites¹⁴⁸ have been criticized,¹⁴⁹ Papias' non-Pauline proximity to Jewish traditions is obvious. On the other hand, he cannot have been opposed to other teachers of the mid-second century such as Valentinus, as the latter had accepted *Matthew* and, unlike Marcion, was not promoting an asceticism that Papias criticized in his readings of the promised blessings from *Gen. 27*. For similar reasons Papias could not have targeted Basilides, who according to Clement of Alexandria relied like Papias on Petrine tradition, and took Glaukias as a 'translator' of Peter.¹⁵⁰ The identical translator-title and the link to Peter may even indicate some relation between Papias and Basilides. Akin to Papias, Basi-

¹⁴⁶ See Iren., *Adv. haer.* V 33,3–4.

¹⁴⁷ See Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* III 39,17.

¹⁴⁸ Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* III 27,3 had reported about the Ebionites that they observed the Jewish Law literally and made use only of the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, and *ibid.* III 27,4–5, that they celebrate the Sabbath, but also the Sunday, which they celebrate with similar rites as Eusebius' church, 'commemorating the Resurrection of the Saviour'. The second-century setting of the Ebionites is commonly suggested: M.D. Goulder, 'Hebrews' (2003); A. Gregory, 'Prior' (2005); A. v. Aarde, 'Tendencies' (2006); P. Luomanen, 'Passion' (2010), 192–6.

¹⁴⁹ U.H.J. Körtner, *Papias* (1983), 167; criticizing the thesis of F.C. Baur, *Paulus* (21866), 252.

¹⁵⁰ See Clem. Alex., *Strom.* VII 17,106.

lides spoke of ‘justice’ as one of God’s eight primal principles and taught of the creation not in derogatory terms.¹⁵¹

Hegesippus

Looking further into how the debate with Marcion developed, we come across Hegesippus, who, like Justin, had moved from the East to Rome (ca. 160–77). In his five books of *Memoranda*¹⁵² (ca. 180–90),¹⁵³ he describes that in every ‘diadoche’ and every city he found everything according to “‘the preaching by the Law, the Prophets and The Lord’”.¹⁵⁴ Interestingly, Hegesippus attests what Marcion has criticized, namely the combination of the Gospel with the Law and the Prophets. Moreover, the Gospel here is titled *The Lord* – perhaps a counter-title to Marcion’s Gospel of the apostle Paul. Hegesippus gives no overall title to this no-name entity of the ‘Law, Prophets and *The Lord*’, and does not call it ‘Old and New Testament’, ‘Gospel’ or ‘Scripture’. We know only of his own five books of *Memoranda*. Like Justin’s title for the so-called gospels, *memorabilia* and *memoranda* were excerpts and notes of lectures that, in late antiquity, formed the first stage of a publication.¹⁵⁵ Preceded by a final editing process, both *memoranda* and *memorabilia* were notes used by an author or teacher for his own purpose, or for internal distribution within his school.¹⁵⁶

Hegesippus, who explicitly writes against Marcion, would have been regarded by the latter as one of ‘those who defended the Jewish belief’ and ‘united the Gospel with the Law and the Prophets’.¹⁵⁷ Hegesippus’ quote ‘leaves no room for Paul as an authority’.¹⁵⁸

In his *History of the Church* from the beginning of the fourth century, Eusebius gives a few details about Hegesippus: He wrote in the seventies or eighties of the second century and was a convert from the Hebrews, probably of Samaritan background. Hegesippus, indeed, displays some considerable Samaritan knowledge, but combines it with a high esteem for the Jewish origins of the churches, especially the ones from Jerusalem. But he is equally bold in criticizing Judaic Pharisaism and Sadduceism, and also Samaritan Christianity. Moreover, he sees Samaritan

¹⁵¹ See *ibid.*, IV 25,162,1.

¹⁵² On his *Hypomnemata* see W. Telfer, ‘Hegesippus’ (1960).

¹⁵³ See O. Zwierlein, *Petrus* (2010), 166–9.

¹⁵⁴ Hegesippus, in Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* IV 22,2–3; C.K. Barrett, ‘Controversies’ (1974), 236; O. Zwierlein, *Petrus* (2010), 167.

¹⁵⁵ See W. Bousset, *Schulbetrieb* (1915), 274–5.

¹⁵⁶ See R. Criboire, *Writing* (1996), 53–5; A. Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon* (2002), 34; H.Y. Gamble, *Books* (1995).

¹⁵⁷ See Tert., *Adv. Marc.* IV 4,4.

¹⁵⁸ W. Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit* (1934), 215–30; C.K. Barrett, ‘Controversies’ (1974), 236–7 (Barrett does not see in it a counter-Marcionite character).

Christianity as paving the way for Marcion's teaching and the separation between Judaism and Christianity. To Hegesippus the parting of the ways between Judaism and Christianity was an inner-Hebrew dispute between a Pharisaic and a Pharisaic-Samaritan Christianity. In clear counter-position to Marcion, whose message he sees as a kind of Samaritan rejection of the Jews and their temple, Hegesippus re-connects the Church's beginnings firmly with Jerusalem and the Temple, and roots the young community deeply in the wider family of Jesus and his brother James.¹⁵⁹ Against, but also partly acknowledging Marcion, Hegesippus paints James as 'the Just' who was announced by the prophets, carries all the Marcionite ascetic ideals (no wine, a vegetarian, no cutting of hair, no perfumes, no bathing) and makes people believe in the resurrection and judgement. He is portrayed like a Jewish-Christian alternative to the Pauline Marcion: Jesus' earthly family counts against Paul's visionary authority of the Risen Christ.

Valentinus, Ptolemy, Heracleon and Theodot

Marcion and his contemporary Roman teacher Valentinus represent an earlier stage of teachers' inter-school relations, although we know even less of Valentinus than of Hegesippus.¹⁶⁰ From what we know, his school – like Marcion's in the early Roman years – seems to have worked within the gallimaufry of Christian teachings; and while distinct in some opinions, Valentinus also shared elements with Marcion. Valentinus trusted writings that he qualified as acknowledged in the Church. It seems that he himself did not write a Gospel, although his pupils are credited with a 'Gospel of Truth'.¹⁶¹ In a fragment of a homily, Valentinus differentiated between 'publicly available books' and 'writings in the church', and suggested that the latter contained 'utterances that come from the heart, the law that is written in the heart' by 'people of the beloved', hence not from Jewish scriptures. In addition, he stated that 'many of the things written' in the books, evidently available on the market, borrowable from houses or at hand in classrooms, made their way into the 'writings in the church'.¹⁶² Sadly we have no more information on this topic than this hint. He did not differentiate between 'pagan'/'Jewish' and 'Church' literature, as Clement of Alexandria would later do.

The distinction between public and recognized books presumes what Marcion had attempted to introduce, namely a qualifying of non-Jewish writings as au-

¹⁵⁹ See H. v. Campenhausen, 'Nachfolge' (1950/51 = 1963), 145–6, who shows that the picture of a monarchian reign of James cannot be based on Hegesippus, who provides us with James both in the midst of the Twelve, and as first bishop of Jerusalem, the latter presumably an anachronistic interpretation by Hegesippus.

¹⁶⁰ See C. Marksches, *Valentinus* (1992), 293–336.

¹⁶¹ See Iren., *Adv. haer.* III 11,9; Ps.-Tert., *Adv. omnes haer.* IV 6; see C. Marksches, *Valentinus* (1992), 339–56, who also shows that the 'Gospel of Truth' (if this was the title of the book) from Nag Hammadi (NHC I 3; XII 2) was not written by Valentinus.

¹⁶² Clem. Alex., *Strom.* VI 6,52,3–4.

thoritative literature. For pre-Marcion Christians, only the Jewish scriptures were undisputed writings ‘in the church’. In Valentinus, this has changed. Decades of intense debate about Marcion’s innovation were lying ahead, wherein Valentinus’ homily would represent but one voice, which clearly sided with Marcion and promoted his view.¹⁶³

We know of other writings that evince further the literary situation of this time. The *Apocryphon of James* (NHC I 2), for example, reports that after the Lord had ascended, ‘the twelve disciples were sitting all together at the same time, and, remembering what the Saviour had said to each one of them, whether secretly or openly, they were setting it down in books’, and precisely at that moment, when James was writing down what was in his book, ‘the Saviour appeared, after he had departed from us while we gazed at him, 550 days after he arose from the dead.’¹⁶⁴ In the *Apocryphon* (similar to *Revelation*), writing books becomes a revelatory experience: the Lord becomes apparent as literature.

Christian books were therefore more than productions for teaching purposes in classrooms: they introduced a teaching of salvation. This is not to say that they did not share the normal production process of books of the time. Notes were edited and manuscripts published (sometimes even in note form) and became readily available, while scholars picked up oral and, increasingly, written information and turned it into writings that competed for recognized status among classes and communities.

From the fragments that are left we can gather that, unlike and perhaps in opposition to Marcion, Valentinus quotes *Matthew* (19:17), not Marcion’s *Apostle’s*. Whether he regarded this text as a public or a recognized book is unclear – Justin, a little later, qualifies the sayings of Jesus still as ‘notes’ –, but he uses these sayings as reference and support for the reading of the creation story from *Genesis* and mentions that they were read by the community in their Sunday gathering.¹⁶⁵

Contrary to Marcion, Valentinus did not despise the created world.¹⁶⁶ He admitted that the universe was not a perfect product, yet ‘the defect within the act of modeling’ was remediated by God’s name in men.¹⁶⁷ Eternal life was ‘death’ that ‘dies’ in us and through us.¹⁶⁸ On the other hand, Valentinus sided again with Marcion and tried to position his view of Christ’s bodily constitution between the extremes of pure docetism, according to which Jesus in his divinity could neither drink nor eat, and pure creationism, according to which Jesus was nothing but a human being of flesh and bones. As a result, Valentinus surmised that Jesus ‘was

¹⁶³ See C. Markschie, *Valentinus* (1992), 194–200.

¹⁶⁴ Trans. R. Cameron, *Gospels* (1982), 57 (slightly altered); the 550 days are much the same as the 18 months of the Valentinian and Ophite sources, see Iren., *Adv. haer.* I 3,2; I 30,14, and the 545 days of the *Ascension of Isaiah* IX 16.

¹⁶⁵ See Clem. Alex., *Strom.* IV 89.6–90.1 and Justin, *1Apol.* 67 (on this see below).

¹⁶⁶ See I. Dunderberg, ‘Teachers’ (2004), 160–2.

¹⁶⁷ Clem. Alex., *Strom.* III 59.3.

¹⁶⁸ Clem. Alex., *Strom.* VI 52.3–4.

continent' and endured 'all things'. He ate and drank in a divine manner 'without excreting his solids', because his body was incorruptible. Nourishment was consumed, but internally preserved, paralleled by our dying an internal death.¹⁶⁹

We are better informed about Valentinus' student Ptolemy,¹⁷⁰ a teacher and perhaps martyr.¹⁷¹ Ptolemy displays a more passionate view of Marcion than does Valentinus. He, like his master, relates Christian teaching to scriptures, both Christian and Jewish, and reflects on the subtle nature of their relation. Akin to Marcion he criticizes the Jewish scriptures, but allows for their differentiated acceptance.¹⁷² In a *Letter to Flora*, one of his noble female students, Ptolemy sets out two – in his opinion flawed – explanations of how 'the law was given through Moses'. The first position holds that the law has been 'given by God the Father'; the opposite view, which Ptolemy criticizes even more harshly, was developed by 'stubborn people', and states that the law 'was established by the adversary, the pernicious Devil'. These people even attributed to the Devil 'the fashioning of the world saying that he is the Father and maker of this universe'.¹⁷³ To Ptolemy, 'one cannot impute the law to the Injust', 'for God is opposed to injustice'. The attacked positions remind us of Marcion's pupil Apelles. Ptolemy, however, sides with Marcion and agrees that 'the law was not given by the perfect God, the Father, for it must be of the same character as the one who gave it; and yet it is imperfect and in need of completion by another, containing commandments alien to the nature and intentions of such a God'. The completion of the imperfect – note the parallel to Valentinus! – in Ptolemy is another law, the commandments of the Christian Saviour. Ptolemy equates the perfect, providential God with the 'just' God who 'hates evil'.

Applying a triple division to the Jewish *Torah*, Ptolemy accommodates justice: there are commandments that derive from the perfect *and* just God, others that were given by Moses, reflecting Moses' 'own ideas', and those that were given by 'the elders'. Jewish laws are always tainted; none are purely of the perfect God. But worse, the second and third categories derive purely from prophets and human beings. 'The elders' remind us strongly of Papias, although Ptolemy takes an opposite stance. Whereas for Papias the elders are the source of the Lord's oracles, for Ptolemy they stand for Jews who do not carry any authority. Ptolemy may have referred to Papias, supporting his argument with mostly accurate but tendentious¹⁷⁴ references to *Matthew* (*Matth.* 12:25) and seconded by *John's* pro-

¹⁶⁹ See Clem. Alex., *Strom.* IV 89.1–3; see, however, Clem. Alex., *Strom.* VI 71.2, who develops a far more docetic view than Valentinus of Christ's body that does not need food nourishment; see I. Dunderberg, 'Valentinus' (2005), 74–5.

¹⁷⁰ On slight doubts about the teacher–pupil relation see C. Marksches, *Valentinus* (1992), 392–4; see id., 'Research' (2000).

¹⁷¹ See I. Dunderberg, 'Teachers' (2004), 163.

¹⁷² See T. Rasimus, 'Ptolemaeus' (2010).

¹⁷³ Epiph., *Pan.* XXXIII 3,2 (own trans. in the light of B. Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures*, 308–15).

¹⁷⁴ See on accuracy of quoting in Ptolemy, B. Aland, 'Rezeption' (1989), 7–14.

logue (*John* 1:3) on which Ptolemy had written a commentary. In the time between Valentinus and Ptolemy at the latest, *John* must have begun to make its appearance in Rome.¹⁷⁵ Ptolemy restricts Marcion's outright antithetical rejection of the Jewish scriptures to the third category¹⁷⁶ and counterbalances (pre-) *Luke* by using *Matthew* and *John*. Nevertheless, he accepts Marcion's principle scepticism, based on *Eph.* 2:15, that 'the law of commandments in ordinances was destroyed'. He accepts the authority of 'the Apostle Paul', but makes him second to 'the disciples of the Saviour' and knows already (if he did not produce it) of a non-Marcionite version of *Romans*.¹⁷⁷

According to Irenaeus and Origen, Heracleon was seen as a pupil of Valentinus,¹⁷⁸ and Clement of Alexandria regards him as one of the most famous representatives of the Valentinians.¹⁷⁹ Hippolytus sees in him an Italian Valentinian.¹⁸⁰ Origen's own patron, Ambrosius, who had asked him to create a *Commentary on John* and oversaw Origen's progress on it, got this idea from the Valentinian environment to which he had previously belonged. He owned Heracleon's *Commentary on John* in note form (*memorabilia* – the same title Justin uses to describe the so-called Gospels), which Origen used to produce his own. Origen mentions that commenting on Christian writings and publishing those multivolume books was a Valentinian innovation that he wanted to match to counterargue what had been produced by Ambrosius' earlier entourage.¹⁸¹ Again, we find confirmation that in and around the time of Marcion the writing and publishing of Gospel literature and, soon, commentaries on these texts was a new fashion. Origen does not disapprove of these productions but only wants to provide a sound version¹⁸² in accordance with the 'Old Testament', a title for the Jewish scriptures that he adopted from Marcion. Heracleon had not only commented on *John*, but probably also made a copy of

¹⁷⁵ Iren., *Adv. haer.* I 8,5.

¹⁷⁶ Apelles and Ignatius had stretched Marcion's view further and saw in the Old Testament nothing but unbelievable stories and myths; see H. v. Campenhausen, 'Das Alte Testament' (1963), 173–4.

¹⁷⁷ *Rom.* 7:12: 'The law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good', while Marcion's text did not have 'holy' nor 'just', but potentially read 'unacceptable' instead of 'good'. See U. Schmid, *Marcion* (1995), 351, although one would have assumed that the text provided 'just', but that 'good' was missing or – as in Ms. 1908 – read θαυμαστή, instead.

¹⁷⁸ Iren., *Adv. haer.* II 4,1; Orig., *Comm. in Ioh.* II 14,100.

¹⁷⁹ Clem. Alex., *Strom.* IV 71,1; Iren., *Adv. haer.* II 4,1 mentions him together with Ptolemy.

¹⁸⁰ Hippol., *Haer.* VI 35,6.

¹⁸¹ See Orig., *Comm. in Ioh.* V 8.

¹⁸² See also the parallels in the so-called *Pastoral Letters* (1*Tim.* 1:10, 6:3; 2*Tim.* 1:13, 4:3; *Tit.* 1:9, 2:1.8).

it.¹⁸³ To Heracleon, the 'third day' did not indicate the Resurrection of Christ, but was a hint at the 'spiritual day', the resurrection of the Church.¹⁸⁴

Theodot (born around 160 AD) was a contemporary of Clement of Alexandria who preserved fragments in his *Excerpta ex Theodoto*. Despite the title, Theodot 'is not the only speaker in the excerpts'.¹⁸⁵ He commented Paul's letters (potentially also *Hebr.*)¹⁸⁶ and is seen as a Valentinian, but whether or not he was his pupil is unclear.¹⁸⁷ Central to his teaching is not the Resurrection, but the kenotic incarnation and cross-event in which the Saviour receives and hands back his flesh to the Father, a flesh that comprises the entire body of the elect: '[A]t this point we revert to Christ's word "into thy hands I commend my spirit", only to be told that it was the labouring soul that yielded herself to the Father, while the spirit, pent in its osseous frame, was not released but brought release to others ... Christ is both the word and the Life of the prologue to the fourth gospel (*Excerpt* 6). Jesus is, according to *Excerpt* 35, the light who empties himself by quitting the pleroma. In baptism he submitted to dispersal in order to reunite the dispersed elect (*Excerpt* 36). Above he is the supernal church (*Excerpt* 17); below he assumes the church is assuming Christ (*Excerpt* 58). While Christ is the head of the church, it is Jesus who, by shouldering the Cross, sustains "the seed" (*Excerpt* 42). It was the better powers of the universe, those of "the right", who foresaw his coming (*Excerpt* 43), and the prophecy that all Israel will be saved refers allegorically to the Israel of the spirit (*Excerpt* 56). Souls who have faith without knowledge become companions to the Demiurge in his intermediate heaven, but it is in the higher Ogdoad ... that the rest decreed for the spiritual church will be enjoyed as a *kuriake* – no mere Sabbath or weekly octave, but the eternal day of the Lord (*Excerpt* 64)'.¹⁸⁸

As Mark Edwards remarks at the end of his concise summary of Theodotus' teaching, Clement of Alexandria 'was not ashamed to learn from his predecessor'.¹⁸⁹

Ignatius and Polycarp of Smyrna

Paul was central for Ignatius and Polycarp.¹⁹⁰ The strong proximity of Ignatius and Paul can be seen from both, Ignatius and Polycarp, even if chapter 13 of Polycarp's Letter to the Philippians were an interpolation.¹⁹¹ In the *Letter to the Philip-*

¹⁸³ See A. Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon* (2002), 31.

¹⁸⁴ *John* 2:19–21. See in Orig., *Comm. in Ioh.* X 37,248–50.

¹⁸⁵ M. Edwards, *Catholicity* (2009), 59.

¹⁸⁶ See Clem. Alex., *Exc. ex Thdt.* 38,2.

¹⁸⁷ See *ibid.*, title.

¹⁸⁸ M. Edwards, *Catholicity* (2009), 59–61.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹⁹⁰ With whom we deal further below, as the Resurrection is a central topic in Ignatius, while we concentrate here on the making of the New Testament.

¹⁹¹ *PolPhil.* 13; trans. Kirsopp Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers* (London, 1912). (London, 1912); R. Joly, *Le dossier* (1979).

prians, written by ‘Polycarp and the elders with him’, elders are given a prominent place. They are less valued, but still of importance in Ignatius, who together with his whole hierarchy writes to the Philadelphians.¹⁹²

How does Ignatius – the dating of his *Letters* is still debated (ca. 110 or, as recent scholarship suggests, 150–80)¹⁹³ – view Paul and other Christian writings, and the Jewish scriptures?¹⁹⁴ He refers to Paul explicitly, although like 1 *Clement* he ranks him after Peter¹⁹⁵ and grants authority to Apostles in the plural.¹⁹⁶ Ignatius knows of a collection of Paul’s letters,¹⁹⁷ and sees himself and his addressees as ‘followers’ of Paul, and Paul as follower ‘of Christ’.¹⁹⁸ He refers especially to 1 *Corinthians*, so that ‘no fewer than forty-six allusions’ to this letter can be found; he knew this and other letters of Paul ‘practically by heart’.¹⁹⁹ Where Ignatius refers to Gospel tradition, it is always related to *Matthew* and *John*, never to *Luke*, neither are there allusions to *Acts*.

Only twice are citations ‘prefaced with an introductory formula’ (‘it is written’),²⁰⁰ and they introduce *Proverbs*. One of these, *Prov.* 3:34 (‘The Lord opposes the proud’), however, Ignatius took not from the Jewish Septuagint, but from a Christian writing, perhaps from 1 *Peter* 5:5, or from *James* 4:6, which read as Ignatius ‘God opposes the proud’, not as the Septuagint does: ‘the Lord opposes the proud’.²⁰¹ The source of the second parallel is unclear, but Ignatius may have found it in another Christian source that is no longer extant.²⁰² He could also have taken it from the Jewish scriptures, as he might have had as little issue with such quotes as Marcion, who accepted introductory forms in his Gospel. While to Marcion the Jewish scriptures demonstrated the antithesis to the Gospel, Ignatius appreciates the Prophets insofar as they proclaimed the Gospel. Only the latter ‘is perfect’, but Prophets and Gospel ‘are good together, if you believe in love’.²⁰³

¹⁹² *IgnPhilad.* inscr.; trans. ANFa.

¹⁹³ See the latest contribution: O. Zwierlein, *Petrus* (2010), 183–237 (lit.), although the dating has no impact on our overall thesis.

¹⁹⁴ The question has not been settled yet, although some research has been done on this question in the past: see P. Foster, ‘Epistles’ (118/2006); D. Hoffman, ‘Authority’ (1985); R.M. Grant, *Testament* (1967).

¹⁹⁵ *IgnRom.* 4; *IgnEph.* 3.

¹⁹⁶ See *IgnPhilad.* 9; *IgnSm.* 8.

¹⁹⁷ *IgnEph.* 12:2 ‘all his letters’; trans. of Ignatius by J.H. Srawley, *Epistles* (1900) (with alterations).

¹⁹⁸ 1 *Cor.* 11:1.

¹⁹⁹ R.M. Grant, *Testament* (1967), 39.

²⁰⁰ P. Foster, ‘Epistles’ (118/2006), 8 only thinks of one text, *IgnEph.* 5:3, but overlooks *IgnMagn.* 12. In addition, he mistakenly sees the quote as taken from the Old Testament.

²⁰¹ *IgnEph.* 5:3.

²⁰² See *IgnMagn.* 12.

²⁰³ *IgnPhilad.* 5; 9. A. Harnack, *Marcion* (1923; 21924 = 1960), 114–16.

Quotes or allusions to the Jewish scriptures in Ignatius are, however, extremely rare (compared to the number of Christian quotes and allusions), and most quotes that occur, as with *Is. 52:5* in *IgnTrall. 8:2*, derive from Christian writings that Ignatius refers to.²⁰⁴

In his *Letter to the Philadelphians* Ignatius mentions the objection of some who say:

If I do not find it in the old Scriptures, I will not believe the Gospel; on my saying to them: It is written, they answered me: That remains to be proved. But to me Jesus Christ is in the place of all that is ancient: His cross, and death, and Resurrection, and the faith which is by Him, are undefiled monuments of antiquity; by which I desire, through your prayers, to be justified.²⁰⁵

Ignatius' εὐαγγέλιον = Gospel was questioned.²⁰⁶ Marcion's own position is partially adopted from both interlocutors. People influenced by yet critical of Marcion accepted that Christianity was based on writings. But they argued that they would not believe the Gospel, if they did not find the Christian claims in those scriptures that they (with Marcion) called old.²⁰⁷ This does not necessarily show an appreciation of those old scriptures, but rather a wish for a traditional basis of Christianity, whereby the Gospel is not purely a witness to something new but rooted in the Jewish past. The novelty of the Christian Gospel made Ignatius' dialogue partners doubt its authority. Ignatius' answer is as enlightening as it is unexpected. He does not link the Gospel back to the Jewish scriptures but follows Marcion. His response sounds like that of a three-quarter-Marcionite Paulinist, pointing to a Christ who replaced 'of all that is ancient' by making his cross, death and Resurrection the 'undefiled monuments of antiquity' – which should not be found elsewhere. Ignatius' christocentrism groups together Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the Prophets, the Apostles and the Church. Against Marcion, Ignatius maintains the prefiguration of Christ in the Prophets, but he sets it apart as former dispensation of grace from 'the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, His passion and Resurrection. For the beloved Prophets announced Him, but the Gospel is the perfection of immortality.'²⁰⁸ More than a touch of Marcion's antithetical thinking shines through this text. Ignatius is even more explicit and criticizes a life 'according to the Jewish law', an

²⁰⁴ See *PolPhil. 1*.

²⁰⁵ *IgnPhil. 8:2*.

²⁰⁶ C.E. Hill, 'Ignatius' (2005), 273.

²⁰⁷ Although T. Zahn had previously believed that Ignatius was hinting at the original autographs of the NT, see D. Hoffman, 'Authority' (1985), 75, but Hoffman can already refer to a list of scholars that maintained against Zahn that Ignatius is thinking of the Jewish Scriptures (Schoedel, Corwin, Grant, Lawson).

²⁰⁸ *IgnPhil. 9*.

‘acknowledgement that we have not received grace’, while the prophets are only ‘divine’, because they ‘lived according to Christ Jesus’.²⁰⁹

Ignatius was, therefore, clear about the rejection of the Jewish law:

If any one preach the Jewish law unto you, listen not to him. For it is better to hearken to Christian doctrine from a man who has been circumcised, than to Judaism from one uncircumcised. But if either of such persons do not speak concerning Jesus Christ, they are in my judgment but as monuments and sepulchres of the dead, upon which are written only the names of men.²¹⁰

We can presume that the ‘man who has been circumcised’ points to Paul – but who is the one who is uncircumcised, but moves Christians towards Judaism? Ignatius picks up Marcion’s accusation that Christians (even non-Jewish Christians) Judaized Christian literature, which to Ignatius is nothing else than ‘monuments and sepulchres of the dead’ with ‘names of men’, hence neither Apostolic nor spiritual authority, in contrast to Paul, the witness of the Resurrection! With his harsh criticism of the Judaizers, Ignatius enlightens Marcion’s position. Although he does not support Marcion’s antithetical thinking with regard to the prophets, he uses the Marcionite title of ‘the new man’ for Jesus Christ and believes ‘in His faith and in His love, in His suffering and in His Resurrection’.²¹¹ Strange for a martyr *in spe* on his way to Rome, Ignatius sounds like a prolific writer at a secure desk, speaking about his plans of ‘a second little work’ that he ‘will write ... [to] make further manifest ... [the nature of] the dispensation’, a treatise that was meant to expound on the newness of Christ. Prophets announce what becomes fulfilled: Jesus Christ is ‘of the seed of David according to the flesh, being both the Son of man and the Son of God’. It can hardly be an accident, and even less a prefiguration of future Marcionite teaching,²¹² that Ignatius first expounds catchwords and topics of his opponent, to then give his own reading of them.

Polycarp displays parallels to and differences from Ignatius. As with Ignatius (and later Justin and Irenaeus), the opponents in Polycarp still bear the simple name ‘Christians’ who cannot be identified as Christians.²¹³ And one must be cautious with profiling opponents, especially when material ‘could be directed against a variety of adversaries’.²¹⁴ Marcion, however, has been mentioned recurrently

²⁰⁹ *IgnMagn.* 8.

²¹⁰ *IgnPhilad.* 6.

²¹¹ *IgnEph.* 20.

²¹² So the position of M. Edwards, *Catholicity* (2009), who sees teachers like Marcion and Valentinus develop the seeds sown by Ignatius rather than Ignatius reflecting the teachings of such forerunners.

²¹³ See *PolPhil.* 6; *IgnEph.* 7.

²¹⁴ P.A. Hartog, ‘Opponents’ (2005), 391.

as one of Polycarp's opponents,²¹⁵ while he himself displays several Marcionite features.

Justice is a central theme in Polycarp, a topic that seems to be linked to the historical background: Polycarp asks us to pray 'for kings and persecutors', both in the plural.²¹⁶ As early as 1853 it was proposed that this must indicate the double reign by Lucius Verus and Marc Aurel in 161 AD, while in 1874 the reign of Marc Aurel and Antoninus Pius from 139 AD was suggested.²¹⁷ The latter date is supported by Justin and Melito of Sardis. Justin mentions the plural 'kings', referring to Antoninus Pius and Marc Aurel, and Melito 'shows that in the times of Marc Aurel, Christians still had a lively memory of the double reign of (the adopted) son and father'.²¹⁸ As Polycarp points out, a persecution raised the question of how to understand divine justice.²¹⁹ His opponent(s) had developed an explanation of 'justice' that took as a starting point the experience of the death by martyrdom of Ignatius and others in Philippi. They probably also suggested a dualistic Marcionite solution to the question of justice, the justice of the just creator God who makes people suffer martyrdom.²²⁰ 'Those members of the community who had written to Polycarp asked for an answer. If there is only one God, what is the nature of his justice? Why are there persecutions and martyrdoms? Polycarp replies christologically: Who believes in the cross, the Resurrection and judgement and, therefore, acknowledges the importance of Christ's suffering in the flesh, this person will not regard his own suffering in martyrdom as something unjust ... Christ's suffering has created a necessarily new understanding of justice'.²²¹

Unlike Papias and rather like Marcion, Polycarp mirrors Paul's language; he quotes him, in three instances mentions him explicitly and knows more about the Apostle than, for example, 1 *Clement* or Ignatius.²²² After naming three contemporary martyrs (among them Ignatius), Polycarp introduces by name only Paul, not Peter, Stephen or any other martyr of the past.²²³ Nevertheless, Polycarp does not display the same exclusive Paulinism as Marcion.

Akin to Marcion, Polycarp focuses exclusively on Christian writings; his text is almost a jigsaw of quotes from them. But Marcion's *Apostle's* has been replaced by writings of Apostles in the plural. Moreover, the material that Polycarp uses

²¹⁵ Rather sceptical with regard to Marcion is A. Lindemann, *Paulus* (1979), 87–8.

²¹⁶ *PolPhil.* 12.

²¹⁷ A. Hilgenfeld, *Väter* (1853); id., 'Ignatiusbriefe' (1874); see also T. Lechner, *Ignatius* (1999), 23.

²¹⁸ See Justin, 1 *Apol.* 14:5, 17:3; Melito's *Apology* in Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* IV 26,10; T. Lechner, *Ignatius* (1999), 23 n56.

²¹⁹ *PolPhil.* 7–9.

²²⁰ See the reconstruction of the historical situation in T. Lechner, *Ignatius* (1999), 35–6; see also N. Brox, 'Gerechtigkeit' (1982).

²²¹ T. Lechner, *Ignatius* (1999), 36 (my own trans.).

²²² *PolPhil.* 3; 9; 11; A. Lindemann, *Paulus* (1979), 87.

²²³ *PolPhil.* 9; 'other apostles' are introduced only in a summary.

does not come solely from *Luke*, *Mark* and *Matthew*. He also quotes Paul.²²⁴ But he adds a citation from the first chapter of *Luke* (1:18), which did not figure in Marcion's Gospel, and elaborates a pronounced, if subtle, criticism of Paul's letters. He cleverly conceptualizes the difference between Paul's accurate and authoritative teaching while Paul was with people, face to face, and the distance that shines through letters that Paul wrote 'when he was absent'.²²⁵ Of course, Polycarp maintains that the letters still enable readers to be built up in faith, but they need 'studying'. Paul's message invoked by Marcion is altered by Polycarp: where in *Gal. 2:2*²²⁶ the Apostle speaks of his own authority ('I had not run in vain'), Polycarp extends this saying to the plural that 'all these (Apostles) did not run in vain'.²²⁷ Polycarp adds to the Apostles the authority of the Prophets.²²⁸

Despite redressing some Marcionite arguments Polycarp, like Ignatius, also adopts Marcion. He does not refer to the Jewish scriptures, except where these are embedded in Christian ones. Where he mentions the 'sacred writings' and 'scriptures', in fact he is only quoting *Ephesians* and *1 Clement*.²²⁹ He accepts the embedded Jewish scriptural quotations, but distances himself from them: 'They have not been left to me'. Antithetically, like Marcion, the 'now' of the Christian revelation of 'faith and truth', that God builds up 'without anger' is set against 'these scriptures' where we read that we should 'be angry' and should 'not sin'.²³⁰

Polycarp also accepts the Pauline/Marcionite emphasis on the Resurrection, but criticizes the 'empty, vain discussion and the error of the crowd'. The Resurrection was 'foretold from earliest times'.²³¹ With a quote from *1 Peter* 1:21,²³² a letter that Papias also knew, Polycarp endorses that God, the Father, raised our Lord,²³³ whereas Marcion spoke of Christ's having raised himself.²³⁴ Following

²²⁴ *2 Cor.* 4:14 and *Rom.* 8:11.

²²⁵ *PolPhil.* 3.

²²⁶ See also *Phil.* 2:16.

²²⁷ *PolPhil.* 9.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 6, 9.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 12; *Eph.* 4:26, within which, of course, *Ps.* 4:5 is cited. When he adds 'let not the sun set upon your wrath', he is still quoting *Eph.* 4:26, but not 'mistakenly' takes this quote 'to be from the OT' – so W.R. Schoedel, Apparatus, in *The Apostolic Fathers V* (1967), 35.

²³⁰ *PolPhil.* 12; this connection has got lost through the chapter division whereby the beginning of ch. 12 is being taken into 'XI. Sobriety "in this thing"'.
²³¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

²³² Not the sole quote from this text, which opened chapter 2 with *1 Peter* 1:13!

²³³ See *PolPhil.* 1, 2, 9, 12.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 2, a tenet accepted even by *IgnSm.* 1–2; on Marcion see Tert., *Adv. Marc.* V 1,3; the autoanastasis was also taught by others who were engaged with Marcion: see Noët of Smyrna, in Hippol., *Ref.* IX 10,12; see also Ps.-Hippol., *C. Noët.* 3,2; see also *Mart. Petri* 2; compare with the Resurrection in Justin, *Dial.* 85,1; Melito, *On Pascha* 8; Iren., *Adv. haer.* III 4,2; id., *Dem.* 38; Tert., *De praescr.* XIII 4; id., *De carne* V 4.

on from the counter-Marcionite introduction of apostles and prophets, Polycarp quotes twice from *1John*, the other letter Papias knew of, in a slightly shortened and adapted version (set in *italics*): 'Everyone who *does not* confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is ... antichrist and anyone who does not confess *the testimony of the cross* is of the devil.'²³⁵ The quote from the Lord's Prayer²³⁶ he combines with another that can only be found in the two Papian authorities, *Mark* (14:38) and *Matthew* (26:41), not in any of Marcion's texts.

Polycarp hints at Marcion with his harsh criticism of 'anyone who treats the sayings of the Lord to suit his own likings and says that there is neither a resurrection nor a judgement – that man is the First-born of Satan!'²³⁷ Irenaeus recognizes that this accusation of the 'First-born of Satan' was directed against Marcion.²³⁸ His critical statement underlines that, as in Papias (and Justin), the Gospel narratives were of no concern to Polycarp, only the Lord's sayings. Marcion had denied the flesh of Christ, so did he reject a fleshly resurrection of the dead, and a final judgement and future of the flesh. And although Polycarp criticizes Marcion harshly for tortuous interpretations and theological shortcomings, he does not advance against him that he mutilated or shortened a Gospel. Instead, Polycarp believed that the criticized could mediate his theological position by way of repentance, hence he asks him to return 'to the word handed on to us from the beginning',²³⁹ alluding not to a text but to the belief in a fleshly Christ, that Christ in his own 'body bore our sins on the tree who committed no sin nor was deceit found in his mouth'.²⁴⁰

It is an almost paradoxical proximity and distance that transpires between Polycarp and Marcion, even more so than in Ignatius: Polycarp (with Marcion) rejects the Jewish scriptures *per se*, but sees Christ's fleshliness as traditional core message. The Resurrection is of salvific relevance without advocating a purely Marcionite reading of it: 'He who raised him from the dead will also raise us if we do his will and walk in his commandments and love the things he loved.'²⁴¹ With a critical look at Marcion's wealth,²⁴² Polycarp deals with 'the beginning of all difficulties', namely 'the love of money'.²⁴³ And, although he endorses Marcion's emphasis on purity, discipline, even 'complete chastity', he moderates his asceticism, adding that one should also teach marriage and bringing up children.²⁴⁴

²³⁵ *PolPhil.* 7; *1John* 4:2–3, 3:8.

²³⁶ Identical in *Matth.* 6:13 and *Luke* 11:4.

²³⁷ *PolPhil.* 7; the discussion of justice in the same chapter made scholars think of an anti-Marcionite reaction: see T. Lechner, *Ignatius* (1999), 36.

²³⁸ *Iren.*, *Adv. haer.* III 3.4; Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* IV 14.7.

²³⁹ *PolPhil.* 7.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 8; see *1Petr.* 2:24,22; *Is.* 53:9.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁴² And not just with regard to the former elder Valens, who is only dealt with in chapter 11.

²⁴³ *PolPhil.* 4.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 4–5.

The Resurrection ‘Mania’

Only as a result of Marcion’s rediscovery of Paul and his promotion of the ‘Gospel’ within his ‘New Testament’,²⁴⁵ did Christ’s Resurrection regain a place in the memory of Christianity. As soon as the fourfold Gospel with Easter narratives was born, the Resurrection message, despite the inclusion of so many non-Resurrection letters in the broadened New Testament, began to grow in importance. Still, and we can assume because of its relatively late reappearance in Christian consciousness and its promotion by Marcion, for decades the Resurrection could not gain the same level of importance that older tenets like theophany, incarnation and the death on the cross had. Only in those circles that were heavily influenced by Marcion did a Resurrection ‘mania’ develop.

Marcion’s concern with Paul underlines that he was not primarily interested in a philosophical concept of God, although he was well trained in rhetoric, literature and philosophy.²⁴⁶ According to Tertullian, Marcion’s prime concern was ‘men’s own salvation’. He doubted that human flesh could and should be rescued, ‘for there is greater difficulty in believing the resurrection of the flesh than the oneness of the Deity’.²⁴⁷ Marcion regarded flesh as matter and a product of the creator, who out of uncreated pre-existing matter had created a world where suffering and death prevailed from inception.²⁴⁸ Horrified at the flesh’s conception, growth in pregnancy, and birth from the ‘sewer’ of a womb, he rejected ‘that workshop for bringing forth the noble animal which is man’, result of ‘the nastinesses of genital elements in the womb, the filthy curdling of moisture and blood, and of the flesh to be for nine months nourished on that same mire’. He added:

Draw a picture of the womb getting daily more unmanageable, heavy, self-concerned, safe not even in sleep, uncertain in the whims of dislikes and appetites. Next go all out against the modesty of the travailing woman, a modesty which at least because of danger ought to be respected and because of its nature is sacred. You shudder, of course, at the child passed out along with his afterbirth, and of course bedaubed with it. You think it shameful that he is straightened out with

²⁴⁵ See H. v. Campenhausen, *Formation* (1972), 147–63; H. Koester, *Gospels* (1990), 35–43.

²⁴⁶ See J.G. Gager, ‘Marcion’ (1972) on his knowledge of Epicurus; B. Aland, ‘Marcion/Marcioniten’ (1992), 93; ead., ‘Sünde’ (2002); W. Löhr, ‘Marcion’ (2002).

²⁴⁷ Tert., *De res.* 2; Engl. trans. by P. Holmes, *The Writings of Qu. S. F. Tertullianus* II, The Ante-Nicene Christian Library, 25 (Edinburgh, 1870), 217–18.

²⁴⁸ See Tert., *Adv. Marc.* I 15, picked up by Hermogenes, see Tert., *Adv. Hermog.* 23–4. It is important to note that such anti-cosmicism with its rejection of the creator god also occurred within the Jewish tradition: see B.A. Pearson, ‘Problem’ (1986).

bandages, that he is licked into shape with applications of oil, that he is beguiled by coddling.²⁴⁹

As with the 'unclean and shameful torments of child-bearing', so, after birth, this product grows through 'the dirty, troublesome, and ridiculous management of the new-born child'.²⁵⁰

Man's flesh was not worthy to be put on by Christ, nor to be resurrected from death. The passage in (pre-)Luke 8:19–21 served as proof that Christ resisted the temptation to make the link with an earthly mother or with sisters.²⁵¹ The hiatus between an earthly creature of ephemeral flesh and the heavenly Lord was unbridgeable.²⁵²

How could Paul's God of Love create a cosmos with darkness, birth, pain and death? Why could the one who provides eternal life punish and admit murder? Belief in the God of Love made Marcion see the antithesis of the Gospel and the Jewish scriptures with their accounts of the creator, an evil god of law and justice. This world was of no value. Neither matter nor flesh, but 'solely the soul' could be saved. When the Saviour appeared on earth, he did so in the same angelic nature in which he was seen after his Resurrection. Saving men meant bringing back the noble animal to the one God of Love. God's sole intent was to deliver humans from the evil god – despite the intervening law.²⁵³

Increasingly, scholars note the Resurrection of Christ in Marcion.²⁵⁴ Its importance can be seen from Marcion's opponent Tertullian. After his early, lost, tract *On the one God and Christ, against Marcion*,²⁵⁵ where it seems that he attacked the inconsistency of Marcion's christocentric monotheism,²⁵⁶ Tertullian started refuting Marcion's teaching on the Resurrection in *On the flesh of (the risen) Christ*. Christ, he insisted, was not an angelic phantasm, but rose in real flesh and blood, as he was really born, really suffered and died on the cross in human flesh.²⁵⁷ Add-

²⁴⁹ Tert., *De carne* 4, trans. Ernest Evans, *Tertullian's Treatise on the Incarnation* (London, 1956).

²⁵⁰ Tert., *Adv. Marc.* III 11.

²⁵¹ Tert., *De carne* 7.

²⁵² *1Cor.* 15:47: 'The first man is an earthly man, the second Lord is from heaven'; *1Cor.* 15:50: 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable'. See Tert., *Adv. Marc.* V 10; *De carne* 8; Iren., *Adv. haer.* V 9,1; Justin, *De res.* in Methodius (370,10–11 Bonwetsch).

²⁵³ *Rom.* 5:20. See Tert., *Adv. Marc.* V 13,10; B. Aland, 'Sünde' (2002), 148, 152–3.

²⁵⁴ See K. Greschat, *Apelles* (1999); see T. Baarda, *Marcion* (1988); A. Harnack, *Marcion* (1923; 21924 = 1960); E.C. Blackman, *Marcion* (1948); A. Orbe, *Introduccion* (1987), II 852–3; id., 'Doctrina' (1993), 64; id., *Teologia de San Ireneo* (1985), 122, 135.

²⁵⁵ Mentioned in Tert., *De res.* II 11.

²⁵⁶ I am grateful to Alaistar Stewart-Sykes for drawing attention to this terminology (already to be found in Stuart Hall's edition of Melito of Sardis, *On Pascha* [1979], xliii).

²⁵⁷ See Tert., *De carne* V 2–4.

ing *On the resurrection of the dead*, Tertullian demonstrated the consequences of Christ's fleshly Resurrection for the resurrection of men. In his five books *Against Marcion*, Tertullian comes back to his own theologically oriented agenda and argues a lengthy case against the perceived dualism of Marcion.²⁵⁸ But even in these books, running through Marcion's readings of (pre-)Luke and Paul, Tertullian frequently discusses Christ's appearances and his Resurrection, culminating in despising Marcion's interpretation of the Resurrection accounts in the Gospel. Similarly, ancient authors who adopted or refuted Marcion regularly critiqued his teaching on the Resurrection.²⁵⁹

Why was Christ's Resurrection important to Marcion? Certainly it was central to Paul as the foundation of salvation, but over time the Resurrection had moved into the shadow of other theological tenets. If the Resurrection was maintained by some authors, even within the Pauline tradition, it was regarded at best as metaphorical expression or as mere evidence for the general resurrection of the dead at the end of days.

Marcion, who was a fervent supporter of Paul's philosophy, must have seen the gap between what he read in the Apostle, and what his contemporaries made out of his hero's core idea. To him neglecting the Resurrection looked like a Judaizing deviation, a rewriting, or a falling away from Paul's Gospel of which Paul had warned his communities. Paul was downplayed, ignored or rejected.²⁶⁰ *Acts* opens with a list of eleven Apostles²⁶¹ who elect a replacement for Judas. Peter is the one who defines the genuine candidate as a Resurrection witness, a man who has 'accompanied us during all the time the Lord Jesus associated with us, beginning from his baptism by John until the day he was taken up from us – one of these must become a witness of his Resurrection together with us'.²⁶² Paul did not meet Peter's conditions. He had never seen Jesus of Nazareth, was not present at his baptism or his ascension, was not 'together' with Peter, and *Acts* seems to claim that neither was Paul a Resurrection witness. True, Paul is silent about the empty tomb and does not claim that he ever visited Golgotha in Jerusalem, but he makes the bold claim of being an Apostle and Resurrection witness,²⁶³ which Marcion endorses.

²⁵⁸ Tert., *Adv. Marc.* I 2,2; already seen by the French editor and translator of *De res.* J.-P. Mahé, *Chair* (1975), 30–31.

²⁵⁹ See, for example, Iren., *Adv. haer.* I 27,2–3 and V 1,1–14,5; see A. Orbe, *Teologia de San Ireneo* (1985), 319–21, 324–8, and id., 'Adversarios' (1979); see Ps.-Tert., *Adv. omnes haer.* 6; on Apelles and his theology of the Resurrection see Hippol., *Ref.* VII 38,4; Philastr., *Diversarum hereseon liber* 47; Epiph., *Pan.* XLIV 3; Aug., *De haer.* 23 and below.

²⁶⁰ M. Klinghardt, "'Gesetz'" (2006), 126 speaks of 'smoothing the edges' or the 'watering down' ('Weichzeichnung') of Paul.

²⁶¹ *Acts* 1:13: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas son of James.

²⁶² *Acts* 1:21–2.

²⁶³ 1Cor. 15.

In *Acts* Paul was no authority, but he depended on the Apostles of the Jerusalem community and was sent as an envoy of the community of Antioch, something Paul, of course, had explicitly denied.²⁶⁴ *Acts* advocates – as do many other writings – the closed group of ‘the Twelve’, while Paul reported that on his visit to Peter, with whom he stayed for two weeks, he ‘saw none of the other Apostles except James the Lord’s brother’.²⁶⁵ When, fourteen years later, Paul made another journey to Jerusalem for his ‘private meeting with the influential people’, he names only three: James and Peter (both again) and John, the three pillars also known from the synoptic Gospels.²⁶⁶ He regarded himself as not less than these three before God. Apostleship was God’s endowment, based on ‘1) witnessing an appearance of the risen Christ, and 2) receiving a divine call or commission to proclaim Christ’s message’.²⁶⁷

For Paul Apostleship was related to target groups – the circumcised for Peter, and for him the Gentiles:

Those who were influential whatever they were make no difference to me; God shows no favoritism between people – those influential leaders [he does not say ‘Apostles’!] added nothing to my message. On the contrary, they saw that I was entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised just as Peter was to the circumcised (for he who empowered Peter for his apostleship to the circumcised also empowered me for my apostleship to the Gentiles).²⁶⁸

Paul did not adopt a Jerusalem type of apostleship.²⁶⁹ In *1Cor.* 15:1–11 Paul gives his list of Resurrection authorities, starting with Peter/Cephas, then the Twelve, then more than five hundred, then James, then all the Apostles.²⁷⁰ He adds: ‘Last of all, as though to one born at the wrong time, he appeared to me also’. It sounds as if Paul toned down his own claims to authority, as if he would have loved to have been born earlier (he seems to be a generation younger than Jesus and the other Apostles). He is, however, anything but modest. Paul uses his *captatio benevolentiae* to boldly state his own apostleship, the essential condition for being an ‘Apostle’, namely witnessing the risen Christ, irrespective of where and when this encounter happened. The last appearance is as valid as the first, the singular as authoritative as the one endorsed by a multitude, the one of Peter, James or the Twelve not different to that of the five hundred. One might call him ‘the least of

²⁶⁴ *Gal.* 2:2.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:19.

²⁶⁶ *Mark* 3:16–9; *Matth.* 10:2–16; *Luke* 6:14–6; *Acts* 1:13.

²⁶⁷ *1Cor.* 9:1; A.G. Brock, *Mary* (2003), 6.

²⁶⁸ *Gal.* 2:6–8.

²⁶⁹ Pace J. Roloff, ‘Apostel’ (1978), 436.

²⁷⁰ The question whether because of the parallel construction of the phrases Peter is one of the Twelve, while James is seen as one of the other Apostles, has been raised already and is still under discussion: see J. Dupont, ‘Apôtres’ (1956), 273–81.

the Apostles', but he insists on having had the same experience as all other Apostles.²⁷¹

Paul knew of people in the early community who were proud of their own apostleship²⁷² and challenged his, not only on the basis of his biographical past, but because of the time gap between his claimed 'revelation' and the Resurrection appearances to others. Having mentioned the precise period of three days between Jesus' death and the Resurrection,²⁷³ Paul is vague with regard to the timeline of the Resurrection appearances to the disciples ('Then ... then ...'). The skilled rhetorician uses the accusation of his opponents to turn his own perceived weakness into divine strength, twisting it not solely into a spiritually powerful position but also into one with real effects that place him and his mission above all other Apostles:

*But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me has not been in vain. In fact, I worked harder than all of them – yet not I, but the grace of God with me. Whether then it was I or they, this is the way we preach and this is the way you believed.*²⁷⁴

Marcion liked Paul's firm stance against his judaizing opponents with reference to the Resurrection. In *Rom.* 6:1–11 Paul spoke about the 'new life' that Christians attained through baptism, 'buried' with Christ but living 'as Christ was raised from the dead' in 'the likeness of his Resurrection'. Paul listed the antitheses between old and new: 'our old man was crucified', but we are living 'to God in Christ',²⁷⁵ being 'in Christ' means being 'a new creation; what is old has passed away – look, what is new has come!'²⁷⁶ We are released from the Jewish law, 'because we have died to what controlled us, so that we may serve in the new life of the Spirit and not under the old written code'.²⁷⁷ Those liberated from the law have become 'servants of a new covenant not based on the letter but on the Spirit, for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life'.²⁷⁸ This 'new covenant', also key in the eucharist,²⁷⁹ is the antithesis to the 'old covenant',²⁸⁰ setting a sharp contrast to how the scripture was

²⁷¹ See A.G. Brock, *Mary* (2003), 9–15, on the important 'role of Resurrection witness narratives'.

²⁷² See *2Cor.* 11:5, 13, 12:11.

²⁷³ *1Cor.* 15:4 with reference to the Jewish scriptures.

²⁷⁴ *1Cor.* 15:10.

²⁷⁵ See W. Kinzig, *Novitas* (1994), 105–6.

²⁷⁶ *2Cor.* 5:17.

²⁷⁷ *Rom.* 7:6.

²⁷⁸ *2Cor.* 3:6.

²⁷⁹ *1Cor.* 11:25; *Luke* 22:20.

²⁸⁰ *2Cor.* 3:14.

read before: 'When they [the Jews] hear the old covenant read', 'a veil lies over their minds, but when one turns to the Lord, *the veil is removed*'.²⁸¹

Marcion did not deny the proximity of Christianity to Israel and Judaism, but he pointed out their strict antithesis.²⁸² Christianity, for the first time, was conceptualized as a separate identity, no longer a strand within Judaism, but as something new. Whether different views on God, Christ and the Resurrection are grounds or consequences of this new identity is not entirely clear, but Paul's position was key. Adolf Harnack, the great German scholar of Patristics who still after over 100 years of modern scholarship on Marcion dominates the discussion, relates that Marcion with his *Antitheses* was essentially a Biblicist.²⁸³

Despite a strict opposition between the divine Just that Marcion read in the Jewish scriptures and the caring and loving Father that he found in Paul and his Gospel, Marcion's belief was christocentric and monotheistic.²⁸⁴ To adhere to the one loving God was to believe in the hitherto-unknown, entirely Transcendent who, for the first time, was revealed by the Lord, the incarnate Love Himself. Clearly, Marcion was influenced by contemporary philosophical fashions, as Paul or Philo of Alexandria a hundred years earlier had been by theirs, but since then philosophy had moved on from a Stoic positive appreciation of the cosmos to a sceptical judgement about this world. Marcion was influenced, too, by Paul's ethical admonitions, and fuelled by a strong moral reading of Paul in the Pauline tradition. As part of the latter, Marcion developed Paul's moral rigour further into an outspoken ethical radicalism and a negative judgement about this world.

In this sense, Marcion shared ground with, but also distanced himself from, other Pauline as well as Stoic and Middle-Platonic teachers. Since Philo of Alexandria at the latest, thinkers of many colours had embraced the notion of a mounting transcendence of the very first principle. And it may have been at the creative crossroads of Jewish monotheism, Platonism, Aristotelism and Stoicism in Philo that Plato's differentiation between God and the creator sparked a consideration of several hierarchical principles. The creator himself, unbearable to his creatures as the empowering pure sun to us on this earth,²⁸⁵ had to be moved such a distance from the world, and the world to be so guarded from its creator, that Philo granted to this God the creation of only the ideal world of a rational cosmos, which he read in the first day of the creation story of *Genesis* (*Gen.* 1).

²⁸¹ Tert., *Adv. Marc.* V 11 (giving the *Gospel* a superiority to which Tertullian in principle agrees); *2Cor.* 3:14–6; see *Hebr.* 8:13.

²⁸² See W. Kinzig, *Novitas* (1994), 126–8.

²⁸³ See A. Harnack, *Marcion* (1923; 21924 = 1960), 93. Nevertheless he rarely adheres to reading Marcion according to this hermeneutical principle: see my contribution 'Schluß' (2002), 80, and now S. Moll, *The Arch-Heretic* (2010).

²⁸⁴ See A. Harnack, *Marcion* (1923; 21924 = 1960), 123 who sees Marcion as a 'modalist monarchian' theologian; see also W. Löhr, 'Marcion' (2002).

²⁸⁵ See Philo, *Quod deus* 77, 79, *De spec. leg.* I 60; F.-N. Klein, *Lichtterminologie* (1962), 23–4, 77–8.

The creation of matter and earth that followed, especially the creation of human beings pending between virtue and vice, Philo attributed to God's assisting powers ('mother of the cosmos') rather than to the 'father of the cosmos', indicated in *Genesis* by the plural ('Let us make ...') and by God's using soil of the ground and his breath of life.²⁸⁶

If we compare Marcion to his fellow teachers, his radical Paulinism stands out. To Marcion, Paul alone had a correct understanding of Jesus' message and of the Christian mystery that originated from the revelation that Paul had received.²⁸⁷ To Paul alone was the title 'Apostle' genuinely to be credited. All other so-called Apostles had never grasped the message of Love, never moved away from Judaism, and threatened to minimize the novelty of Jesus' revelation.

Moreover, Paul alone had met the real Christ, not an earthly one who by his very nature would have been part of the creator's world and could not serve as redeemer. Instead, the Saviour had appeared on earth in the angelic flesh of the Risen. He had lifted Paul into the third heaven where he – and he alone – was endowed with the divine message that was 'so secret that human lips may not repeat it'.²⁸⁸ Not solely for Marcion, it seems, was this Resurrection scenario the key to understanding Paul. A generation later, Theodot calls Paul 'the type of the Paraclete' who 'became the Apostle of the Resurrection', who 'after the suffering of the Lord had also been sent to preach'.²⁸⁹ Epiphanius in the fourth century even knows of so-called Cainites who kept the *Ascent of Paul*, a book that contained the 'secret words' of which Paul spoke in *2Corinthians*.²⁹⁰

Christ's appearance in an angelic body was consistent with Marcion's Gospel, which did not start as *Luke* today with the narrative of the birth in the days of Herod, the king of the Jews,²⁹¹ but with the 'unexpected appearance of the Son, who was unexpectedly sent as the unexpected Christ, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Caesar Tiberius', in the days of the pagan emperor.²⁹² For Marcion, the pagan Roman Empire, not Judaea, is the stage; Christ's home, however, is heaven.

²⁸⁶ See Philo, *De ebrietate* 30; 184; see A.N.M. Rich, 'Ideas' (1954); A. Hockel, *Christus* (1965), 41; D.T. Runia, 'Philo' (1990), 8–9.

²⁸⁷ See Iren., *Adv. haer.* III 13,1: *Solus Paulus ueritatem cognouit, cui per reuelationem manifestatum est mysterium*; see the counter-argument in Ps.–Clem., *Hom. XVII* 18–19: 'From this time I learned that revelation is knowledge gained without instruction, and without apparition and dreams ... And how are we to believe your word, when you tell us that he appeared to you?'; *ApcPt* 75; and in contrast to these counterarguments, see *ApcPl*.

²⁸⁸ *2Cor.* 12:4.

²⁸⁹ In *Clem. Alex., Exc. ex Thdt.* 23,2.

²⁹⁰ See *Epiph., Pan.* XXXVIII 2,5.

²⁹¹ *Luke* 1:5. Potentially one of the reasons why Hippol., *Ref.* VII 20.1 thinks of a link between Marcion and *Mark*, as this gospel lacks the birth story.

²⁹² See *Luke* 3:1a; so Tert., *Adv. Marc.* III 2,2–3, I 19,2; A. Harnack, *Marcion* (1923; ²1924 = 1960), 185*; M. Klinghardt, 'Gesetz' (2006), 105.

The opening of Marcion's Gospel is followed by a story in which Jesus 'went down from above, he appeared and in the synagogue began to teach the people. They were amazed at his teaching, because he spoke with authority' (*Luke* 4:31–7). And the pericope ends with a big dissent:

When they heard this, all the people in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, forced him out of the town, and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. But he passed through the crowd and went on his way.²⁹³

This beginning matches the end of the Gospel, with the Resurrection appearance.²⁹⁴

The appearance of the Risen Christ to Paul is mentioned three times in Paul.²⁹⁵ Paul's vision and revelation gave him his authority, which depended neither on Jewish- nor on pseudo-apostolic tradition. His apostleship derived directly from the Risen Christ and from the unknown God.²⁹⁶

The Resurrection stories in (pre-) *Luke* supported Marcion's reading of Paul, as they display the disciples' blindness to the Risen Christ. Although the Lord walked with the two disciples towards Emmaus, 'their eyes were kept from recognizing him', and although he tried to explain what had happened before, Jesus concluded: 'You foolish people – how slow of heart to believe.'²⁹⁷

How differently did Paul react! Fleshly people around Jesus, even his closest disciples, did not recognize the angelic appearance. Marcion was sure that the so-called Apostles played a miserable role.²⁹⁸ 'Even during his life, Jesus did not achieve to make them believe that he is the son of an alien God ... It is about them when Jesus mourns about the "unbelieving generation".'²⁹⁹ At the end, the disciples remained sceptical about the one who had preached, suffered and risen. Like the 'Judaizers'³⁰⁰ they promoted a pseudo-apostolic mission and mixed law-like elements with the pure, love-based Gospel.³⁰¹ Jesus must have

²⁹³ *Luke* 4:24,28–30.

²⁹⁴ *Luke* 24:36–43,41–2,47,49; and see below.

²⁹⁵ *Gal.* 2:2; *1Cor.* 15:8; *2Cor.* 12:1–4. This can be seen from the reaction in *Iren., Adv. haer.* III 1–3; unfortunately we do not know whether, or to what extent, Marcion used *1Cor.* 15:5–9.

²⁹⁶ See Tert., *Adv. Marc.* I 14, 29, V 12; A. Harnack, *Marcion* (1923; 21924 = 1960), 101–2.

²⁹⁷ *Luke* 24:16,25.

²⁹⁸ See *Luke* 6:13ff.

²⁹⁹ A. Harnack, *Marcion* (1923; 21924 = 1960), 37–8, Tert., *Adv. Marc.* IV 13.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, V 3.

³⁰¹ *Iren., Adv. haer.* III 12,12; Tert., *Adv. Marc.* IV 11.

been severely disappointed at having chosen Peter, a ‘man of the law’,³⁰² Judas and the others.³⁰³

The Resurrection appearances to the disciples were the summit of the Gospel story of God’s loving offer and the failure of the human response. The ascension scene, missing in Marcion’s Gospel, reads like a correction. Located near Bethany, topographically close to Jerusalem,³⁰⁴ it provides the link to *Acts*. According to *Acts*, the ascension took place at ‘the Mount of Olives’.³⁰⁵ Instead, Marcion relies solely on Paul’s statement that Christ ‘was raised’, ‘is at the right hand of God’, and that those who ‘have been raised with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is’.³⁰⁶ Paul does not mention an ascension. And Marcion reads the admonition to think not about earthly locations, but about a hidden life:

Keep thinking about things above, not things on the earth, for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.³⁰⁷

Luke and *Acts* contradict Marcion’s purely spiritual reading of Paul. But other Christian authors prior to Marcion do not display any knowledge about Christ’s ascension either (*Didache*, *Hermas*), and even contemporaries of Marcion shared his scepticism (Polycarp, Ignatius), while – like the Resurrection – the ascension became emphatically emphasized in writings directed against Marcion.³⁰⁸

Luke 24 in the version of Marcion’s Gospel describes the appearance of the Risen to his disciples in Jerusalem:³⁰⁹

24:36 While they were saying these things, he [the Risen] himself stood among them and said to them: ‘Peace be with you.’ 24:37 But they were startled and terrified, thinking they saw a phantasm. 24:38 Then he said to them: ‘Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 24:39 Look at my hands and my feet; it’s me! A spirit has not bones as you see me having.’ 24:41 And while they still could not believe it, he said to them: ‘Do you have anything here to eat?’ 24:42 So they gave him a piece of broiled fish, 24:43 and he took it and

³⁰² Tert., *Adv. Marc.* IV 11.

³⁰³ See A. Harnack, *Marcion* (1923; 21924 = 1960), 38.

³⁰⁴ *Luke* 24:50.

³⁰⁵ *Acts* 1:12.

³⁰⁶ *Rom.* 8:34; *Eph.* 1:20.

³⁰⁷ *Col.* 3:1–3.

³⁰⁸ Tertullian, *EpAp* 51, or in non-Pauline writings like the *Apocalypse of Peter* 17 and the *Pistis Sophia* 2–3.

³⁰⁹ The most detailed study of this passage can be found in M. Klinghardt, ‘Gesetz’ (2006), 114–19.

ate it in front of them. 24:44 Then he spoke to them, 24:47/9 'and I am sending you to preach³¹⁰ to all nations'.

Against Marcion, the *Luke* version provides references to Christ fulfilling the Jewish scriptures, Jerusalem as the beginning of Christian preaching, physicalities (flesh, hands and feet, touching and seeing), and elements that supported a physical reading of the Resurrection appearance 'on the third day'.

The search for a discussion of this appearance passage elsewhere in early Christian writings of the second century yields only two results:

The first is the description and refutation of the teaching of the so-called Ophites.³¹¹ According to Irenaeus of Lyon, the Ophites distinguished between Christ and Jesus. After Jesus' death, Christ had not forgotten about Jesus, and poured out on him from above a power that awoke him in his body. This body, however, was not a cosmic body, but psychic and pneumatic, because the cosmic elements that Jesus held within himself before his death had been left behind in the world.³¹² The account positions the Ophites in proximity to the Valentinians, who distinguished among the cosmic, psychic and pneumatic.

Second, the appearance story reappears as a key passage in the description and refutation of Marcion's teachings.³¹³ Tertullian reports:

Now here Marcion, on purpose I believe, has abstained from crossing out of his gospel certain matters opposed to him, hoping that in view of these which he might have crossed out and has not, he may be thought not to have crossed out those which he has crossed out, or even to have crossed them out with good reason. But he is only sparing to statements which he proceeds to overturn by strange interpretation no less than by deletion. He will have it then that [the words] *A spirit has not bones as you see me having*, were so spoken as to be referred to the spirit, 'as you see me having', meaning, not having bones, even as a spirit has not.³¹⁴

Was Marcion's reading of this story a 'strange interpretation'? Instead of identifying the 'phantasm' of v. 37 with the spirit in v. 39 as we have it in *Luke*, Marcion

³¹⁰ Thanks to the attentive note by M. Klinghardt, 'Gesetz' (2006), 115 n67, I have to correct my earlier version of this text and regard 'repentance for the forgiveness of sins' as not being present in Marcion, while he obviously read the first part of what is given in *Luke* 24:49, according to Tert., *Adv. Marc.* IV 43,9.

³¹¹ See J.N. Gruber, *Ophiten* (1864), 123–31.

³¹² See Iren., *Adv. haer.* I 30,13; see also P.F.M. Fontaine, *Light* (1993), 147; A. Hönic, *Ophiten* (1889); B. Witte, *Ophitendiagramm* (1993), 149–63.

³¹³ Whether or not in relation, reaction or unconnected to the Ophites is uncertain. See *EpAp* 11 (22) on *Luke* 24:37,39; *Or.Syb.* 8; Iren., *Adv. haer.* V 2,1; Epiph., *Pan.* XLII 3–5,11 (school. 78); Ps.–Just., *De res.* 9; Adam., *Dial.* V.

³¹⁴ Tert., *Adv. Marc.* IV 43,6–7.

differentiates between the two. Because the disciples doubt, they mistakenly take the Risen for a phantasm, and not for the boneless spirit. They are startled and frightened. Despite the Lord's assertion ('It's me!') and his show-eating in front of them, the disciples 'still could not believe'.

To Marcion, this proves the disciples to be pseudo-Apostles. They encounter the Risen, but they do not understand him. When the Lord explains to them that he is a spirit without bones, not simply a phantasm or phantom, a spirit who can eat with them – reminding us of the Eucharist –, the disciples are puzzled. Because the Jewish pseudo-Apostles are not fit for their mission, Paul disseminates Christ's message to the Gentile nations.

Contrary to the drastic 'realism' of *Luke's* version, Marcion emphasizes the pneumatic aspect of the Risen, without denying any bodily constitution of Christ. On the contrary, he promotes the idea of a special body not only of the Risen but also of the Lord who had appeared on earth. As Harnack commented: 'As the angels that visited Abraham were no phantoms, but truly and bodily persons who were able to eat, so Christ, too, was not a phantasm, but God who appeared as a human appearance and who allowed himself to feel like a human being, to act and to suffer'.³¹⁵ Marcion only rejected any creaturely, fleshly matter in Christ, as ephemeral, transient matter was regarded by him as the product of a weak, cruel, angry and petty-minded creator.

The difference from the 'realism'-oriented Tertullian becomes even clearer when we look at Marcion's interpretation of Christ's descent into hell.³¹⁶ This journey underlines 'the unreliability of the Creator God who fails to inspire trust in his disciples', an untrustworthiness that would not even 'qualify for a god according to the philosophical standards of Antiquity'.³¹⁷

In the eyes of Marcion's pupils, Tertullian had the same crude realistic understanding as those disciples who altered the Gospel and forged *Luke*. Tertullian reveals the principle misunderstanding when he asks: why did Jesus offer to show to his disciples his hands and feet, if they were without bones? And why did he emphasize that it was himself, if he was no longer in the body as he was before? Moreover, why did Marcion criticize the disciples for believing that they saw a phantasm?

All presuppositions of the three arguments had been rejected by Marcion, who stated that:

1. The one who appeared on earth had no earthly, fleshly body, but hands and feet have to be understood spiritually.

³¹⁵ A. Harnack, *Marcion* (1923; 21924 = 1960), 125.

³¹⁶ I refrain from looking into this topic, as the descent is a broad subject on its own, and has been dealt with in some detail with regard to early Christianity.

³¹⁷ W. Löhr, 'Marcion' (2002), 145; see Iren., *Adv. haer.* I 27.

2. The Risen was the same as the one on the cross and the same who had appeared on earth before; he was never a fleshly being, but always the spiritual redeemer of an angelic body.
3. Christ criticized the disciples for not believing, for distrusting and not discovering the truth of the spirit.

Against the background of Tertullian and other anti-Marcionite authors, the centrality of Marcion's version of (pre-) *Luke* becomes apparent. Christ's pneumatic–angelic bodily constitution was predicated to be that of the souls of the believers, while the creaturely cosmic matter was held to be dissolved. In response to Marcion and his pupil Apelles, Tertullian argued that the comparison between the Saviour's body and that of an angel was unconvincing because no angel had ever died, so how could Christ be an angel and not the Son of the supreme God?³¹⁸

Marcion denied the future judgement, because he saw God as Judge to be an antithesis of the God of Love, but he did not deny the resurrection of the dead, only that of the flesh, as he was 'promising salvation to the soul alone'.³¹⁹ For the Stoic-oriented Tertullian, body and flesh as much as the soul were all substances. From this outset and his assumption that Marcion, too, is talking only of 'substance', he could not see how Marcion maintained the idea of a risen body, if he denied the resurrection of any bodily or fleshly substance in the (Stoic) materialistic sense. In this respect, the dispute was a principle misunderstanding between a Middle-Platonic Marcion and a Stoic Tertullian rather than between rejection and acceptance of a bodily resurrection.

There are clear parallels between Marcion's pupil Apelles and Middle-Platonic philosophy, some of which apply also to Marcion.³²⁰

When Paul ascended into the third heaven to encounter the heavenly Christ, it was Christ who had descended first into the third heaven and then all the way down to earth. In the discussion with Marcion, Tertullian points to Paul's 'examples' of the resurrection: 'the grain of wheat', 'seed' and 'body', 'flesh of man', 'celestial and terrestrial' bodies, the 'glory of the sun and another of the moon and another of the stars'.³²¹ Tertullian infers that Marcion seems to have elaborated on the descent to some extent and that Apelles thoroughly substantiated his master's teaching about the poverty of the created flesh and the poor work of the creator god. Marcion seems to have suggested not just an angelic but also a glorious sun-like, astral and sideric nature of the Lord's body. Apelles added the gradual assumption of angelic matter during the descent and the discarding of it again during Christ's ascent. According to Tertullian:

³¹⁸ See Tert., *De an.* 6.

³¹⁹ See Tert., *Adv. Marc.* V 10.

³²⁰ See K. Greschat, *Apelles* (1999), 103–7.

³²¹ Tert., *Adv. Marc.* V 9.

[T]hese Apelleasts make a special point of sheltering behind the dishonour of the flesh, alleging that it was constructed for seduced souls by that fiery prince of evil and therefore is unworthy of Christ, and therefore he must needs have got him a substance from the stars.³²²

Apelles was speaking of the substance of the soul, not the body, an accidental addition not worth regarding as anything substantial. The world itself was nothing but a sinful ‘mistake’, the ‘world’ no other ‘place except for sin’.³²³

If matter is purely accidental to Christ’s heavenly body, Apelles has carefully developed Marcion’s concept without negating his master’s principles. They both believed in the angelic–astral nature of Christ. When Hippolytus³²⁴ reports that at the end of the descent Christ accepted the four elements of the cosmos, heat, cold, liquid and dry, to form his body, he obviously knew of Marcionites going further than their master who could not see any link between the transcendent noetic cosmos of the supreme God of Love and the worthless creation of the demiurge.³²⁵ To Marcion, Christ would not and even could not have added hollow matter to his spiritual body.

Marcion and Apelles fit the Middle-Platonic background where the non-bodily pre-existing soul was seen as descending from the divine through the heavenly realms towards the earth, dressing herself with an astral body, its carrier, to adapt herself to the worsening conditions through the lower spheres.³²⁶ Although of non-earthly planetary substance, given by the spheres, clothed with a pure body and therefore capable of getting in contact with the heavier bodies, Middle-Platonic thinkers saw the astral nature as being created and ephemeral. Angels had a body, not born or incarnate but one that allowed them to engage with people, to eat and drink, suffer pain, die and be given back to the spheres on the way up, back to their origin. According to the *Chaldaean Oracles*, accepted by Porphyry, the astral body wrapped the soul to alleviate her moving into an earthly body. On her way back, the elements of the spheres and heavenly regions that enclosed the soul dissolved, moved away from the soul, and returned to the places whence they had come.³²⁷

³²² Tert., *De carne* 8.

³²³ Ibid., 8.

³²⁴ Repeated by Epiphanius and Filastrius.

³²⁵ See Hippol., *Ref.* VII 38,3–5; Epiph., *Pan.* XLIV 2,2–3; Filastr., *De div. her. lib.* 47,5.

³²⁶ See Celsus, in Orig., *C. Cels.* VI 21; Eratosthenes and Ptolemy in Stob. I (378,6ff. Wachsmuth); Atticus, *Frg.* 15,3.

³²⁷ See *Chaldaean Oracles* 61e; Plotin., *Enn.* IV 3; Porph., according to Procl., *In Tim.* III, see K. Greschat, *Apelles* (1999), 105–6, although I cannot see a difference in principle between Marcion and Apelles (in the description of Tertullian), even if Apelles is prepared to accept the term ‘flesh’ that his master rejected; his interpretation of ‘flesh’ is identical with his master’s understanding of ‘body’.

With Hermogenes, a Roman painter and philosopher of the late second century, we encounter another stage in the development of Christ's descent and ascent. As with Marcion and Apelles, we are primarily informed about Hermogenes through the eyes of Tertullian,³²⁸ hence Hermogenes must have taught not long after them. From what Tertullian and a few others report, he even depended on Marcion and Apelles,³²⁹ while he also developed their theories substantially further and partially argued against, partially deviated from them,³³⁰ especially in his positive opinion of the Jewish scriptures. With Marcion he accepts a Scripture-oriented thinking, and the Jewish past is no longer self-evident. Hermogenes' response reads like an amalgam of Marcion, Apelles, Jewish and Christian scriptures and Middle-Platonism. Unlike Marcion or Apelles, he refers to Jewish scriptures to depict his theology, as for example in his interpretation of the ascent of Christ using *Ps.* 19:5f.:

In the sun he has placed his tabernacle, and himself [is] as a bridegroom coming forth from his nuptial chamber, [and] he will rejoice as a giant to run his course.

To Hermogenes, 'God is always Lord, and always Creator'.³³¹ And if Hippolytus' report is correct, Hermogenes speaks of 'the voice of the *Gospels*' – one single voice expressed through a plurality of *Gospels*.³³² Paul is not mentioned as a source of authority in Hermogenes; instead, and consistent with what is said about his view on the Resurrection, Christ only appears to 'the disciples'. The form in which Christ appears, however, shows parallels to Marcion and even more to Apelles. Christ, 'after His passion, was raised up in a body, and appeared to His disciples, and as He went up into heaven He left His body in the sun, but He Himself proceeded on to the Father'.³³³

When we survey the Jewish and pagan background to the first two centuries, including astrology, mystery cults, politics and magic, we find few attempts to relate the sun to Christ.³³⁴ Only from Marcion onwards did Christians begin to develop a sun-Christology and refer to *Ps.* 19:5f.³³⁵ In his *Dialogue with Tryphon* Justin refers to this verse to explain that God is not holding back his glory, but

³²⁸ Tert., *Adv. Herm.*, although the Latin master evidently relied on an earlier refutation of Hermogenes by Bishop Theophilus of Antioch (late second century).

³²⁹ Adolf Harnack thought that they taught almost the same Christology: *Apelles* (1874), 88.

³³⁰ See Filastr., *Div. her. lib.* lv 3; on Hermogenes see K. Greschat, *Apelles* (1999), 4, 135–286.

³³¹ In Hippol., *Ref.* viii 10.

³³² See *ibid.*

³³³ *Ibid.*

³³⁴ See M. Wallraff, *Christus* (2001), 41.

³³⁵ See K. Greschat, *Apelles* (1999), 264–6, on the history of interpretation of *Ps.* 19 (18 LXX) in the early church.

has given it to the one who is ‘the light’ for the Gentiles.³³⁶ Having mentioned the glory of the Lord, his descent and ascent, Justin illustrates the Lord’s ‘habitation in the sun’. Naturally, Justin was familiar with Marcionite thinking. He had written books against both Marcion and Apelles, and taught in the same city and at the same time. Justin himself adopted his opponent’s sun-Christology. Hence Hermogenes’ assertion that Christ is rising to the sun to leave his body, and proceeds bodiless on to the Father, was certainly not stretching the views of Marcionites too far. He only needed to build on their Middle-Platonic principles.

Paul’s Belief in the Resurrection after Marcion

Sacrifice and Glorification

1*Timothy* is the first of the so-called three ‘Pastoral Letters’. From the beginning, they had probably been projected as one corpus of letters³³⁷ in which Paul is the Apostle ‘*par excellence*’.³³⁸ While *Acts* ‘avoids the controversial element in Paul’s career’, ‘the Pastorals represent him as engaged in constant and violent controversy’.³³⁹ The letters are pseudonymously written by an adherent of Paul’s teaching, but attributed to his master. Paul is ‘represented as the martyr. His death, of course, cannot be described in documents purporting to have been written by his hand, but 2*Tim.* 4 brings Paul as close to death as possible: nothing more remains but the crown of righteousness which the Lord will give him’.³⁴⁰

1*Timothy* opens (1:1) with a statement of Paul’s authority reminiscent of the opening of *Galatians*. Why the name Timothy? In *Acts*, Timothy is portrayed as the son of a Jewish mother and Greek father who, out of respect to the Jews, Paul had circumcised.³⁴¹ Different from *Gal.* 1:1, where Paul’s authority as an Apostle is based neither on ‘any human authority’ nor on a ‘human act’, but on ‘Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead’, the Resurrection is absent from 1*Tim.* The purpose of Paul’s gospel is now ‘to instruct certain people neither to spread false teachings nor to occupy themselves with myths and interminable genealogies’.³⁴² Even the recapitulation of the life-changing revelation of Paul appears without reference to his encounter with the Risen Christ.³⁴³ Instead,

³³⁶ Justin, *Dial.* 67.

³³⁷ See M. Wolter, *Die Pastoralbriefe* (1988); A. Lindemann, ‘Brief’ (2009), 271; H. v. Campenhausen, ‘Polykarp’ (1951 = 1963).

³³⁸ C.K. Barrett, ‘Controversies’ (1974), 240.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 241.

³⁴¹ *Acts* 16:1–3.

³⁴² 1*Tim.* 1:3–4.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1:13–14.

the letter introduces grace and praises Christ's coming into the world, the one, single God who gracefully gives eternal life.³⁴⁴

Such prayer is right, and approved by God our Saviour, whose will it is that all should find salvation and come to know the truth³⁴⁵

God, Jesus Christ, is the one mediator, himself man who through his sacrifice – an allusion to his death on the cross – wins freedom for all mankind, or in short: the one God-man who sacrifices himself is the 'mystery of our religion' that is 'great beyond all questions':

He appeared in flesh,
vindicated in spirit,³⁴⁶
was seen by angels;
he was proclaimed among the nations,
believed in throughout the world,
received in glory.³⁴⁷

It sounds almost as if the author of this letter wanted to avoid speaking of the Resurrection. Instead, the verses end with Christ's proclamation among the nations, with him believed in throughout the world and received in glory, where the term 'received' alludes to the ascension.³⁴⁸

The raising of Paul's authority without reference to his encounter with the Risen Christ points to a specific historical background.³⁴⁹ Against Marcion, who considered the Jewish law as 'just', not good, *1 Timothy* states the opposite: 'The law is good.'³⁵⁰ And there are more anti-Marcionite elements.³⁵¹ In the closing section of *1 Timothy*, Marcion is refuted in direct terms:

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:15,7.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 2:3–7.

³⁴⁶ See also *Odes of Salomo* 31,5: 'And his face was justified; / For thus his holy Father had given to him', and also *ibid.*, 17,2, 25,12, 29,5; M. Dibelius and H. Conzelmann, *Epistles* (1977), 62–3, take this part of the verse and what follows as referring to Christ's ascension, supported by *Ascls* 11,23.

³⁴⁷ *1Tim.* 3:16.

³⁴⁸ *Mark* 16:19, *Luke* 9:51 and *Acts* 1:2.11.

³⁴⁹ See on his biographical data (with further lit.), S. Moll, 'Three' (2008).

³⁵⁰ *1Tim.* 1:8.

³⁵¹ M. Rist, 'Refutations' (1942), 50–55; H. v. Campenhausen, 'Polykarp' (1951 = 1963), 205; reiterated by M. Rist, 'Pseudepigraphy' (1972), 76–7.

O Timothy, protect what has been entrusted to you. Avoid the profane chatter and *Antitheses* of falsely so-called ‘knowledge’. By professing it, some have strayed from the faith. Grace be with you all.³⁵²

Antitheses is the very title of Marcion’s introductory work, and the quote is ‘directly targeting’ him, ‘the most dangerous enemy that the Church ever had throughout the entire antique times’.³⁵³ *1Timothy*’s use of the term ‘falsly so-called “knowledge”’ might even be ‘the natural starting point’ for the beginning of ‘a history of a movement named “knowledge”’, Gnosis.³⁵⁴

Following the quoted verse, the author ‘explicitly warns’ against forms of asceticism that, again, remind us of Marcion: ‘They will forbid marriage, and insist on abstinence from foods’. Instead, the letter recommends: ‘Have nothing to do with superstitious myths, mere old wives’ tales’.³⁵⁵ The final instructions reproach a rich man, another feature of Marcion:

Anyone who teaches otherwise ... is a pompous ignoramus with a morbid enthusiasm for mere speculations and quibbles ... They think religion should yield dividends; and of course religion does yield high dividends, but only to those who are content with what they have ... The love of money is the root of all evil, and in pursuit of it some have wandered from the faith and spiked themselves on many a painful thorn.³⁵⁶

Then follows a confession to ‘our Lord Jesus Christ’, with a clear anti-dualist statement.³⁵⁷ Jesus’ confession before Pontius Pilate of his humanity (‘Ecce homo’) and of being Christ, the one Sovereign, King and Lord, implies that there is no other, higher, immortal God who dwells in unapproachable light. Despite the proximity to Paul’s teaching, the letter even counter-argues Paul’s Resurrection account by insisting that ‘no one has ever seen or can ever see’ the Lord. Consequently, the text evades any discussion of the Resurrection, probably to avoid Marcion’s argument for Paul’s endowment with special divine revelation. But this topic is debated in *Titus*.

The *Second Letter to Timothy* reflects a similar reminder ‘to stop disputing about mere words’,³⁵⁸ although the profile of the enemies is less sharp than in the previous letter. In *2Tim.* 1:9–12 the author gives a first summary of the gospel. Christ’s granting us grace started ‘before time began’ (not, as in Marcion, with

³⁵² *1Tim.* 6:20–21.

³⁵³ H. v. Campenhausen, ‘Polykarp’ (1951 = 1963), 206; M. Rist, ‘Refutations’ (1942), 61–2.

³⁵⁴ C. Marksches, *Gnosis* (2003), 67.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 4:1–3.7.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 6:3–10.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 6:13–15.

³⁵⁸ *2Tim.* 2:14.

the appearance of Christ), although the author would agree with Marcion that the breaking of the power of death and the bringing of immortality is realized 'through the gospel' and only 'now made visible through the appearing of our Saviour'. Where the author reminds us of Paul's gospel and mentions the Resurrection, he stresses, however, not the Resurrection, but Jesus, 'born of David's line':

If we died with him, we will also live with him;
if we endure, we will also reign with him;
if we deny him, he will also deny us;
if we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, since he cannot deny himself.³⁵⁹

Endurance and steadfastness are elements of martyrdom narratives.³⁶⁰ The Apostle who has been rescued from danger once, reckons that next time he is going to face death. Longing for 'salvation into the heavenly kingdom',³⁶¹ he wants to be taken into the 'present glory of the King Christ in heaven, the door to which martyrdom will open'.³⁶² Resurrection is not a return to earthly life, but the union between those who have died a martyr's death and King Christ.³⁶³

Turning to the third of the so-called 'Pastoral Letters', the message we find in *Titus* is very close to that of the *First Letter to Timothy*: God's Grace, hope of God's splendour to come, and Jesus Christ 'who sacrificed himself for us, to set us free from all wickedness and to make us his own people, pure and eager to do good. These are your themes'.³⁶⁴ Salvation has come through Jesus' sacrifice, his death, not through his Resurrection. The one who dies with Christ shall live with him.³⁶⁵ Salvation is enacted through rebirth in baptism and the renewing power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul, the Apostles and the Resurrection

The *Epistle of the Apostles* (*Epistula Apostolorum*),³⁶⁶ originally written in Greek, is preserved only in an incomplete Coptic version from the late fourth- or early fifth century, and a complete text in Ethiopic from the eighteenth century. It reads like an alternative version of the beginning of *Acts*. Instead of a forty-day period

³⁵⁹ *2Tim.* 2:11–13.

³⁶⁰ J. Jeremias, *Briefe* (1975); U. Kellermann, *Auferstanden* (1979), 127–30.

³⁶¹ *2Tim.* 4:8,16–17.

³⁶² J. Jeremias, *Briefe* (1975), 66.

³⁶³ See U. Kellermann, *Auferstanden* (1979), 141–2.

³⁶⁴ *Tit.* 2:11–15.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 3:4–7; see also *2Tim.* 2:11.

³⁶⁶ See L. Guerrier (ed.), *Testament* (1913); C. Schmidt, *Gespräche* (1919); H. Duensing (ed.), *Epistula* (1925); M. Hornschuh, *Studien* (1965); J. Hartenstein, 'Geschichten' (2010), 129–31; M. Vinzent, 'Give' (2010).

of Christ's post-Resurrection appearance,³⁶⁷ in *EpAp* the fictitious frame is the one day of the Resurrection. The eleven Apostles encounter the Risen in 'the most extensive group appearance in the extant literature'.³⁶⁸

The title itself is an indication that *EpAp* promotes a clear counter-concept to that of Marcion: the authority of a single letter by a plurality of Apostles, contrary to several letters by a single Apostle (*epistula apostolorum* versus *epistulae apostoli*).³⁶⁹ The counter-position is explicitly reflected in a paragraph dealing with Paul. As with *Acts* there is good reason to read *EpAp* as influenced by Marcion but also as distancing itself from him.³⁷⁰ The eleven Apostles³⁷¹ (not Paul) take their revelation from their unmediated encounter with the Risen Lord.

How deeply Marcion has influenced *EpAp* can be seen from the opening of the letter, where the epistle reiterates thrice in one sentence that Christ's revelation has resulted in a *book*:

The *book* which Jesus Christ revealed unto his disciples: and how that Jesus Christ revealed the *book* for the company [college] of the Apostles, the disciples of Jesus Christ, even the *book* which is for all men.³⁷²

Since Marcion then, the Lord's post-Resurrection narratives, not only sayings or oracles, have become literature, readily available as a published book.

EpAp is not an 'anti-genre', nor 'a parody of a form of apocalyptic literature favored by its Christian gnostic opponents', nor an 'attempt to domesticate the literature of those who portrayed Jesus as the revealer of otherworldly knowledge disclosed in mystery books',³⁷³ but, set within the frame of early debates with Marcionites, the *Epistle* displays the osmosis that influenced and provoked responses. *EpAp* is written pseudonymously against the 'false Apostles' 'Simon and Cerinthus'.³⁷⁴ Simon Magus represents a Samaritan type of Christianity in *Acts* and Cerinthus was seen as the rival of the Apostle John in Asia Minor.³⁷⁵ Simon in par-

³⁶⁷ *Acts* 1:3.

³⁶⁸ J. Alsup, *Stories* (1975), 128; see also C. Schmidt, *Gespräche* (1919), 202–3. Another, although very fragmentary dialogue with the Risen can be found in the so-called *Strassburg Papyrus*: see Alsup, *ibid.*, 132.

³⁶⁹ I am grateful to Samuel Sanders, with whom I discovered this anti-Marcionite argument.

³⁷⁰ See C. Schmidt, *Gespräche* (1919), 190; M. Rist, 'Refutations' (1942), 45–6.

³⁷¹ See the special chapter in M. Hornschuh, *Studien* (1965), 81–3 on the 'Eleven apostles'.

³⁷² *EpAp* 1, trans. Montague Rhode James in *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1924), 485–503. On similar letters by the divine, see Valentinus in Epiph., *Pan. XXXI* 5.6; *ActThom* 108:40–41; *EvVer* 19:34–5.

³⁷³ R. Cameron, *Gospels* (1982), Introduction.

³⁷⁴ *EpAp* 1.

³⁷⁵ *Acts* 8:9ff. See C. Schmidt, *Gespräche* (1919), 195.

ticular was soon accounted for as an arch-heretic, 'from whom all sorts of heresies derive their origin',³⁷⁶ and most particularly stood for Marcion. As the author(s) wanted to retain the fictitious apostolic authorship, *EpAp* had to refer to 'heretics' known in apostolic times, not to those of the second century, contemporary with its being written, although Irenaeus described Cerinthus as teaching elements that remind us of Marcion.³⁷⁷ Cerinthus was 'a man who was educated in the wisdom of the Egyptians', and

taught that the world was not made by the primary God, but by a certain Power far separated from him, and at a distance from that Principality who is supreme over the universe, and ignorant of him who is above all. He represented Jesus as having not been born of a virgin, but as being the son of Joseph and Mary according to the ordinary course of human generation, while he nevertheless was more righteous, prudent, and wise than other men. Moreover, after his baptism, Christ descended upon him in the form of a dove from the Supreme Ruler,³⁷⁸ and that then he proclaimed the unknown Father, and performed miracles. But at last Christ departed from Jesus, and then Jesus suffered and rose again, while Christ remained impassible, inasmuch as he was a spiritual being.³⁷⁹

From Irenaeus' account we can see direct parallels and differences between Cerinthus and Marcion. They both distinguished between a non-creator God and a demiurge 'far separated from' the transcendent Principle 'who is supreme over the universe'. On the other hand, while to Cerinthus Jesus was a fleshly entity, generated by human procreation through Joseph and Mary, Marcion explicitly denied a human birth of Jesus Christ.

Another important difference from Marcion derives from Cerinthus' understanding of the cross and the Resurrection. To Cerinthus, Christ was unable to suffer; only the body of Jesus was subjected to the cross, died, and rose again, whereas Christ as a spiritual being was unaffected and 'remained impassible'. For Marcion, Jesus Christ was the spiritual entity that went through all the salvific stations of life, crucifixion and Resurrection, in a divine manner. In him the supreme God himself rescued humans from the creator god; by giving Christ up to death

³⁷⁶ Iren., *Adv. haer.* I 23; see O. Zwierlein, *Petrus* (2010), 57–8 (lit.).

³⁷⁷ On Cerinthus, see the excursus in C. Schmidt, *Gespräche* (1919), 403–52.

³⁷⁸ On the descending dove, see also Clem. Alex., *Exc. ex Theod.* 16; on the Basilidians, see Clem. Alex., *Strom.* II 38.

³⁷⁹ Iren., *Adv. haer.* I 26; see the conflicting information in Epiph., *Pan.* XXVIII 6,1 according to which Cerinthus believed: 'Christ suffered and was crucified, but has not yet risen again, but that he will rise, when the general resurrection of the dead takes place', potentially identifying the Cerinthians as Paul's opponents in Corinth (1Cor. 15:29): see M. Myllykoski, 'Cerinthus' (2005), 219. Myllykoski also states (224) that, on the basis of our scanty evidence (no mention of Cerinthus in Ignatius, Papias, Hegesippus, Justin!), 'all attempts to uncover the historical Cerinthus' are 'hypothetical'.

he paid the price for the transgressions of the law that they could never fulfil.³⁸⁰ According to Marcion, ‘it was the Christ of the transcendent God who was brought to the cross, by the Creator’s powers’.³⁸¹ Divine *kenosis* was absolutely new.³⁸²

Throughout *EpAp* we note the anti-Marcionite and Marcionite stance rather than an anti-Cerinthus position, for example in its focus on ‘the human side of the appearance present, but also ... that the disciples occupy center stage’.³⁸³ The disciples are no longer doubting, but ‘are pictured as probing, questioning and searching *because* of faith, i.e., to unite faith and understanding so that the future life and mission of the church might be firm and clear’.³⁸⁴

The *Epistle* is a reflexion of Paul’s claim of authority in *Galatians*:

The *book* has been written that you may not flinch nor be troubled, and depart not from the word of the *Gospel* which you have heard.

It counters the departure from Paul’s Gospel. The greeting that ends the opening of the letter makes specific reference to ‘God, the Father, *the Lord of the world*’,³⁸⁵ contradicting any distinction between God and the Lord of the world in Marcion. This counter-position is further confirmed by the letter’s first argument, which introduces Jesus Christ as the Son of God, who is firmly described as the *Creator of heaven and earth*.

[Christ] was sent of God, the *Lord of the whole world*, the *maker and creator of it*, who is named by all names, and high above all powers, Lord of lords, King of kings, Ruler of rulers, the heavenly one, that sits above the cherubim and seraphim at the right hand of the throne of the Father.³⁸⁶

There is no mention of Cerinthus’ distinction between Jesus and Christ. *EpAp* reaffirms the Son’s part in the creation with reference to the first book of Moses, the fathers of old and the prophets. *EpAp*’s message is that

[God] *by his Word* made the heavens, and formed the earth and that which is in it ... the day and the night, the sun and the moon, did he establish, and the stars in the heaven: that did separate the light from the darkness ... and by the fathers of old and the prophets is it declared, of whom the apostles preached, and whom the disciples did touch (*Luke 24*). In God, the Lord, the Son of God, do we be-

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 439.

³⁸¹ Tert., *Adv. Marc.* III 24.

³⁸² See B. Aland, ‘Marcion’ (1973), 439.

³⁸³ J. Alsup, *Stories* (1975), 128.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 129; Alsup also points to the Freer Logion of *Mark* 16:14–18, which scales down the doubt of the disciples and grants them a retort.

³⁸⁵ *EpAp* 1.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 3.

lieve, that he is the word become flesh: that of Mary the holy virgin he took a body, begotten of the Holy Ghost, not of the will (lust) of the flesh, but by the will of God: that he was wrapped in swaddling clothes in Bethlehem (*Luke* 2:7) and made manifest, and grew up and came to ripe age, when also we beheld it.³⁸⁷

In addition to the linking of Word and creation, the foretelling through the fathers and prophets, *EpAp* refers to the end and beginning of *Luke*. Marcion had used precisely this encounter between the Risen and the Apostles of (pre-)*Luke* 24 to undermine the falsely called Apostles, and emphasized the angelic nature of the one who appeared in the same flesh before in the time of Tiberius as he made himself visible after his Resurrection. On that basis he denied the fleshly birth from Mary and ridiculed the birth story (the wrapping of the baby, his youth and upbringing), which he apparently knew as a distortion of his Gospel. That *EpAp* mentions the birth story, the wrapping and Jesus' growing up counters Marcion, not Cerinthus.³⁸⁸ *EpAp* refers to Paul's Gospel and criticizes its Marcionite reading, hence is close to Marcion, but also indicates a first defence of the version that was to become the canonical *Luke*.

To *EpAp* the eleven Apostles are its 'authors' and the Christian communities in the East, West, North and South the addressees. The Apostles drew their revelation from the encounter with the Risen Christ:

We do write according as we have seen and heard *and touched him*, after he was risen from the dead: and how that he revealed to us things mighty and wonderful and true.³⁸⁹

As early as *EpAp* 2 Marcion's key Resurrection passage, (pre-)*Luke* 24:36–43 ('touching the Lord') is used in order to emphasize the belief of the authors. *EpAp* then expands on the Resurrection and has a detailed story of the three women going to Jesus' tomb. Having dealt with Marcion's key Lukan passage, the narrative in *EpAp* no longer follows *Luke* or any of our known Gospels, but it has parallels to all four later canonical texts *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke* and *John*, and also to the *Gospel of Peter*. Older scholarship has assumed that *EpAp* relies on the canonical Gospels, although more recently one has become more sceptical about the authoritative character of these.³⁹⁰ It seems from the loose way of referring to them or their underlying traditions that the author of the *Epistle* may have been aware of these writings, as he may have been of *Acts*, the *Letter of James*, and potentially some of Paul's letters, but he handles these texts with extreme liberty, guided by his own authority, the revelation of the Risen Christ:

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ M. Klinghardt, 'Markion' (2006), 498–501.

³⁸⁹ *EpAp* 2.

³⁹⁰ See M. Hornschuh, *Studien* (1965), 9.

And there went three women, Mary, she that was kin to Martha, and Mary Magdalene [Sarrha, Martha, and Mary, *Eth.*],³⁹¹ and took ointments to pour upon the body, weeping and mourning over that which was come to pass.³⁹² And when they drew near to the sepulchre, they looked in³⁹³ and found not the body³⁹⁴ [*Eth.* they found the stone rolled away³⁹⁵ and opened the entrance]. And as they mourned and wept, the Lord showed himself unto them and said to them: For whom do you weep? Weep no more!³⁹⁶ I am he whom you seek.³⁹⁷ But let one of you go to your brethren and say:³⁹⁸ Come, the Master is risen from the dead.³⁹⁹ Martha [Mary, *Eth.*] came and told us. We said to her: What have we to do with you, woman? He that is dead and buried, is it possible that he should live? And we believed her not⁴⁰⁰ that the Saviour was risen from the dead. Then she returned unto the Lord and said unto him: None of them has believed me, that you live. He said: Let another of you go to them and tell them again. Mary [Sarrha, *Eth.*] came and told us again, and we believed her not; and she returned to the Lord and she also told him.⁴⁰¹

The narrative justifies the scepticism of the Apostles with reference to the unreliability of their female witnesses as a retort to Marcion's illustration of the worthlessness of the so-called Apostles. *EpAp* continues:

Then said the Lord to Mary and her sisters: Let us go to them. And he came⁴⁰² and found us within, and called us out; but we thought that it was a phantom and believed not that it was the Lord. Then said he to us: Come, be not fearful! I am your teacher, because I am the master whom you, Peter, did deny three times before the rooster crowed,⁴⁰³ and now do you deny again? And we came to him, doubting in our hearts whether it were he.⁴⁰⁴ Then said he to us: Why do you still doubt, and are unbelieving?⁴⁰⁵ I am he who spoke to you of my flesh and my death and my Resurrection. But that you may know that I am he, Peter, put your

³⁹¹ *Mark* 16:1; *Luke* 24:1.

³⁹² *Mark* 16:10.

³⁹³ *John* 20:11; *EvPetr.* 55.

³⁹⁴ *Luke* 24:3.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 24:2; *Mark* 16:4.

³⁹⁶ *John* 20:14–15; *Mark* 16:6.

³⁹⁷ See *John* 20:15.

³⁹⁸ *Matth.* 28:7.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 28:10; *John* 20:17.

⁴⁰⁰ *Mark* 16:11–12; *Luke* 24:11–41.

⁴⁰¹ *EpAp* 9–10.

⁴⁰² *John* 20:19,26; *Mark* 16:14.

⁴⁰³ *Matth.* 26:34,69ff. par.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 28:17.

⁴⁰⁵ *Luke* 24:38; *John* 20:27; *Mark* 16:14.

finger into the print of the nails in my hands, and you also, Thomas, put your finger into the wound of the spear in my side;⁴⁰⁶ but you, Andrew, look on my feet and see whether they leave a print on the earth; for it is written in the prophet: 'A phantom of a demon makes no footprint on the earth'.⁴⁰⁷ And we touched him,⁴⁰⁸ that we might learn of a truth whether he were risen in the flesh; and we fell on our faces [and worshipped him] confessing our sin, that we had been unbelieving. Then, our Lord and Saviour said to us: Rise up, and I will reveal to you that which is above the heaven and in the heaven, and your rest which is in the kingdom of heaven.⁴⁰⁹ For my Father has given me power [sent me, *Eth.*] to take you and those who also believe in me up to here.⁴¹⁰

These passages prove the author's extraordinary ability to compose a storyline as a response to Marcion's opposite interpretation of the appearance of the Risen Christ.⁴¹¹ The broadening of the narrative is intended specifically to contradict the idea that the Apostles did not believe. Interestingly, *EpAp* accepts that the Apostles had great difficulty in believing, indeed doubted and distrusted, the message of the women, emphasizing that the Lord did everything possible to convince them, naming particularly Peter and Thomas, but also adding Andrew with a saying of the Lord known only outside the canonical Gospels, but that must have been known at that time: 'A phantom of a demon makes no footprint on the earth'. *EpAp* targets precisely Marcion's catchword 'phantom' that stems from (pre-) *Luke* 24. The anti-Marcionite reading in *EpAp* also explains why Peter as the head of the Eleven is mentioned first, although he does not play a role in *Luke* 24:38–42. It is on the authority of him and the Eleven that Christians believe, because the Lord allowed him, Thomas and Andrew in all possible realism to touch the nails, put a finger into the wound made by the spear, and look for the Lord's prints on the earth.

Luke 24 is turned from Marcion's testimony for a pneumatic body of the Risen Christ into a proof text for the fleshly Resurrection appearance, where the Lord is exhibiting the trust of the Apostles without need for a hidden revelation or a mysterious message to Paul. Christ himself overturns the natural scepticism of the Apostles vis-à-vis human testimonies and enables them to believe the Gospel of the book.

A central part of the *Epistle* comprises a paragraph on the Lord's incarnation and his death. According to the *Epistle* the Lord became the angel Gabriel, be-

⁴⁰⁶ See *John* 20:20,27.

⁴⁰⁷ Agraphon, also found in Commodian, *Carmen apologeticum* V 564, ed. B. Dombart (CSEL 15, 1887, 152: 'A shadow does not make a print'); see also *ActJohn* 93.

⁴⁰⁸ *Luke* 24:39; *1John* 1:1; *IgnSm.* 3:2.

⁴⁰⁹ See *2Clem.* 5:5, 6:7.

⁴¹⁰ *John* 12:32; *EpAp* 10–12.

⁴¹¹ An even broader story of the multiple appearance forms of Christ, which embraces Marcion's angelic reading and combines it with a material understanding of the body of the Risen in *Acts of John* 88–93 with reference to the 'footprint on the earth' (93).

ing all things in all, and ‘brought the message to Mary’. This further reference to *Luke*’s birth story,⁴¹² missing in Marcion’s Gospel, makes another Marcionite/anti-Marcion combination. *EpAp* adopts Marcion’s angelological Christology despite its obvious opposition to Marcion’s denial of Jesus’ birth from Mary and the fleshly nature of the Incarnate.⁴¹³

On that day when I took the form of the angel Gabriel, I appeared to Mary and spoke with her. Her heart accepted me, and she believed, and I formed myself and entered into her body. I became flesh, for I alone was a minister to myself in that which concerned Mary in the appearance of the shape of an angel. For so must I needs do. Thereafter did I return to my Father.⁴¹⁴

The passage sounds like a smoothed version of Marcion, where *Luke*’s account of Jesus’ birth was integrated into Marcion’s angelological frame. As with Jesus’ self-Resurrection in Marcion, in *EpAp* he is his self-creator in Mary.

Contrary to Marcion, it is not the Resurrection that is of importance but the Lord’s ‘return’ to the Father until such time as he will come back:

‘Like the sun when it is risen’, and his ‘brightness will be seven times the brightness of it! The wings of the clouds shall bear me in brightness, and the sign of the cross shall go before me, and I shall come upon earth to judge the quick and the dead.’⁴¹⁵

An even more realistic narrative picture can be found in the second-century *Gospel of Peter*, preserved in several papyri and well attested in early Christianity.⁴¹⁶ Around the year 200 AD, Bishop Serapion of Antioch was presented with this Gospel during a visit to Rhossos (Syria), where he first took it to be unproblematic. Only after having read it a second time did he become sceptical, having discovered in it certain docetic features:⁴¹⁷

35. Now in the night in which the Lord’s Day dawned, when the soldiers were keeping guard, two by two in each watch, there was a loud voice in heaven, 36. and they saw the heavens open and two men come down from there in a great brightness and draw near to the sepulchre. 37. That stone which had been laid against the entrance to the sepulchre started of itself to roll and move sideways, and the sepulchre was opened and both young men entered.

⁴¹² *Luke* 1,26–7.

⁴¹³ See H.E. Lona, *Auferstehung* (1993), 81.

⁴¹⁴ *EpAp* 14.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴¹⁶ *POxy* 4009; *PCair* 10759; *POxy* 2949; Ostrakon (J. van Haelst, *Catalogue des papyrus littéraires juif et chrétiens*, Paris 1976, 738, no. 741); *Fragment M18* (Turfan); see M. Vincent, ‘History’ (1995).

⁴¹⁷ Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* VI 12,3–6.

38. When those soldiers saw this, they awakened the centurion and the elders, for they also were there to mount guard. 39. And while they were narrating what they had seen, they saw three men come out from the sepulchre, two of them supporting the other and a cross following them. 40. And the heads of the two reaching to heaven, but that of him who was being led reached beyond the heavens. 41. And they heard a voice out of the heavens crying, 'Have you preached to those who sleep?' 42. And from the cross there was heard the answer, 'Yes'.

43. Therefore the men decided among themselves to go and report these things to Pilate. 44. And while they were still deliberating the heavens were again seen to open and a man descended and entered the tomb. 45. When those who were of the centurion's company saw this they hurried by night to Pilate, leaving the sepulchre which they were guarding, and reported something that they had seen, being greatly agitated and saying, 'In truth he was [the] Son of God'. 46. Pilate answered and said, 'I am clean from the blood of the son of God; it was you who desired it'. 47. Then they all came to him, beseeching him and urgently calling upon him to command the centurion and the soldiers to tell no one about the things they had seen. 48. 'For it is better for us', they said, 'to make ourselves guilty of the greatest sin before God than to fall into the hands of the people of the Jews and be stoned'. 49. Pilate therefore commanded the centurion and the soldiers to say nothing. 50. At dawn on the Lord's Day Mary Magdalene, a woman disciple of the Lord – for fear of the Jews, since they were inflamed with wrath – had not done at the sepulchre of the Lord what women are accustomed to do for their dead loved ones. 51. She took with her [women] friends and came to the sepulchre where he was laid. 52. And they were afraid lest the Jews should see them and said: 'Even though we could not weep and lament on that day when he was crucified, yet let us now do so at his sepulchre. 53. But who will roll away for us the stone that is across the entrance to the sepulchre, that we may go in and sit beside him and do what is due?' – (54) for the stone was great – 'and we fear lest any one see us. And if we cannot do so let us at least place by the entrance what we have brought as a memorial for him, and let us weep and lament until we go home'. 55. But having arrived they found the sepulchre opened. And they came near, stooped down there, and saw a young man sitting in the middle of the sepulchre, comely, and clothed with a brightly shining robe. He said to them: (56) 'Why have you come? Whom do you seek? Not the man who was crucified? He is risen and gone. But if you do not believe, stoop this way and see the place where he lay for he is not there. For he is risen and is gone to the place from which he was sent'. 57. Then the women fled frightened. 58. Now it was the last day of unleavened bread and many went away and returned to their homes because the feast was at an end. 59. But we, the twelve disciples of the Lord, wept and mourned and each one, grieving for what had happened, returned to his own home. 60. But I, Simon Peter, and my brother Andrew took

our nets and went to the sea. And there was with us Levi, the son of Alphaeus, whom the Lord⁴¹⁸

Paul had assigned to Peter the role of first witness,⁴¹⁹ but here it is Mary of Magdala and her friends who are given the Resurrection message, while Peter is assigned the role of reporter.⁴²⁰ Although mention is made of the Twelve, they are portrayed as weeping and grieving. Peter, his brother Andrew, and Levi, the same disciples named in the *Gospel of Mary*,⁴²¹ go back to their day jobs. Unfortunately, because of the fragmentary state of the text, we do not know whether a Resurrection appearance followed. Apparent is a stark anti-Jewish character that conforms with the fact that the author does not refer to Jewish scriptures. Parallels between this Gospel and the redactional parts of the synoptic ones make it likely that the author knew already of the final form of these.

We can add two more texts with similar mixtures of realism, prophetism, and apocalyptic angelic scenes, one in the second-century *Ascension of Isaiah* and one in a broadened version of *Mark 16:3* of the *Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae* (*k*). To start with the latter:

But suddenly at the third hour of the day there was darkness over the whole circle of the earth, and angels descended from the heavens, and they rose in the brightness of the living Jesus, at the same time they ascended with him; and immediately it was light. Then the woman went to the tomb.⁴²²

In the *Ascension of Isaiah* III 13b–18 we read the following scenario:

13. ... Through him [Isaiah] there had been revealed the coming of the Beloved from the seventh heaven,
and his transformation, and his descent, and the form into which he must be transformed, into the form of man,
and the persecution with which he will be persecuted
and the torments with which the children of Israel must torment him,
and the teaching of the twelve
and that he must be crucified with wicked men
and that he would be buried in a grave,
14. and the twelve who [were] with him would be offended at him;
and the guarding of the guards of the tomb,

⁴¹⁸ Trans. J.K. Elliott (ed.), *Testament* (1993), 156–8.

⁴¹⁹ *1 Cor.* 15:5.

⁴²⁰ Hence I am less inclined to see an overt pro-Petrinism in this gospel at the expense of Mary, *pace* A.G. Brock, *Mary* (2003), 68–9.

⁴²¹ See below.

⁴²² See B.M. Metzger, *Testament* (1977), 315–16.

15. and as the descent of the angel of the church which is in the heavens ..., whom he will summon in the last days;
 16. and ... the angel of the Holy Spirit
 and Michael, the chief of the holy angels, will open his grave on the third day,
 17. and the Beloved, sitting on their shoulders, will come forth and send out his disciples,
 18. and they will teach all nations and every tongue the Resurrection of the Beloved, and those who believe in his cross will be saved,
 and in his ascension to the seventh heaven from where he came.⁴²³

The three accounts share some narrative motifs. They are fictive, illuminated with apocalyptic symbols, and 'give the impression of a visible resurrection from the tomb' to tell in detail how Christ rose.⁴²⁴ All three bear angelic Marcionite elements, such as the light metaphors, the angels, and the glory and brightness of the Risen. However, they also show clear emphasis on realism. They set great store on the facticity of the Resurrection. It is neither a mystery hidden out of time, nor an inner experience conveyable only to perfect insiders, but a knowable event. Eyewitnesses, the women, the Jews and the pagan soldiers play a role. In contrast to some later texts where separate classes of angels mark the division between the spiritual realm and that of matter, here angels descend and ascend taking Christ with them. None of the followers of Jesus sees his actual Resurrection. Other than the soldiers who according to *EvPe* report to Pilate what they have seen, only the women (*EvPe*), the Twelve (*AscIs*) or Eleven (*EpAp*) announce the Resurrection to all the nations – however, it is not the Resurrection itself that is the content of the message, but belief in the cross, hence its central place in these narratives. The cross precedes or follows the Risen, stresses the identification between the dead and the Risen and connects the Jesus-history with Christ's reign, an element that was already present in Marcion. The texts play on opposites, heaven and earth, death and life, darkness and light, cross and salvation. And although they display anti-Marcionite features, some theologians and bishops of the late second century, such as Serapion of Antioch, criticized the *Gospel of Peter* only for its 'spurious additions', not for shortcutting or altering previous, authoritative gospels, a criticism similar to Marcion's against the 'Judaizers'.

The centrality of the cross is also present in *EpAp*, where the celebration of Pascha is called a 'commemoration of the Lord's death',⁴²⁵ while the light meta-

⁴²³ Trans. from the Ethiopic version by M.A. Knibb in *Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah*, in J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha* (1985), II 160 (revised and compared with the Greek text); see on this text M. Vinzent, 'Give' (2010).

⁴²⁴ D.W. Palmer, 'Origin' (1976), 115.

⁴²⁵ *EpAp* 15. See the discussion about this passage in H. Duensing, Rev. of C. Schmidt (1922), 248–52; C.C. Richardson, 'Riddle' (1973), 76. Unfortunately, most of what he has to say about Pascha and *EpAp* is hypothetical and cannot be proven.

phors link Pauline and Johannine theologies and the final commandment in the closing ascension passage of *Luke*:⁴²⁶

I am wholly in the Father and the Father in me,⁴²⁷ because of the likeness of the form and the power and the fullness and the light and the full measure and the voice. I am the Word, I have become to him a thing, that he is. I am the thought, fulfilled in the likeness; I have become it on the eighth day [Ogdoad], which is the Lord's day. But the whole fulfilment of the fulfilment you shall see after the redemption which has come to pass by me, and you shall see me, how I go up to my Father which is in heaven.⁴²⁸ But behold, now, I give you a new commandment: Love one another⁴²⁹ and obey one another, that peace may rule always among you. Love your enemies, and what you would not that man do to you, that do to no man.⁴³⁰

The post-ascension eschatological divine unity is the 'whole fulfilment of the fulfilment' that the Lord has achieved on the eschatological eighth day, the Lord's day,⁴³¹ and which is promised to the disciples for the eschaton.⁴³² Until the coming back of the Lord, the Church must live in this ambiguous world and embrace the 'new commandment' of loving one another and one's enemies.

In a second explanation of what that passage implies, the *Epistle* launches its manifesto for the resurrection of the flesh as a result of the Resurrection of the Lord, in contradistinction to the Marcionite angelic flesh. *EpAp* counters by the fulfilment of the prophecy in the Lord:

⁴²⁶ The Ethiopian version adds a formula with reference to the Resurrection (*EpAp* 18): 'This means, after he was crucified, and dead and arisen again, when the work was fulfilled which was accomplished in the flesh, and he was crucified and the ascension come to pass at the end of the days, then said he thus, *etc.*'; similar Ethiopian clarifications also in *EpAp* 10.19. In 1924 the English translator, Montague Rhode James, wrote about the Ethiopian addition: 'It is an interpolation, in place of words which the translator did not understand, or found heretical', so M.R. James, *Testament* (1924), *ad loc.* Indeed, only in the Coptic version – although not easy to interpret – the text runs logically without the explanatory 'this means ...' of the Ethiopian text, which evidently tried to incorporate in the margins a copyist's note that served to illucidate the difficult original text, preserved in the Coptic.

⁴²⁷ See John 10:38, 14:10,11–20, 17.21–3; *ActJohn* 100.

⁴²⁸ See *Matth.* 7:21 and others.

⁴²⁹ See *Matth.* 5:44; *Luke* 6:27; *Tob.* 4:16; *Acts* 15:20,29 cod. D; *Did.* 1:2; *Const. Apost.* VII:1.

⁴³⁰ *EpAp* 18.

⁴³¹ More on the Lord's day below in the special section of the chapter on 'Celebrating Life and Death'.

⁴³² *EpAp* 19–24.

See, I have put on your flesh, in which I was born and crucified, and am risen again through my Father which is in heaven, that the prophecy of David the prophet might be fulfilled,⁴³³ in regard of that which was declared concerning me and my death and resurrection.

Christ's Resurrection was part of the prophecy of David, as were the elements of the Lord's dispensation through his incarnation:

I who am unbegotten and yet begotten of mankind, who am without flesh and yet have borne flesh⁴³⁴ [and have grown up like unto you that were born in flesh, *Eth*]: for to that end am I come, that [*gap in Copt.: Eth. continues*] you might rise from the dead in your flesh.⁴³⁵ ... Then we said to him: Great is that which you let us hope and tell us. And he answered and said: Do you believe, that everything that I tell you shall come to pass? We answered and said: Yes, Lord. He said to us: Verily I say to you, that I have obtained the whole power of my Father,⁴³⁶ that I may bring back into light them that dwell in darkness,⁴³⁷ them that are in corruption into incorruption, them that are in death into life, and that I may loose them that are in fetters. For that which is impossible with men, is possible with the Father.⁴³⁸ I am the hope of them that despair, the helper of them that have no saviour, the wealth of the poor, the health of the sick, and the resurrection of the dead.⁴³⁹ When he had thus said, we said unto him: Lord, is it true that the flesh shall be judged together with the soul and the spirit,⁴⁴⁰ and that the one part shall rest in heaven and the other part be punished everlastingly yet living?⁴⁴¹ And he said to us: How long will you inquire and doubt? ... He answered and said: Verily I say to you, the resurrection of the flesh shall come to pass with the soul in it and the spirit.⁴⁴²

The *Epistle of the Apostles* is the earliest writing in which the resurrection of the flesh is explicitly discussed in conjunction with the state of human nature.⁴⁴³ The opening question takes Marcion head on: is the body of the risen dead of angelic or of fleshly nature? *EpAp* bases its thoughts about salvation and eschaton on

⁴³³ *Luke* 24:44–5.

⁴³⁴ See *IgnEph.* 7:2.

⁴³⁵ See *2Clem.* 9:5.

⁴³⁶ See *Matth.* 28:18.

⁴³⁷ See *2Peter* 2:9; *Odes of Salomon* 21:3, 42:16.

⁴³⁸ See *Matth.* 19:26 par.

⁴³⁹ See *Acts of Thecla* 37; *Liturgy of Mark*.

⁴⁴⁰ See *1Thess.* 5:23.

⁴⁴¹ See *2Clem.* 9:1.

⁴⁴² *EpAp* 19–24.

⁴⁴³ See H.E. Lona, *Auferstehung* (1993), 79.

Marcion,⁴⁴⁴ but it reaches an opposite view: the nature of the risen dead is based on the nature of the Risen, namely flesh in fulfilment of the ‘prophecy of David the prophet’, substantiated by *Ps.* 3, against Marcion’s angelic body.⁴⁴⁵

A little later the *Epistle* formulates the dialectical principle that will reoccur again and again in the Church Fathers:

That which has fallen shall rise again, and that which was lost shall be found, and that which was weak shall recover, that in these things that are so created the glory of my Father may be revealed. As he has done to me, so will I do to all that believe in me.⁴⁴⁶

The fleshly resurrection prepares for the day of judgement, so that everybody can be judged according to their deeds.⁴⁴⁷

Although the *Epistle* is based on the Risen Lord talking to the disciples and revealing his message to them, the letter is sceptical of those who want to see the Lord, and quotes the beatitude:

Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed, for they shall be called children of the kingdom, and they shall be perfect among the perfect, and I will be unto them life in the kingdom of my Father.⁴⁴⁸

In the light of the following chapter on Paul, this is a criticism of the one disciple who claims to have seen the Risen Christ and who drew from this encounter his apostleship.

Still, *EpAp* praises Paul, and again, sides in this with Marcion, yet also distances itself from both: Paul’s letters are not quoted (except against him), nor does his own thinking shine through,⁴⁴⁹ on the contrary, he is explicitly subjugated to the teaching, instruction and blessing of the Eleven! Against Marcion, Paul’s Jewishness, his being circumcised, is stressed. Whereas *EpAp* had pointed out the belief of the Eleven, Paul received ‘his voice from heaven with fear and trembling and at the same time [became] blind’.⁴⁵⁰ He was the ‘the last of the last’ and only

⁴⁴⁴ M. Hornschuh, *Studien* (1965), 54–5, can also show that *EpAp* has a number of parallels to the thinking of Basilides, in a special chapter (*ibid.*, 67–80) he tracks Jewish influences in *EpAp*.

⁴⁴⁵ *Mark* 12:25.

⁴⁴⁶ *EpAp* 25.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 26–9.

⁴⁴⁸ See *John* 20:29; *Matth.* 13:38, 5:48, 26:29.

⁴⁴⁹ M. Hornschuh, *Studien* (1965), 84. It is astonishing that it did not occur to Hornschuh that Marcion (and not Basilides: see *ibid.*, 86) was the targeted opponent of *EpAp*. Granted that also for Basilides Paul was *the* apostle, but he did not struggle with Paul’s Jewishness, pointed out by Luke in *Acts*, as Marcion did – refuted here in *EpAp*.

⁴⁵⁰ M. Rist, ‘Refutations’ (1942), 46.

became a preacher to the Gentiles by recognizing that the 'fathers', namely 'the prophets', spoke of the Lord, and that in the Lord is fulfilled what has been prophesied. The Eleven are Paul's 'guide': they instruct him 'and bring to his mind that which is spoken of', the Lord in the scriptures. In clear hierarchical order, only 'thereafter shall he become the salvation of the Gentiles'. The depowering of Paul is taken steps further than in *Acts*, presumably against Marcion's 'overstatement' of Paul.⁴⁵¹

In a similar vein to *EpAp* and *Acts*, the *Wisdom of Jesus Christ (SJC)*, one of the tracts of the so-called *Nag Hammadi Library*,⁴⁵² plays down Paul's role by elevating the Twelve and seven female disciples.

We are placed again into the same narrative timeframe after the Resurrection and before the ascension, but move to Galilee 'onto the mountain called "Divination and Joy"'.⁴⁵³ The writer himself is an eyewitness.⁴⁵⁴

Only five disciples are named: Philip, Thomas, Mary, Matthew and Bartholomew. The male disciples reappear only as a second group in the canonical enumerations in *Mark*, *Matthew* and *Luke*, while the first group – Peter, Andrew, James and John – is missing in *SJC*.⁴⁵⁵ Thomas and Matthew are also present in other texts, such as in the two related books *Thomas the Contender* (NHC II 7) and the *Dialogue of the Redeemer* (NHC III 5).⁴⁵⁶ Matthew reappears in the *Gospel of Thomas* (logion 13), and together with Philip and Bartholomew in *Pistis Sophia* and *I.Jeu*.⁴⁵⁷ A clear hint as to why some are omitted while others are named can be found in the *Gospel of Mary* and the *Pistis Sophia*.⁴⁵⁸ Peter and Andrew from

⁴⁵¹ *EpAp* 31. So B. Aland, 'Marcion' (1973), 436, 446.

⁴⁵² (NHC III,4) and also known from the *Codex Berolinensis* 8502 (p. 77, l. 8 – p. 127, l. 12).

⁴⁵³ Trans. D.M. Parrott, in *Nag Hammadi Codices III,3–4 and V,1*, NHS XXVII (Leiden, 1991) (trans. altered); on *SJC* as a story of the Resurrection appearance see J. Hartenstein, 'Geschichten' (2010), 125–9.

⁴⁵⁴ See D.M. Parrott, 'Disciples' (1986), 194.

⁴⁵⁵ Already noted in *ibid.*, 198; on what follows see *ibid.*, 200–203; note the important criticism of Parrott's oversystematizing and historicizing attempt in A. Marjanen, *Woman* (1995), 55–9. In addition, one has the almost opposite situation in the *Gospel of the Ebionites*, where after the first four disciples of the synoptic list, of those who appear in *SJC* only Matthew is mentioned, as the last named disciple; see D. Lührmann and E. Schlarb, *Fragmente* (2000), 36.

⁴⁵⁶ In the latter there is mention of the Twelve, but only Matthew, Judas or Thomas and Mary are named.

⁴⁵⁷ *Pistis Sophia* and the two *Books of Jeu* are addresses by the Risen one, but 'there is no appearance form as such' – J. Alsup, *Stories* (1975), 136.

⁴⁵⁸ According to the *Pistis Sophia*, 'twelve years were required after the Resurrection for the redeemer to fully initiate them into the mysteries that they had to know. The final day, the day of the Ascension, is set precisely at the 15th of the moon in the month of Tobe (January). The scene is perhaps the best example of this type of special revelation/ascension scene in the extra-canonical literature. The elements of the scenery share something of the

the first synoptic group are mentioned, but they are heavily criticized, while Mary is the main carrier of revelation and finds support in Levi, who from *Mark* and *Luke* is known not as an Apostle but as a tax-collector, and is renamed in *Matthew* as Matthew. Similar to the *Gospel of Mary* is *Pistis Sophia* IV, where Mary ‘predominates in the dialogue, while all the male disciples are given second place’ and Peter complains about her (‘My Lord, let the women cease to question that we may also question’). All first four disciples of the synoptic list are named, and three from the next four, but Mary takes the lead of all.⁴⁵⁹ The same importance of Mary reoccurs in *Pistis Sophia* I–III, where Mary dominates and criticizes Peter. The task of recording the revelation is given not to one of the first four disciples in the synoptic list, but to three of the second four.

The missing disciples in *SJC* are, indeed, those who in the synoptic tradition, in *Acts* and in Paul are the most prominent. To allow them to receive the revelatory answers of the Lord can, in one sense, rescue them (together with Mary) from Marcion’s verdict of false-Apostleship, while *SJC* silently endorses the rebuke of those disciples who became, if they were not already, ‘connected with the Judaistic interpretation of the post-resurrection period’.⁴⁶⁰

The language of *SJC* is more esoteric than that of *EpAp*.⁴⁶¹ It distinguishes between the Saviour’s earthly appearance (‘his previous form’) and the Risen as ‘invisible spirit’ and ‘great angel of light’, but the setting and the angelic appearance of the Risen are parallels to Marcion. *SJC* also knows of the distinction between earthly and perfect flesh that allowed Marcion to see Christ not as a pure phantom.

As we know, *SJC*⁴⁶² is a Christianized reworking of an important philosophical tract, Egnostos the Blessed, preserved in two copies in the same *Nag Hammadi Library*.⁴⁶³ While in the earlier tract it is Egnostos who teaches, in *SJC* it is the

combination of motifs similar to Mt. 28:16–20, etc. The aspects of location (the Mount of Olives), the place of the women in the whole picture, the expansion of time and the centrality of the question theme are especially arresting. ... Interestingly enough, of the forty-six questions asked thirty-nine of them are raised by Mary Magdalene. These elements are then altered in the second text of Codex Askewianus. The time is changed to the day of the Resurrection (“the third day”) and the participants in the gathering become “his disciples”. The physical setting is also quite volatile. It changes from “the water of the ocean” to “a place in the air along the way of the middle” to “the mountain of Galilee” to “the Amente(?)”. ... The addition of secret word formulas on the order of incantations ... makes the scene most bizarre even by gnostic standards.’ So J. Alsup, *Stories* (1975), 135–6.

⁴⁵⁹ D.M. Parrott, ‘Disciples’ (1986), 204.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 201.

⁴⁶¹ They are ‘perplexed about the underlying reality of the universe and the plan, and the holy providence, and the power of the authorities, and about everything the Saviour is doing with them in the secret of the holy plan’.

⁴⁶² BG 8502; NHC III,4; *POxy* 1081, trans. Nag Hammadi Library in English.

⁴⁶³ NHC III 3; V 1, trans. Nag Hammadi Library in English.

Risen Lord who addresses his disciples and the women, making use of Eugnostos' teaching:

All men born on earth from the foundation of the world until now are dust, while they have inquired about God, who he is and what he is like, but have not found him.⁴⁶⁴

While the philosophical tract keeps to arguments and trusts rational insights into the truth, *SJC* inserts the Risen as mediator of revelation that becomes a gift to the selected ones, sharpened in its moral message.⁴⁶⁵ *SJC* sees in the Almighty⁴⁶⁶ and Yaldabaoth⁴⁶⁷ 'a low "arrogant" demiurge', whereas *Eug* 'does not revolt against the Jewish God in the way (or at least to the extent) that *SJC*' does.⁴⁶⁸ *Eug* admits that this world cannot have been created by God himself, only by a created demiurge, but *SJC* radicalizes the world as a place that reflects the divine hierarchy and distance between God and world. Hence, the myth of the fall of Sophia is prominent in *SJC* and almost absent in *Eug*. Marcion and *SJC* share various elements, but *SJC*'s insistence upon the authority of the Twelve (plus the Seven) sets it apart from Paul's pupil and develops a Christian form of knowledge that in the late second- and early third century became labelled as gnosticism.

The importance of authority with regard to the post-Resurrection appearance can be even better seen from a document we have alluded to before, The Gospel of Mary⁴⁶⁹ (2nd cent. AD).⁴⁷⁰ It is preserved in a longer Coptic and two shorter Greek papyri fragments; hence this Gospel, the only extant one ascribed to a female author, must have enjoyed some interest and is better attested in early papyri than, for example, Mark, although it is never mentioned in any of our known early Christian sources.⁴⁷¹ The Gospel is critical not only towards Peter and the other Apostles – the term 'Twelve' does not appear – but also towards Paul, who is not mentioned either. It positions a female, Mary (of Magdala?),⁴⁷² who has to struggle against

⁴⁶⁴ Eugnostos, NHC V 1,3–4; see *SJC* 92, NHC III 4.

⁴⁶⁵ 'Empty life' in Eugnostos, for example, becomes 'polluted life' in *SJC*.

⁴⁶⁶ *SJC* 107, 119.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁴⁶⁸ J.L. Sumney, 'Eugnostos' (1989), 175–6.

⁴⁶⁹ Text and Translation are taken from C. Tuckett, *Gospel* (2007).

⁴⁷⁰ Determined by the papyri of the early third century, which are themselves copies.

⁴⁷¹ *PBer* 8502; *POxy* 3525; *PRyl* 463; the only potential mention is Epiph., *Pan. XXVI* 8,1–3; although the passage speaks of 'other gospels' just before the 'so-called "Greater Questions of Mary"' – there are also "Lesser" ones forged by them', either the content description refers to another text or Epiphanius had no lucid knowledge of the *Gospel* itself as we have it; the latest edition (and trans.) of the text is C. Tuckett, *Gospel* (2007), 86–115; see *ibid.*, 4 on earlier editions.

⁴⁷² S.J. Shoemaker, 'Rethinking' (2001) can show that there are, indeed, texts that speak of a Resurrection appearance to the mother of Jesus (the *Pistis Sophia*, and especially

male dominance but claims knowledge of the words of the Lord in a counter-Pauline and anti-gendered form. The only term used for the divine, for example, is ‘the Good’.⁴⁷³ Moreover, she finds support in another sinner, Levi, known from *Luke* 5:27–32 and *Mark* 2:13–7 as a former wealthy tax collector who is not included in the list of the Twelve in these Gospels.⁴⁷⁴ The Gospel attests ‘a debate taking place within agreed limits and boundaries ... Indeed, the very existence of the debate at all may suggest that any competing groups are still in dialogue with each other. Strict boundary lines have evidently not yet been drawn, and any ‘us versus them’ mentality seems to be at a fairly early stage of development’.⁴⁷⁵ Hence we have yet another witness to the inter-relationship between early Christian strands.

As with *EpAp* and *SJC* the text is situated in the post-Resurrection and pre-ascension scenario. The fragment opens with a critical address by the Lord, who is not differentiated from the pre-Risen but is called ‘the Blessed’, a martyr.⁴⁷⁶ He gives explanations about the end of times and answers the critical question: ‘Will matter then be destroyed or not?’⁴⁷⁷ In his response, he refers not to the resurrection of the dead (or his own Resurrection), but to a restoration of nature to its roots by a dissolution of matter. Matter is not an anti-power to the divine; sin has no natural, but rather an anti-natural, origin. Sickness and death derive from sexual passion, from matter, a disturbance that captures the whole body. It is not the Resurrection that matters, but that ‘the Good came among you to the [things?] of every nature in order to restore it to its root’.⁴⁷⁸

The Lord exhorts his disciples:⁴⁷⁹

the Syriac tradition where Jesus appears first to his mother, as for example with Ephraem who reads Tatian’s *Diatessaron* accordingly), but in *GM* the connection with Levi makes Mary Magdalene a more likely identification, although a conflation of characters of both Marys is likely, too. For more discussion and further literature, see C. Tuckett, *Gospel* (2007), 14–18; see especially E.A. De Boer, *Gospel* (2004), and A. Marjanen, *Woman* (1995).

⁴⁷³ See K.L. King, Introduction, in *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures* (New York, 2007), 739.

⁴⁷⁴ Unlike the tax collector who appears as Matthew (!) in the parallel story in *Matthew* (*Matth.* 9:9) and is included in the list of the Twelve explicitly as ‘Matthew the tax collector’ (*Matth.* 9:9), a reference that makes most sense if the author of *Matthew* knew of Levi as somebody who was *not* included in the list(s) of the Twelve in *Mark* resp. *Luke*. There is no mention of Levi in *John*.

⁴⁷⁵ C. Tuckett, *Gospel* (2007), 203.

⁴⁷⁶ *GM* 8:12, 9:11.

⁴⁷⁷ *GM* 7.

⁴⁷⁸ *GM* 7.

⁴⁷⁹ See the parallels to Paul, *Gal.* 1:6–9; K.L. King, *Gospel* (2003), 119–27.

Beware that no one leads you astray .. Do not lay down any rules beyond what I have appointed for you, and do not give a law like the law-giver lest you be constrained by it. When he had said this, he departed.⁴⁸⁰

The Lord requires his disciples to adhere to his commandments, not to those of the law giver. Although this sounds Marcionite, in *GM* it is not Paul but Mary⁴⁸¹ who, after the Lord has departed, speaks of her revelatory vision. Mary claims for herself that 'what is hidden from you, I will proclaim to you', because 'Lord, I saw you today in a vision'.⁴⁸² She is depicted in a quasi-parallel role to Paul, 'established between Jesus and Mary',⁴⁸³ speaks to the disciples and encourages them. At least initially, she is accepted by Peter, who wants to know 'the words of the Saviour which you remember, which you know, but we do not, and which we have not heard'. What Marcion was claiming to derive from Paul, divine revelatory knowledge, in *GM* derives from Mary.⁴⁸⁴ She is not only set over and above the other disciples, but also replaces the not-mentioned Paul.

GM reveals some of the hidden messages. An extraordinary dispute ensues among Mary, Andrew and Peter – the two brothers who according to the lists of Apostles in *Luke* and *Matthew* are chief among the Twelve,⁴⁸⁵ and according to *John* 1:35–42 were disciples of John, Andrew bringing his brother Peter to Jesus:⁴⁸⁶

[Peter objects to Mary]: [The Saviour] did not speak with a woman without our knowing, and not openly, did he? Shall we turn around and all listen to her? Did he prefer her to us?⁴⁸⁷

Was Mary more important than Jesus' male disciples? Shall men listen to a woman? What would have sounded offensive for many nineteenth- and twentieth-century people was certainly not a smaller social revolution to listeners of late antiquity.

In response, Mary weeps, but defends her position with a rhetorical question:

⁴⁸⁰ *GM* 8–9.

⁴⁸¹ 'In stark contrast to, for example, the *Gospel of Thomas*', Logion 114, so J. Alsup, *Stories* (1975), 138–9.

⁴⁸² *GM* 10.

⁴⁸³ C. Tuckett, *Gospel* (2007), 149.

⁴⁸⁴ In addition to the *SJC*, there are more early Christian writings where Mary is portrayed 'as one of the interlocutors in dialogues of Jesus with his disciples', so K.L. King, *Gospel* (2003), 143; for example, the *Gospel of Thomas* (logion 21), the *Gospel of Philip* (*GPhil* 59:6–11; 63:33–64:9), the *First Apocalypse of James* and the *Dialogue of the Saviour* (*DSav* 139:11–142:13).

⁴⁸⁵ *Luke* 6:13–16; *Matth.* 10:1–4; different in *Mark* 3:16–19 and *Acts* 1:13.

⁴⁸⁶ On Andrew and Peter in early Christianity, see more in K.L. King, *Gospel* (2003), 137–41.

⁴⁸⁷ *GM* 17.

Do you think [Peter] that I thought this up in my heart, or that I am lying about the Saviour?’ And Levi supports her, as if, indeed, she needed male support, and criticises Peter: ‘Peter, you have always been hot tempered. Now I see you are arguing against the woman like the adversaries. But if the Saviour made her worthy, who are you then to reject her? Certainly the Saviour knows her very well. That is why he loved her more than us. Rather let us be ashamed and put on the perfect man and acquire him for ourselves as he commanded us, and let us preach the gospel, not laying down any other rule or other law beyond what the saviour said and they began to go out to proclaim and to preach.

It is here, with this summing-up of its anti-Peter and -Paul message, that the *Gospel of Mary* ends.⁴⁸⁸

Having already encountered in *1Peter* and *2Peter* two texts that placed themselves in the Pauline tradition, the question arises whether the *Teaching of Peter* (written not long before 170/80 AD) is Pauline, too. The fleshly interpretation of the passage that we know from *Luke* 24:37–9, the *Teaching of Peter* (*Kerygma Petrou*), comes, indeed, close to the anti-Marcionite position of the *Epistle of the Apostles*. It is a difficult text with few extant fragments from various writings transmitted under different titles: *Doctrina Petri*, *Kerygma Petrou* and *Didascalica Petrou*.⁴⁸⁹

Similar to *EpAp* and other texts, the *Teaching* is set within the post-Resurrection scene, at the very moment when the Lord chooses the Twelve⁴⁹⁰ and makes them his Apostles, ‘having judged them faithful, sending them into the world to evangelize the people on the earth,⁴⁹¹ that they may recognize that there is one

⁴⁸⁸ GM 18–19. The opposite position can be found in the *Cave of the Treasures*, a Syriac text, probably of the 5th cent., which recounts the Bible from the creation to Pentecost. Peter (together with John) is the main Resurrection witness. Peter gives the guardians wine to make them sleepy, to take the body of the Messiah without breaking the seals of the tomb, not to allow the Jews to claim that the body was stolen. The Risen appears to Peter first; Peter is charged with looking after men, women and children; the apostles are ordained as priests; and Mary is baptized by Peter: see A. Su-Min Ri, *La Caverne des Trésors*, CSCO.S 207 (Turnhout, 1987); J.-P. Mahé, *La Caverne des Trésors*, CSCO.I 24 (Turnhout, 1992); A.S.-M. Ri, *Commentaire de la Caverne des Trésors: Étude sur l’histoire du texte et de ses sources*, CSCO.Sub 103 (Turnhout, 2000).

⁴⁸⁹ W. Schneemelcher (ed.; trans. R. McL. Wilson), *Apocrypha* I (2002), 249–85; see also E. von Dobschütz, *Kerygma* (1893); M.G. Mara, ‘Kerygma’ (1967); A. Hilgenfeld, ‘Kerygma’ (1893); id., *Testamentum* IV (1866); M. Elze, *Untersuchungen* (1963); W. Rordorf, ‘Christus’ (1979 = 1993); E. Norelli, ‘Situation’ (1991); M. Cambe, ‘Prédication’ (1993); W. Kinzig, *Novitas* (1994). See my own contribution ‘Geistwesen’ (1999) (what follows is based on this text).

⁴⁹⁰ See *Luke* 6:13; *John* 6:70.

⁴⁹¹ See *Matth.* 10:5–6.

God, showing clearly what will happen through the faith of Christ, that they who heard and believed should be saved'.⁴⁹²

The choice of the Twelve (there is no discounting of Jude the traitor) who become Apostles is based on their having been judged faithful by the Lord, contrary to Marcion who used the same Resurrection situation to expound their disbelief. *Luke* in his parallel passage disentangled Jesus' 'calling his disciples', 'whom he also named Apostles', and situated it during Jesus' earthly life.⁴⁹³

The saving message is a simple statement of monotheism: that there is 'one God'. It is not difficult to detect further elements that distinguish the *Teaching* from Marcion: the belief in 'one God', as opposed to the differentiation between the unknown God and the God of the Jewish law; and the implied exclusion of Paul, as the missionary task of the Twelve is not directed solely to the Jews but to the entire world. 'From this perspective, there is no place left for Paul. Even without him, the Gentiles have been called to be saved and have been converted.'⁴⁹⁴

This summary indicates an anti-Pauline-/Marcionite tendency. The monotheistic belief is not solely a marker against the polytheism of the Gentiles, but it seems more clearly directed against an alleged ditheism. Very similar to the *Teaching*, Ignatius states:

The divine prophets lived according to Christ Jesus. For this cause also they were persecuted, being inspired by His grace to the end that they which are disobedient might be fully persuaded that *there is one God* who manifested Himself through Jesus Christ His Son, who is His eternal Word that did not proceed from silence,⁴⁹⁵ who in all things was well-pleasing unto Him that sent Him.⁴⁹⁶

The same insistence upon the monotheistic belief is reiterated in the *Teaching* with reference to God, the creator and eschatological end. This God of beginning and end is identified with 'the Invisible', Marcion's supreme God:

Know then that there is one God, who made the beginning of all things, and holds the power of the end; and he is the Invisible, who sees all things, incapable of being contained, who contains all things, needing nothing, whom all things need, and by whom they are, incomprehensible, everlasting, unmade, who made

⁴⁹² See *Rom.* 10:14–15; *KerPetr.* frg. 3b; Clem. Alex., *Strom.* VI 6,48 (trans. here and below Philip Schaff, ANF II).

⁴⁹³ *Luke* 6:12–16.

⁴⁹⁴ J. Wagenmann, *Stellung* (1926), 96.

⁴⁹⁵ Note the text correction 'eternal ... not' according to the best manuscript G, the Latin version L, and the monophysite Timotheus Aelurus; on this T. Lechner, *Ignatius* (1999), xxiii (and earlier scholars who have adopted this reading).

⁴⁹⁶ *IgnMagn.* 8:2.

all things by the Word of His power,⁴⁹⁷ that is, according to the gnostic scripture, His Son.⁴⁹⁸

Unfortunately we do not know to which ‘gnostic scripture’ the *Teaching* refers. That the invisible God is the one who creates by the power of his Word, and that the Word does not belong to a different God is reinforced by calling this one, single God the Lord of ‘Law and Word’ – precisely the combination that Marcion had denied, together with his rejection of the combination of the Gospel with the Jewish law.⁴⁹⁹

Conversely, the author accepts Marcion’s criticism of Judaism, also his idea of Christianity as a ‘new covenant’, a ‘new way’, but, contrary to Marcion, he grounds the new covenant on the Jewish scriptures, the Prophets. The old way of believing of Judaism he sets on a par with the belief of the Greeks, and establishes – for the first time in Christian history, as far as we know – a third form of worship, ‘the new and spiritual way’:⁵⁰⁰

The excellent among the Greeks worshipped the same God as we, but that they had not learned by perfect knowledge that which was delivered by the Son ... Neither worship as the Jews; for they, thinking that they only know God, do not know Him, adoring as they do angels and archangels, the month and the moon ... keep them [the old traditions, but], worship God in a new way, by Christ. For we find in the Scriptures, as the Lord says: Behold, I make with you a new covenant, not as I made with your fathers in Mount Horeb.⁵⁰¹ He made a new covenant with us; for what belonged to the Greeks and Jews is old. But we, who worship Him in a new way, in the third form, are Christians. For clearly, as I think, he showed that the one and only God was known by the Greeks in a Gentile way, by the Jews Judaically, and in a new and spiritual way by us.⁵⁰²

Had one not read the other fragments before, one could be under the impression that one is reading a Marcionite text. Marcion was the first to have picked up the idea of newness and radicalized it: ‘No other catchword appears as often as “new” in the *Antitheses*.’⁵⁰³ Nevertheless, there are major differences between Marcion

⁴⁹⁷ See *Hebr.* 1:3.

⁴⁹⁸ *KerPetr.* frg. 2a; Clem. Alex., *Strom.* VI 5, 39.

⁴⁹⁹ *KerPetr.* frg. 1b and 2a; Clem. Alex., *Strom.* II 15, 68, and Clem. Alex., *Strom.* VI 5, 39.

⁵⁰⁰ See W. Kinzig, *Novitas* (1994), 145–7; soon, Aristides in his *Apology* and *Barn* will call the Christians a ‘new race’ (see *ibid.*, 147–52 on Aristides, and 171–2 on Barn), similar to *Diognetus* 1:1 (*ibid.*, 157–8); on Tertullian’s criticism of the term (*ibid.*, 158–61).

⁵⁰¹ *Hebr.* 8:8–10; *Jer.* 31:31–2.

⁵⁰² *KerPetr.* frg. 2d; Clem. Alex., *Strom.* VI 5, 41.

⁵⁰³ W. Kinzig, *Novitas* (1994), 126; A. Harnack, *Marcion* (1923; ²1924 = 1960),

and the *Teaching*. While Marcion regarded the scriptures of the Jews, with Paul, as an 'Old Testament',⁵⁰⁴ Peter shares only part of this idea. In principle, he supports the term 'new covenant' – especially as it dates back further than Marcion –, but he does not take it as an antithesis of the old covenant. On the contrary, we are faced with an early anti-Marcionite turn of the idea of 'old' and 'new', where with the inclusion of the Greeks in what is 'old', the 'new covenant' becomes a proof that 'new' is a fulfilment of 'old'.⁵⁰⁵

The author clearly alludes to *Hebrews*, *John* and *Matthew*,⁵⁰⁶ or at least traditions that were incorporated into these writings, strictly emphasizing the oneness of God but also the oneness of the First-begotten, a statement that is set in the context of *Matthew* 23:8–10: 'Call no man your teacher on earth.' The 'teacher on earth' who derived his authority not from the Lord, as Peter did and Paul at least claimed to do, but from his own reading of Paul's Gospel, was Marcion, who dissociated the Old and the New Testament, whereas the *Teaching* speaks of 'the Apostles' and maintains their unity through a history of salvation:

We opened the books of the prophets⁵⁰⁷ which we possess, who name Jesus Christ, partly in parables, partly in enigmas, partly expressly and in so many words, and find His coming and death, and cross, and all the rest of the tortures which the Jews inflicted on Him, also His resurrection and assumption to heaven previous to the foundation of Jerusalem. As it is written: '*These things are all that He behoves to suffer, and what should be after Him*'.⁵⁰⁸ Recognising them, therefore, we have believed in God in consequence of what is written respecting Him.⁵⁰⁹

For Marcion the prophets mentioned the messiah of the creator, not the Saviour Christ.⁵¹⁰ The Saviour had expressed himself in 'a new form of preaching' that was not in harmony with that of the Old Testament, but contrasted with it.⁵¹¹ Christ had spoken in parables and given answers to questions. His deeds were recorded in the 'new document',⁵¹² not in the Jewish Prophets or scriptures,⁵¹³ for example,

⁵⁰⁴ 2Cor. 3:12–16; Tert., *Adv. Marc.* IV 6,1.

⁵⁰⁵ See the reference to *Hebr.* 8:8–10 (= *Jer.* 31:31–2). A slightly different argument in Tert., *Adv. Marc.* V 11,4.

⁵⁰⁶ See the interpretation given by Clement in *Clem.*, *Strom.* VI 7 (a text that unfortunately is rarely considered together with the fragments of the *Teaching*).

⁵⁰⁷ See 1Petr. 1:10–12.

⁵⁰⁸ See *ibid.*, 1:11.

⁵⁰⁹ *KerPetr.* frg. 4a; *Clem. Alex.*, *Strom.* VI 15,128.

⁵¹⁰ See Tert., *Adv. Marc.* I 8,1, 9,1, V 16,3.

⁵¹¹ See *ibid.*, IV 11,12: *nova forma sermonis*.

⁵¹² See *ibid.*, IV 18,2.

⁵¹³ See W. Kinzig, *Novitas* (1994), 128.

in the resurrection of the widow's son at Nain,⁵¹⁴ or the removal of Sabbath observances.⁵¹⁵

If one reads the *Teaching* as a part-rejection of Marcion, the line of argument of the preserved fragments becomes clearer. In the previous passage, for example, the 'Peter' of the *Teaching* simply inverts the main arguments of Paul's disciple Marcion: the deeds of Christ, and what happened to him and with him, have been named by the books of the Prophets, through their parables and enigmas, and partly detailed. As *Barnabas*, 'Peter' finds everything relating to Christ, 'also' his Resurrection 'previous to the foundation of Jerusalem', and he concludes with a saying that hints at a tradition we know from another Petrine writing, *1Peter*. Against the dissociation of the Jewish law and the new message of Christ, 'Peter' calls Christ the Lord himself, this God who he had also called 'Law and Word'. Against Marcion's cutting off the Jewish law from the Christian Gospel, 'Peter' speaks of 'possession' of the Prophets, of the one link who is God, the Lord, Christ, and of his having instituted everything in his one Scripture.⁵¹⁶

The central passage for our purpose derives from a quote transmitted by Origen, successor to Clement in the catechetical school of Alexandria. Origen writes in the preface to his systematic work *On principles* as follows:

The term ἀσώματον, i.e., incorporeal, is disused and unknown, not only in many other writings, but also in our own Scriptures. And if any one should quote it to us out of the little treatise entitled *The Teaching of Peter*, in which the Saviour seems to say to His disciples, 'I am not an incorporeal demon', I have to reply, in the first place, that that work is not included among ecclesiastical books; for we can show that it was not composed either by Peter or by any other person inspired by the Spirit of God. But even if the point were to be conceded, the word ἀσώματον there does not convey the same meaning as is intended by Greek and Gentile authors when incorporeal nature is discussed by philosophers. For in the little treatise referred to he used the phrase incorporeal demon to denote that that form or outline of demoniacal body, whatever it is, does not resemble this gross and visible body of ours; but, agreeably to the intention of the author of the treatise, it must be understood to mean that He had not such a body as demons have, which is naturally fine, and thin as if formed of air (and for this reason is either considered or called by many incorporeal), but that He had a solid and palpable body. Now, according to human custom, everything which is not of that nature is called by the simple or ignorant incorporeal; as if one were to say that the air which we breathe was incorporeal, because it is not a body of such a nature as can be grasped and held, or can offer resistance to pressure.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁴ See *Luke* 7:11–17.

⁵¹⁵ See *Luke* 6:1–5.

⁵¹⁶ See *KerPet.* frg. 4b; Clem. Alex., *Strom.* VI 15,128.

⁵¹⁷ Orig., *De princ.* I pref. 8.

In the opening of his work, Origen had already declared his opposition to Marcion⁵¹⁸ and professed the 'just and good God' as one and the same, the God of the Old and New Testament. Origen must have seen in the *Teaching* a supportive document for his position. While Marcion had rejected the salvation of the just of the Old Testament,⁵¹⁹ the *Teaching* maintained that it was the one God who had created and arranged all things and who cared for the people of both the old and the new covenant.

With regard to Christ, Origen teaches against Marcion that Jesus Christ was born of this creator, served in the creation, divested himself of his glory, and was incarnate. And against Marcion, Origen stresses – quoting Marcion –

that this Jesus Christ was *truly* born and *truly* suffered [*natus et passus est in ueritate*], *not as a ghost* did he endure this death common [to man], but did *truly* die; that, in fact, He did *truly* rise from the dead, and *truly* after His resurrection He conversed with His disciples, and was taken up [into heaven].⁵²⁰

Having reflected and rejected Marcion's view of the Resurrection, he adds that the Resurrection gave authority to the plurality of Apostles, that these were inspired by the divine spirit, and that 'there was not one Spirit in the men of the old dispensation, and another in those who were inspired at the advent of Christ'.⁵²¹

Origen relates the *Teaching* and comes back to Marcion's view of the Resurrection that had already been refuted by the *Teaching*. 'Peter' had discussed the nature of the body of the Risen against a position that rejected its gross, visible and palpable character and suggested a demonic body of aerial material, a precise description of Marcion's view. The *Teaching* retorted with a non-canonical Lord's saying, 'I am not an incorporeal demon', meaning that the Risen 'had a solid and palpable body'.

Origen does not like the term 'incorporeal' as it is neither common among Christians nor understood in a way that Greek and Gentile authors would have it. But despite his scepticism, he does not set the *Teaching* aside because of its anti-Marcion character. It supports Origen's reading of *Luke* 24:37–9.

The *Teaching* is not the only text of the first three centuries that gives the non-scriptural Lord's saying 'I am not an incorporeal demon'. It seems that Origen had quoted only the latter part of the saying, and related the first part of it. Ignatius

⁵¹⁸ See J. Rius-Camps, 'Orígenes' (1975). Even later, in II 9,5–8 when he adds that he is refuting the 'school of Marcion, Valentinus and Basilides' and evidently lumps together the teaching of these three (similarly id., *ComMt* XII 12; *FrgMt* 166; *HomJr* 10, 17), Marcion is still the first to be mentioned; see A. le Boulluec, 'Place' (1975), 48, 55.

⁵¹⁹ See the excursus on the descensus in C. Schmidt, *Gespräche* (1919), 453–576, at 479–83.

⁵²⁰ Orig., *De princ.* I pref. 4.

⁵²¹ Ibid.

preserves a slightly fuller text: ‘*Take, touch me and see that I am not an incorporeal demon*’:

You are firmly planted in love in the blood of Christ, being fully convinced as *touching* our Lord that He is *truly of the race of David after the flesh*, and Son of God after the Divine will and power,⁵²² *truly* born of a virgin, baptized by John,⁵²³ that all righteousness might be fulfilled by Him,⁵²⁴ under Pontius Pilate and Herod the Tetrarch⁵²⁵ *truly* nailed for us in the flesh (of whose fruit are we, even of His most blessed Passion); that He might raise up an ensign to the ages through His Resurrection, for His saints and believers, whether among Jews or Gentiles, in one body of His Church.⁵²⁶

For all these sufferings He endured for our sakes [that we might be saved]. And He *truly* suffered, as also He *truly raised Himself up*. Nor is it the case, as some unbelievers affirm, that He suffered in semblance – it is they who are semblance⁵²⁷ ...

For I know and believe that *He was in the flesh even after the Resurrection*. And when He came to *Peter* and those who were with him, He said to them, ‘*Take, touch me and see that I am not a spirit without body*.’ And straightway they *touched* Him and believed, being united with His flesh and blood. Therefore also they despised death, and were found to rise above death. Moreover after His Resurrection He ate with them and drank with them,⁵²⁸ as living in the flesh, although spiritually united with the Father.⁵²⁹

Ignatius begins with reference to core Pauline traditions (*Gal.*; *Rom.*), potentially wishing to add his own letter – or rather interpretative set of letters – to the collection of Paul’s. In all of Ignatius’ letters to Christian communities, the Resurrection has an important place (although with different emphasis), ‘conditioned by the polemics’.⁵³⁰ As in the *Letter to the Smyrneans*, the polemical context is explicit in his *Letter to the Magnesians*:

Fall not upon the hooks of vain doctrine ... in regard to the birth, and passion, and Resurrection which took place in the time of the government of Pontius

⁵²² See *Rom.* 1:3–4.

⁵²³ See also *IgnEph.* 16ff., and on this predominantly anti-Valentinian text now the extensive and convincing commentary by T. Lechner, *Ignatius* (1999), 121–305; on Jesus’ baptism in early Christianity, see D.A. Bertrand, *Baptême* (1973), esp. 26–32.

⁵²⁴ See *Matth.* 3:15.

⁵²⁵ See *Luke* 23:7–12; *Acts* 4:27.

⁵²⁶ See *Eph.* 2:16, 3:6, 1:23; *Col.* 1:18.

⁵²⁷ See *IgnTrall.* 9:10.

⁵²⁸ See *Luke* 24:30,35,42; *John* 21:13.

⁵²⁹ *IgnSm.* 1–3.

⁵³⁰ See A. Hamman, ‘R surrection’ (1975), 294.

Pilate, *being truly and certainly accomplished* by Jesus Christ, who is our hope, from which may no one of you ever be turned aside.⁵³¹

Compare also the very similar text in Ignatius' *Letter to the Church at Tralles*, where he warns again of false doctrines and insists upon Jesus Christ's true descent from David and Mary, on his true birth, crucifixion, death and Resurrection.⁵³²

As in the quote above from his *Letter to the Smyrneans*, in his letters to the churches of Magnesia and Tralles he underlines the realism of all three data, birth, passion and Resurrection, secured by reference to Pontius Pilate. What he calls 'speaking at variance' or 'the hooks of vain doctrine' is more precisely described in the first quote from the *Letter to the Smyrneans*, where Ignatius states that 'some unbelievers affirm that He suffered in semblance'. Whether the letters are genuine or fictitious writings from the time of Eleutherius, Ignatius in common with most others (Papias, Polycarp) does not name the opponents, but combines them (Marcionites with Valentinians, for example).

If Ignatius is quoting the same *Teaching* as Origen, the letters can hardly have been written before the mid-second century.⁵³³ This timing would explain Ignatius' position against Marcion, but also his focus on the Resurrection. As we have seen with *EpAp*, those who object to Marcion naturally have to fight the battle on the grounds on which Marcion stands, and adopt a range of elements of their opponent's hermeneutical approach. The Resurrection becomes a key topic, as do the writings of Paul and the Gospel(s). In criticizing Marcion his objectors have to deal with his views on the Resurrection and develop their own historical, fleshly or realistic interpretation, or, in contrast, an even more spiritualized version of it. Whatever view is being proposed, almost all authors who object to Marcion combine their arguments with a renewed, partly anti-Marcionite reading or rejection of Paul: they either refer to *Luke* or balance this Gospel by complementing it with other writings.

For Ignatius (as for Marcion) it is solely through Jesus Christ that the Church has been 'established in the harmony of God, and rejoices unceasingly in the passion of our Lord, and is filled with all mercy through his Resurrection'.⁵³⁴ In none of his letters does Ignatius substantiate the realism of Jesus Christ's birth, death or Resurrection by drawing on the Jewish scriptures. He differentiates himself from Marcion, however, by being resolutely 'realistic', underpinning

⁵³¹ *IgnMagn.* 11.

⁵³² *IgnTrall.* 9.

⁵³³ This suggestion has recently been substantiated by R.M. Hübner *Monarchianism* (1999), 162-77 (around 175 AD) (followed with alterations by Timothy Barnes [140 AD]), carefully suggested by Paul Foster, but forcefully endorsed by the late Walter Schmithals in a thorough survey of the whole question: see T.D. Barnes, 'Date' (2008); P. Foster, 'Epistles' (117/2006); W. Schmithals, 'Ignatius' (2009), endorsed again by O. Zwierlein, *Petrus* (2010).

⁵³⁴ *IgnPhil.* tit.

the fleshly element of the Saviour and accusing his opponents of deviating from such realism.⁵³⁵ Instead of securing his realism statements with reference to the Jewish scriptures, he points to the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, endorsed by the Lord himself in his saying that we already know from the *Teaching*. Ignatius reads an absolute unity – an even stronger monarchian one than Origen – against any docetic divide.⁵³⁶ Jesus Christ is ‘the God’, the Lord, ‘in flesh and spirit’. More important than the pneumatic aspect is the tangible one. This Lord is *truly* of the race of David *after the flesh*, spelled out in *Luke*’s genealogy that was absent from Marcion’s Gospel.⁵³⁷ Ignatius uses Pauline thoughts and *Luke*’s writing to counter-argue Marcion, but based on his opponent’s scriptural foundation. His stark realism is underpinned by reference to Pontius Pilate; while the Resurrection is a testimony ‘to the ages’,⁵³⁸ he concurs with Marcion by claiming that Christ ‘*truly* raised *Himself* up’.⁵³⁹

Ignatius, as many others, represents a mixed attitude towards Marcion.⁵⁴⁰ The appearance of the Risen makes the Apostles believe. But the eating and drinking with the Risen makes them recognize not only the one ‘living in the flesh’ but also the same eucharistically and ‘spiritually united with the Father’.

A parallel realism statement against Marcion can be found in Tertullian’s *De carne Christi* 5:2–4, where Marcion is explicitly mentioned:

God was crucified. Excise this also, *Marcion* – or rather, this for preference. For which is more beneath God’s dignity, more a matter of shame, to be born or to die, to carry about a body or a cross, to be circumcised or to be crucified, to be fed at the breast or to be buried, to be laid in a manger or to be entombed in a sepulchre?

Tertullian contrasts tenets that Marcion rejected with those he upheld. Why did Marcion reject the birth and upbringing of Jesus, but retain the cross and his death?

Or was your reason for not tearing out of your scriptures the sufferings of Christ that *as a phantasm he was free from the perception of them*? I have already suggested that he could equally well have undergone the unsubstantial ridicule of an imaginary nativity and infancy. But your answer is now required, murderer of the truth: was not God *truly* crucified? Did he not, as *truly* crucified, *truly* die? Was he not *truly* raised again, seeing of course he *truly* died? Was it by fraud

⁵³⁵ *IgnSm.* 7:1, 12:2; *IgnTrall.* tit.

⁵³⁶ See R.M. Hübner, “Εἶς θεὸς Ἰησοῦς Χριστός” (1996, now with further lit. and notes 1999); id., ‘Ignatianen’ (1999).

⁵³⁷ *Luke* 3:23–31.

⁵³⁸ See on Pontius Pilate, A. Hamman, ‘Résurrection’ (1975), 305–9.

⁵³⁹ *IgnSm.* 1–2.

⁵⁴⁰ See E.F.v.d. Goltz, *Ignatius* (1894), 154, who noted the anti-Marcionite character of Ignatius.

that Paul determined to know nothing among us save Jesus crucified,⁵⁴¹ was it by fraud that he represented him as buried, by fraud that he insisted that he was raised up again?⁵⁴² Fraudulent in that case is also our faith, and the whole of what we hope for from Christ will be a phantasm

In his polemic against Marcion, Tertullian presupposes that Marcion denied Christ's suffering, which, of course, he did not. Tertullian adds one of his most paradoxical statements:

I am saved if I am not ashamed of my Lord. *Whosoever is ashamed of me*, he says, *of him will I also be ashamed.*⁵⁴³ The Son of God was crucified: I am not ashamed – because it is shameful. The Son of God died: it is immediately credible – because it is silly. He was buried, and rose again: it is certain – because it is impossible.

There is a clear parallel to Origen's anti-Marcionite preface to *On principles*:

Jesus Christ was *truly* born and *truly* suffered, *not as a ghost* did he endure this death common to man, but did *truly* die; that He did *truly* rise from the dead, and *truly* after His resurrection He conversed with His disciples, and was taken up into heaven.

3*Cor* is 'a most ingenious pseudepigraph',⁵⁴⁴ 'an alleged correspondence between Paul and the Corinthian Church' of two letters.⁵⁴⁵ Indicated by its title and seen especially 'in certain regions in the East' as 'authentic', it became incorporated in the New Testament, for example by some Armenian Churches and was regarded as part of the Pauline tradition.⁵⁴⁶

Today 3*Cor* is embedded in the *Acts of Paul* that we have encountered above, but we know from the manuscript evidence that this text had circulated separately. The author of 3*Cor* positions the letter fictitiously under the authority of Paul, but interestingly takes a similarly critical view of his protagonist as do *Acts* or *EpAp*.

As early as the opening address by Stephanus and the other 'presbyters' from Corinth, the Corinthians combine Paul's authority with those of 'the other Apostles'. One scholar has noted: 'The author cannot be a Paulinist'.⁵⁴⁷ Instead, Paul is portrayed as a preacher of asceticism and the resurrection of the dead who

⁵⁴¹ See 1*Cor*: 1:23, 2:2.

⁵⁴² *Rom*: 6:4; 1*Cor*: 15:4; see also *Col*: 2:12.

⁵⁴³ *Matth*: 10:33; *Mark* 8:38; *Luke* 9:26.

⁵⁴⁴ M. Rist, 'Refutations' (1942), 47.

⁵⁴⁵ V. Hovhannessian, *Corinthians* (2000), pref., 1.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 10; O. Zwierlein, 'Briefwechsel' (2010) shows that 3*Cor*. was an integral part of the *Acts*.

⁵⁴⁷ A. Lindemann, *Paulus* (1979), 68.

has to take a stance against several contentious claims (referring to a Simon and Cleobius⁵⁴⁸) that the Corinthians ask him about: ‘We have never heard such things from you or the other Apostles. Whatever you and the other Apostles teach we will believe’.⁵⁴⁹

What are those strange things? The opening section of the letter includes a list of six topics:

1. ‘We must not, they say, make use of the prophets’
2. ‘God is not almighty’
3. ‘There is no resurrection for the flesh’
4. ‘The creation of man is not by God’
5. ‘The Lord did neither come in the flesh, nor was he born of Mary’
6. ‘The world is not of God but of the angels’

By now, the adversary’s profile can easily be detected. Although Ephraem, the fourth-century Syrian theologian, in his commentary of *3Cor* identifies the opponents with the Bardaisanians (a Christian group in Syria), because according to Bardaisan the ‘body was evil and perishable’ and ‘without any hope of resurrection’, ‘no where [*sic*] in the heresiologists, however, do we read about Bardaisan rejecting the prophets of the Old Testament’.⁵⁵⁰ There is ‘no doubt’, therefore, ‘that the beliefs of Marcion and his followers are the closest to the false teachings targeted in *3 Cor*’.⁵⁵¹

In his answer to the Corinthians (which deals only with the above topics 1 to 5), Paul calls the opponent a ‘falsifier’ of the Lord’s words – an accusation against Marcion that we know from pre-Irenaeus opponents of Marcion. But the Paul of *3Cor* does not insist on having received the Gospel from the Risen Christ, only that ‘from the beginning’ he ‘handed down’ what he had ‘received *from the Apostles who were before me “with Jesus Christ at all times”*’,⁵⁵² a clear acceptance of *Acts*’ strategy to subordinate Marcion to the authority of *Luke* and Paul to that of the Apostles.⁵⁵³ The rules by which one has to abide, are ‘received through *the blessed prophets* and the holy Gospel’.

The accusation of falsification of the Lord’s Word and the submission of Paul are the first two topics before *3Cor* turns to the list of questions, beginning with number 5, providing the answer that ‘our Lord Christ Jesus was born of Mary of the seed of David by the Holy Spirit, sent from heaven by the Father into her’. After two additional anti-Marcionite statements, this answer counters one

⁵⁴⁸ The same heretics appear in *Didascalia apostolorum* VI 10 where they stand for Marcionite teachings, see M. Rist, ‘Refutations’ (1942), 44.

⁵⁴⁹ Trans. V. Hovhannessian, *Corinthians* (2000), 76–9.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 128; M. Rist, ‘Refutations’ (1942).

⁵⁵² *Acts* 1:21.

⁵⁵³ See V. Hovhannessian, *Third Corinthians* (2000), 101.

of Marcion's core messages, that Christ Jesus was not of David's seed, not born of Mary.⁵⁵⁴ Although we know of other second-century teachers who denied the fleshly birth of Jesus, the profile matches best the tenets of Marcion. He believed that the anointed Jesus, the Christ, belonged to the supreme God of Love, but had taken the name of 'Christ' that was familiar to the Jews, to 'work his way into the Jews' confidence'⁵⁵⁵ in vain – as it resulted in another sign of disbelief on the side of the Jews, who were still expecting their own Messiah and rejected Jesus.⁵⁵⁶ *3Cor* reminds of Tertullian when the latter states: 'You will need to understand that Christ is reckoned [as derived] from David by carnal descent, because of the lineage of Mary the virgin.'⁵⁵⁷

While *3Cor* dwells widely on the incarnation that fights off 'the Evil One', there is little about Christ's Resurrection, an indication of how far *3Cor* is removed from the authentic Paul.⁵⁵⁸ Even when Christ's Resurrection is mentioned, and we have an early use of Jonah's story to interpret the event, this only serves to illustrate the fleshly nature of the Risen of whom – as with Jonah – 'nothing was harmed neither hair nor eyelids'. Christ's own Resurrection⁵⁵⁹ is an example of a fleshly resurrection of man from the dead, 'man that was formed by his Father' (topics no. 3–4), by 'God of all, the Almighty, the maker of heaven and earth' (no. 2), the one who 'sent out prophets first to the Jews' (no. 1).

In the previous section we looked at those responses to Marcion that counter-argued him or developed a position in distinction to him by reducing the singularity of Paul's authority, often emphasizing a not exclusively spiritual but also fleshly and historicizing interpretation of the Resurrection appearances, to link the risen Christ with the Twelve or even other disciples. The following witnesses will be even more radical, denying Paul any authority as part of a rejection of any human tradition or apostolic institution, and instead focusing on salvation as pure knowledge.

Ridiculing All Apostles Together

Probably the most radical testimony against any apostolic authority⁵⁶⁰ is the *Gospel of Judas*, a witness that only surfaced as recently as 2007, this time not di-

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid., 107.

⁵⁵⁵ Tert., *Adv. Marc.* III 15.

⁵⁵⁶ See *ibid.*, III 16. 20.

⁵⁵⁷ Tert., *Adv. Marc.* III 20; see V 8.

⁵⁵⁸ Similarly V. Hovhannessian, *Third Corinthians* (2000), 105–6, 106: 'The author's main intention in writing 3 Cor is to argue for the corporeal resurrection of the dead. He mentions the birth and resurrection of Jesus only to use these well known Christian doctrines for his argument of the resurrection of the dead.'

⁵⁵⁹ As in *EpAp*, see also 1 *Clement*.

⁵⁶⁰ Although we can also point to another drastic example, the *Apocryphon of James* (NHC I 2), where Jesus says to James and Peter, but also includes all the others (and the

rectly from the Egyptian desert sand but ‘reassembled from a box of papyrus fragments’.⁵⁶¹

As in Marcion (and Apelles), according to this gospel that ‘again and again ... seems to echo Luke (and only in some cases a Markan parallel)’ and *Acts*,⁵⁶² Jesus was not born, but ‘appeared’.⁵⁶³ Jesus conveyed his message ‘on eight days, (ending) three days before he (allegedly) suffered [or: celebrated Passover]’,⁵⁶⁴ while the spiritual Jesus had already left this world before his mortal counterpart with whom he clothed himself was handed over. ‘Though the ensuing dialogue between Jesus and the disciples takes place before Easter, he is able to disappear and reappear among his disciples like the canonical Jesus in his post-resurrection appearances, not needing anyone to free him from his mortal body.’⁵⁶⁵ Even more, he leads a double life: he shows himself as the master of the disciples on earth, while he belongs to the transcendent world of ‘another great and holy Generation’.⁵⁶⁶ Each time he comes to earth he traverses, step by step, the regions superior and inferior to heaven.⁵⁶⁷

The Jesus we find in the Gospel of Judas is not the son of the God of the Hebrew Scriptures, but the son of the supreme God – in the platonic sense. He also stands on the other side of almost every issue the disciples hold dear, for instance rejecting the Eucharist and orthodox Baptism, as well as every form of sacrifice, since sacrifice benefits only the inferior God, not Jesus’ true Father, who does not need any sacrifice. The notion of a divine salvation plan that requires Jesus’ death is completely foreign [to this thought. Hence] Judas could not have played a role in such an event one way or another. ... it is Gnosis that saves: knowing where you came from, how it happened that you are here, and what it will take to enable you to return to your true origin and not have to endure the apocalyp-

wording even hints at Paul): ‘Woe to those who have seen the Son of Man! Blessed are those who have not seen the Man, and who have not consorted with him, and who have not spoken with him, and who have not listened to anything from him. Yours is life! Know, therefore, that he healed you when you were ill, in order that you might reign. Woe to those who have rested from their illness, because they will relapse again into illness! Blessed are those who have not been ill, and have known rest before they became ill. Yours is the Kingdom of God! Therefore I say to you, become full and leave no place within you empty, since the Coming One is able to mock you’ – trans. R. Cameron, *Gospels* (1982), 57–8.

⁵⁶¹ See M. Meyer, ‘Judas’ (2008), 41 (ibid., 361–74 extensive lit.); J.-P. Mahé, ‘Scène’ (2008), 27.

⁵⁶² J.M. Robinson, ‘Sources’ (2008), 60.

⁵⁶³ *Gospel of Judas* 33,6 (trans. by G. Schenke-Robinson, ‘*Gospel*’ [2009]).

⁵⁶⁴ *Gospel of Judas* 33,1–14.

⁵⁶⁵ G. Schenke-Robinson, ‘*Gospel*’ (2009), 101; see also further lit. in S. Petersen, ‘Warum’ (2009).

⁵⁶⁶ *Gospel of Judas* 36,16–17.

⁵⁶⁷ See J.-P. Mahé, ‘Scène’ (2008), 28.

tic blow of the end time – a message the Gnostic Jesus came down to reveal. ... The text is full of irony, plays on words, insinuations, allusions and hidden coded words that the original audience would readily have understood, but that we can easily miss ... the stars stand for destiny, the kingdom for the evil realm of the archons, and the twelve disciples for the misinformed leaders of the pre-orthodox church. Jesus mocks them and laughs a great deal about their lack of understanding. For them, the gospel offers little hope, since nobody seems to be able to escape from the clutches of this world. The stars control everybody's fate, but they are in error themselves, so that Jesus laughs about them, too. As the Incipit of the gospel already seems to express, Jesus will render a devastating eschatological verdict over the entire cosmos, which will be destroyed in the final dissolution.⁵⁶⁸

Judas himself becomes the prime example of the dramatic future prospects: 'After he recounts a vision and begs Jesus to take him along into what is apparently Jesus' heavenly dwelling place, which Judas saw in his vision', 'Jesus bluntly tells him that his star misled him'⁵⁶⁹ into believing he will ever be able to enter the highest realm. After Jesus laughs and calls Judas the thirteenth demon,⁵⁷⁰ 'irony again comes into play and the stage is set for another play on words, this time involving the term "thirteenth". ... As the thirteenth demon he will be stuck in the thirteenth aeon,⁵⁷¹ just as his star itself.⁵⁷² No matter how hard Judas tries, he will never be able to enter the highest realm, but will end up ruling over the archons, angels, and stars, the powers holding sway over the lower world.'⁵⁷³ But the *Gospel* does not only despise Judas. Together with him, the author also ridicules the Twelve: the disciples

saw a large house with an altar to which twelve priests brought offerings, watched by an approving crowd. Yet the people participating in the sacrificial ritual are accused of all sorts of wicked, lawless, and evil deeds, which were done by Christians baptized in Jesus' name. In explaining the disciples' vision,⁵⁷⁴ Jesus harshly tells them that they were the ones to be blamed; they themselves are the twelve priests who led their followers astray by unwittingly sacrificing them like cattle to a god they have no idea is deficient. Their readiness to embrace martyrdom as well as all the deeds seemingly taken from familiar lists of vices is utterly misguided.⁵⁷⁵

⁵⁶⁸ G. Schenke-Robinson, 'Gospel' (2009), 100.

⁵⁶⁹ See *Gospel of Judas* 45,13–14.

⁵⁷⁰ See *ibid.*, 44,20–21.

⁵⁷¹ See *ibid.*, 46,19–47,1.

⁵⁷² See *ibid.*, 55,10–11.

⁵⁷³ G. Schenke-Robinson, 'Gospel' (2009), 103.

⁵⁷⁴ See *Gospel of Judas* 39,5–42.

⁵⁷⁵ G. Schenke-Robinson, 'Gospel' (2009), 103.

Although there is some dispute about the precise reading of the final revelation, there are good reasons to see it as an ascension scene of Jesus who ‘freely ascends to his divine realm and reappears at will throughout the text’.⁵⁷⁶ ‘Those standing on the ground heard a voice coming from the cloud.’⁵⁷⁷

The *Gospel of Judas* clearly shows no interest in redemption and salvation of humankind, since everyone born mortal is under the control of the erroneous stars, and is thus destined for eternal doom. ... The apostles and their followers belong to the doomed generation; they only were given human spirits as a loan.⁵⁷⁸ Their ignorance and devastating influence on believers by way of their misguided practices are callously exposed in the document.⁵⁷⁹

I am the All

The *Gospel of Thomas* (*EvThom.*) has been known to us for centuries, mentioned by Hippolytus, Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, Ambrose and Beda; the full text, however, was only discovered a few decades ago.⁵⁸⁰ Three Greek fragments of *EvThom.*,⁵⁸¹ previously known, but never linked, derive from three different sources, not just from one codex or papyrus roll,⁵⁸² and testify to the frequent use of this Gospel in Egypt. Preserved in the library of Nag Hammadi, the entire text is generally so well preserved that it was easy to match it with the few fragments that we already knew.⁵⁸³

Hippolytus reports in his *Philosophoumena*:

The Naassene say that the happy nature ‘is the kingdom of heaven to be sought for within a man’.⁵⁸⁴ And concerning this [nature] they literally quote from the *Gospel* inscribed of *Thomas*, the following text: ‘He who seeks me, will find me in children from seven years old; indeed, hidden there, I manifest myself in the

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., 104.

⁵⁷⁷ *Gospel of Judas* 57,23–6.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., 53,19–22.

⁵⁷⁹ G. Schenke-Robinson, ‘*Gospel*’ (2009), 106–7.

⁵⁸⁰ See, for example, A.D. DeConick, *Recovering* (2005) (further lit.).

⁵⁸¹ In the case of *POxy* 654, which contains the name of Thomas, one considered a possible connection, only to reject this option.

⁵⁸² See J.A. Fitzmyer, ‘*Logoi*’ (1995), 505–6.

⁵⁸³ There is little content difference between the Greek fragments and the Coptic version, but it is clear that any emendation or addition of missing text in the Greek version must be done in the light of the Coptic version. Hence, for example, the addition in the Greek preserved saying 5 by its editor J.A. Fitzmyer must be altered, as we shall see below.

⁵⁸⁴ See *Luke* 17:21.

fourteenth eon'. This, however, is not of Christ, but of Hippocrates, who says: 'A child of seven years is half of a father'.⁵⁸⁵

Hippolytus seems to refer to Hippocrates' work *On the number seven*, lost today, but well known in antiquity and quoted, for example, by Ambrose.⁵⁸⁶ If the saying, said to have derived from *EvThom.*, was based on Hippocrates' teaching on the number seven, it builds on his structuring the process of human life that passes 'through seven stages to old age'. Christ enters into human beings from their second stage, hidden at first, becoming manifest only in the third stage, as humans mature towards adulthood.⁵⁸⁷

The literary description as a 'gospel' reminds us of the variety of texts that can bear this title, encompassing collections of Jesus-narratives⁵⁸⁸ but also, as in the case of *EvThom.*, collections of sayings, almost unframed by narratives, much like *Q*, the collection of sayings postulated and much debated by New Testament scholars as a source for the synoptics *Matthew* and *Luke*.

EvThom. contains 114 sayings of Jesus, 'most of them simply introduced by the formula, "Jesus said"'. ... These sayings sometimes resemble maxims or proverbs, sometimes parables, but sometimes answer a question put by a disciple and thus form part of a conversation. They are strung together without any apparent logical order; once in a while catchword bonds ... can be the reason for joining two sayings. The collection of sayings is actually an artificial grouping of *dicta Iesu*, cast in a homogeneous format, which are most likely derived from various sources'.⁵⁸⁹

Scholars still debate the dating of *EvThom.*, and the age and authenticity of many of the various sayings, but they agree that, although one can group several sayings thematically, most have to be treated individually. Despite the specific character of each of these sayings, it is also apparent that the whole collection has a specific theology, expressed in the frame: 'These are the hidden words that

⁵⁸⁵ Hippol., *Ref.* V 2.

⁵⁸⁶ Ambr., *Ep.* 50; see O. Temkin, *Hippocrates* (1991), 131.

⁵⁸⁷ Although the preserved Coptic version of the *Gospel of Thomas* does not contain the saying quoted by Hippolytus, it may have belonged to it. There is, for example, saying 4 that plays on the number 7, although the content is unrelated – 'The person old in his days will not hesitate to ask a child seven days old about the place of life, and he will live' –, and the preserved Greek fragments show that the Coptic version has not retained everything. It looks as if several slightly altered versions of the Gospel were in use: see J.A. Fitzmyer, '*Logoi*' (1995), 510.

⁵⁸⁸ See also another early Christian text – also bearing the name of Thomas yet evidently unrelated to our *Gospel of Thomas*. On H.-M. Schenke and the contribution of the 'Berliner Arbeitskreis', also on the earlier editor Johannes Leipoldt, see J. Schröter, 'Forschung' (2009).

⁵⁸⁹ J.A. Fitzmyer, '*Logoi*' (1995), 508.

the living Jesus spoke. And Didymos Judas Thomas wrote them down'.⁵⁹⁰ Most recently, the first two sayings have been taken as expression of an ecstatic Easter experience that encapsulates the oldest information about Christian Easter,⁵⁹¹ speaking of the shock of the disciples who encounter the Risen Christ.⁵⁹²

'Whoever finds the meaning of these words will not taste death'. Jesus says: 'The one who seeks should not cease seeking until he finds. And when he finds, he will be dismayed. And when he is dismayed, he will be astonished. And he will be king over the All'.⁵⁹³

EvThom. does not introduce Didymos Judas Thomas as the authority; he is merely the one who wrote the sayings down. Instead, saying 12 establishes James the Just as the one 'who will rule', 'for whose sake heaven and earth came into being'.

Situated in a frame very similar to the *Epistle of the Apostles*, where Christ addresses his Eleven, *EvThom.* does not refer to any other Apostle, nor does it mention the Resurrection, although it discusses the fate of the dead and expands the tradition known from *Mark* 4:22 par.:

Come to know what is in front of you, and that which is hidden from you will become clear to you. For there is nothing hidden that will not become manifest, there is nothing buried [that will not be raised].⁵⁹⁴

His disciples said to him: 'When will the [...] of the dead take place, and when will the new world come?' He says to them: 'That which you are awaiting has (already) come, but you do not recognize it'.⁵⁹⁵

As the dead are already alive in a present eschatology,⁵⁹⁶ the 'living Jesus' is not called the Risen Christ, because death cannot have affected Jesus in the first instance, neither does it affect anyone 'whoever finds the meaning of these words', as all those 'will not taste death'.⁵⁹⁷ *EvThom.* tells of the listeners' persistent interest in knowing the end, death, and what humans have to wait for. The answer,

⁵⁹⁰ *EvThom.* pref. See also *ActThom.* 39: 'The twin of Christ, the apostle of the highest and co-mystic of the hidden word of Christ, who has received the hidden sayings ...'. See J.A. Fitzmyer, '*Logoi*' (1995), 513–14.

⁵⁹¹ *Luke* 24:37–8; *John* 20:22; *Acts* 9:21,26.

⁵⁹² See P. Pokorný, 'Eschatologie' (2009), 50–51.

⁵⁹³ *EvThom.* 1–2.

⁵⁹⁴ *EvThom.* 5. The latter part ('there is nothing buried [that will not be raised]') is a reasonable reconstruction of the Greek papyrus-text, as has been shown by J.A. Fitzmyer, '*Logoi*' (1995), 526, as it 'has been confirmed by an inscription on a shroud found in the hamlet of Behnesa and bought in 1953. It is dated paleographically to the fifth or sixth century A.D. and reads': 'Jesus says: there is nothing buried that will not be raised'.

⁵⁹⁵ *EvThom.* 51.

⁵⁹⁶ See P. Pokorný, 'Eschatologie' (2009), 48.

⁵⁹⁷ *EvThom.* 1, 19, 85, 111; see Melito above.

however, inverts their expectation – it is not about the end that the disciples should enquire, but about the origin of life, Jesus himself as the living beginning. They should want to be where he is, and ‘look for the Living One’.⁵⁹⁸

Blessed is he who will stand at the beginning. And he will know the end, and he will not taste death.⁵⁹⁹

Knowledge, and more specifically self-knowledge, is the key to the kingdom:

When you come to know yourselves, then you will be known, and you will realize that you are the children of the living Father. But if you do not come to know yourselves, then you exist in poverty, and you are poverty.⁶⁰⁰

The title ‘living’ Christ should not ‘be referred to Christ’s preresurrectional or postresurrectional existence’.⁶⁰¹ These sayings go beyond time: they are of the known who knows and who imparts and reveals his hidden knowledge to those who want to understand:

Jesus says: ‘The heavens will roll up before you, and the earth. And whoever is living from the living one will not see death’. Does not Jesus say: ‘Whoever has found himself, of him the world is not worthy?’⁶⁰² And Jesus says: ‘This heaven will pass away, and the [heaven] above it will pass away. And the dead are not alive, and the living will not die. In the days when you consumed what was dead, you made it alive. When you are in the light, what will you do? On the day when you were one, you became two. But when you become two, what will you do?’⁶⁰³ Jesus says: ‘I am the light that is over all. I am the All. The All came forth out of me. And to me the All has come’. ‘Split a piece of wood – I am there. Lift the stone, and you will find me there’.⁶⁰⁴ And Jesus says: ‘Look for the Living One while you are alive, so that you will not die (and) then seek to see him. And you will not be able to see [him]’.⁶⁰⁵ And Jesus says: ‘Blessed is the person who has struggled. He has found life’.⁶⁰⁶

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid., 59, 111.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid., 18; see *John* 8:52.

⁶⁰⁰ *EvThom.* 3.

⁶⁰¹ J.A. Fitzmyer, ‘*Logoi*’ (1995), 515: the Coptic term for ‘living’ (*etonh*) ‘scarcely means, “while He was living” ... There is nothing in the Coptic or Greek versions that supports’ these sayings being identified as pre- or postresurrectional sayings, ‘on the contrary, a number of sayings imply the preresurrectional’, others the postresurrectional phase.

⁶⁰² *EvThom.* 111.

⁶⁰³ Ibid., 11.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid., 77.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid., 59.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid., 58.

James – Not Paul

We do not know of any gospel of James, but there are several texts of other genres attributed to James,⁶⁰⁷ the *Apocryphon of James* (NHC I 2), for example, where after the crucifixion the living Lord writes to James and Peter ‘a secret book’. The text explicitly excludes all but a few of the Twelve, and addresses seven female disciples, of whom only four seem to be elected: Salome, Mariam, Martha and Arsinoe. Other than James and Peter, nobody else joins the women in the dialogue with the Lord. The Lord writes to these two, because he was unable ‘to refuse’, or ‘to speak directly’ to them about the cross, death and how the disciples will be rescued. There is no allusion to the Resurrection.

Quite different is the *First Apocalypse of James*,⁶⁰⁸ which is situated before and after the Resurrection.⁶⁰⁹ Before his death, Jesus announces his reappearance and asks James to give up both his flesh and his name to become the One-who-is. And, indeed, after the Lord had ‘fulfilled what was fitting’,⁶¹⁰ James waited in distress for ‘several days’ and ‘was walking upon the mountain which is called “Gaugelan”, together with his disciples who listened to him because they had been distressed, and he was a comforter’. Then,

the crowd dispersed and James remained in prayer, as was his custom, and the Lord appeared to him. He stopped [his] prayer and embraced him. He kissed him, saying, ‘Rabbi, I have found you! I have heard of your sufferings, which you endured. And I have been much distressed. My compassion you know. Therefore, on reflection, I was wishing that I would not see this people. They must be judged for these things that they have done. For these things that they have done are contrary to what is fitting’.

Jesus calms James and exculpates ‘this people’, the Jews, pointing out that he had not suffered at all, ‘and this people have done [him] no harm’. In addition, James’ title ‘the Just’ indicates, according to Jesus, that James was himself serving the destructive powers as much as were ‘this people’. But still, he gives him hope of being redeemed, because he will be able to say ‘I am a son, and I am from the Father’, or more precisely, ‘I am from the Pre-existent Father, and a son in the Pre-existent One’.⁶¹¹ And he will escape the archontic powers, because he is willing to go ‘to the place’ from which he has come.

⁶⁰⁷ For example the *Proto-Gospel of James*, ‘a phantastic report on the virtues of the holy Mary and a sequence on the birth of Jesus’: see J. Alsop, *Stories* (1975), 134.

⁶⁰⁸ NHC V 3; CT 2.

⁶⁰⁹ See J. Brankaer and H.-G. Bethge (eds), *Codex Tchacos* (2007), 84.

⁶¹⁰ Trans. by W.R. Schoedel, in J.M. Robinson (ed.), *Library*.

⁶¹¹ The text has a literal parallel in Irenaeus’ report about the ‘redemption’ deathbed ritual of the Marcosians: see Iren., *Adv. haer.* I 21,5.

The text knows the proximity of James, 'the Just', to the Jewish people, but seems to portray James and Peter as revelation authorities, a revelation that is of course paradoxical, as the one who suffered did not suffer. Emphasis is put on the incarnation; the Resurrection appearances are only mentioned in passing.⁶¹²

A *Second Apocalypse of James* (NHC V 4), which follows the *First Apocalypse of James* in the Nag Hammadi Library, does not seem related to the previous text, although there are parallel ideas, including the mention of James' title 'the Just'. The message in the second apocalypse, however, is more complex, heightening the paradox. The creator was unable to see the Father, a first parallel to Marcion. The Father is life and light, 'has compassion', but his inheritance is 'not unlimited', another idea borrowed from Marcion. Likewise, the son is 'the beloved', 'the righteous one', 'the son of the Father', and he himself has power to speak, to command, to show. Jesus will not judge (a further parallel to Marcion) and can even be called the 'kind Father', not 'the Just'. The text closes with a marvellous thanksgiving and prayer to 'God and Father' for having been rescued and for future rescue from death without, however, pointing to the Resurrection:

My God and my father,
 who saved me from this dead hope,
 who made me alive through a mystery of what he wills,
 Do not let these days of this world be prolonged for me ...
 Save me from an evil death!
 Bring me from a tomb alive, because your grace –
 love – is alive in me to accomplish a work of fullness!
 Save me from sinful flesh,
 because I trusted in you with all my strength,
 because you are the life of the life!
 ...
 Because I am alive in you, your grace is alive in me.
 I have renounced everyone, but you I have confessed.
 Save me from evil affliction! ...⁶¹³

The Cross of Light

According to Pope Leo the Great the *Acts of John* (*AJ*) contains 'a hotbed of manifold perversity', and according to the Nicene Council of 787 AD they 'deserve to be consigned to the fire'.⁶¹⁴ As many other apocryphal texts, they are mysterious

⁶¹² More prominently in the CT version than in NHC V 3.

⁶¹³ Trans. by C.W. Hedrick, in Robinson (ed.), *Library*.

⁶¹⁴ See Leo Magn., *Letter to Turribius of Astorga* on 21 July 447, ch. 15 (PL 54, 688A); Conc. Nic. II, *actio* V (Mansi XIII, col. 176A).

in many ways. We know neither the circumstances of their origin, nor when and where they were written.⁶¹⁵

These *Acts* describe John ‘as the guarantor of the tangible reality of Christ’s revelation’,⁶¹⁶ while at the same time they attest his polymorphism, metamorphosis and non-material appearance.⁶¹⁷ The section with the ‘most scandalous’ non-materialistic part of ‘John’s preaching of the Gospel’⁶¹⁸ is about Christ’s death and Resurrection, but this section is absent in most versions of *AJ* and has been preserved only through inclusion in a hagiographical collection of 1319 AD.⁶¹⁹

Sometimes when I would lay hold on him, I met with a material and solid body, and at other times, again, when I felt him, the substance was immaterial and as if it existed not at all. ... And oftentimes when I walked with him, I desired to see the print of his foot, whether it appeared on the earth; for I saw him as it were lifting himself up from the earth: and I never saw it.⁶²⁰

In a lengthy and most original description of Jesus’ fate on the cross, the Resurrection survives only as one of Christ’s titles, and the Easter narratives are replaced by the symbolism of a cross of light. In a most paradoxical way, the text combines opposites:

You hear that I suffered, yet I suffered not; and that I suffered not, yet I did suffer; and that I was pierced, yet I was not lashed; that I was hanged, yet I was not hanged; that blood flowed from me, yet it did not flow; and, in a word, that what they say of me, I did not endure, but what they do not say, those things I did suffer.⁶²¹

This paradoxical language, however, is not applied to the Resurrection. Instead, the Lord is depicted before his arrest together with his disciples, forming a circle with them, singing a hymn, dancing, explaining and pointing out the symbolic cross:

He showed me a Cross of Light brought to a fixed shape, and around the Cross a great crowd, which had no single form; and in it [the Cross] was one form and the same likeness. And I saw the Lord himself above the Cross, having no shape

⁶¹⁵ E. Junod and J.-D. Kaestli, ‘Traits’ (1976), 125.

⁶¹⁶ K. Schäferdiek, ‘Introduction’, in W. Schneemelcher and R. McL. Wilson (eds), *Apocrypha II* (1992), 152.

⁶¹⁷ See D.R. Cartlidge, ‘Transfigurations’ (1986).

⁶¹⁸ *AJ* 87–105.

⁶¹⁹ See K. Schäferdiek, ‘Introduction’, in W. Schneemelcher and R. McL. Wilson (eds), *Apocrypha II* (1992), 157.

⁶²⁰ *AJ* 93.

⁶²¹ *Ibid.*, 101.

but only a kind of voice; yet not that voice which we knew, but one that was sweet and gentle and truly [the voice] of God, which said to me, 'John, there must [be] one man [to] hear these things from me; for I need one who is ready to hear. This Cross of Light is sometimes called Logos by me for your sakes, sometimes mind, sometimes Christ, sometimes a door, sometimes a way, sometimes bread, sometimes seed, sometimes Resurrection, sometimes Son, sometimes Father, sometimes Spirit, sometimes life, sometimes truth, sometimes faith, sometimes grace; and so [it is called] for men's sake. But what it truly is, as known in itself and spoken to you, [is this]: it is the delimitation of all things and the strong uplifting of what is firmly fixed out of what is unstable, and the harmony of wisdom. ... This Cross then, which has made all things stable through the Logos and separated off what is transitory and inferior, and then has poured itself [?] into everything, is not that wooden cross which you will see when you go down from here; nor am I the [man] who is on the cross, [I] whom now you do not see but only hear [my] voice. I was taken to be what I am not, I who am not what for the many I am; but what they will say of me is mean and unworthy of me. Since then the place of rest is neither [to be] seen nor told, much more shall I, the Lord of this [place], be neither seen [nor told].'⁶²²

Already Origen had tried to convert the sign of shame into that of fame.⁶²³ The *AJ* distinguishes between the shameful, wooden cross and the victorious cosmic sign, using Platonic ideas.⁶²⁴ This light-cross bears titles, known especially from *John* (Logos, door, way, bread, Resurrection), but it is also called 'Christ', 'Son', and even 'Father'. Still, this Cross (and with it Son and Father) is subordinated to the Lord who is beyond shape and visibility, only heard through the divine voice. Christ is removed from the scandal of humanity, is neither born nor has he died. Noticeably absent is any reference to the Old Testament or the Jews: the 'religion announced by John has no "before" at all, no past'.⁶²⁵ Where *AJ* describes the appearance of the Lord 'in the tomb like John and as a young man', the *Acts* mentions the 'perplexity' of the listeners. These were 'not yet established in the faith'.⁶²⁶ John extends this perplexity to himself and the Apostles 'whom he chose' but who 'have suffered many temptations', and draws from it that these visions have not, yet, been uttered, nor written down, but that he intends to adapt them to his audience to make them see 'the glory which surrounds' the Lord and 'which was and is both now and evermore'.⁶²⁷ Despite allusions to Christian scriptures, *AJ* presents itself as sole revelation, displaying a Marcionite absence of Jewish refer-

⁶²² Ibid., 101, 98–9.

⁶²³ Orig., *Comm. in Ioh.* I 107, 124.

⁶²⁴ See A. Böhlig, 'Lichtkreuz' (1978), 475–7 (here also further sources that develop ideas similar to *AJ*).

⁶²⁵ See E. Junod and J.-D. Kaestli, 'Traits' (1976), 127 (my trans.).

⁶²⁶ *AJ* 87.

⁶²⁷ Ibid., 88.

ence but drawing from the Resurrection experience a non-Resurrection-oriented belief in a metamorphic glory of an otherwise entirely transcendent God.⁶²⁸

The Resurrection in Fellow Teachers of Marcion

The earliest open contestant of fellow teachers who denigrated their opponents as ‘opinion holders’ (‘heretics’) was Justin, by his own admission a Samaritan by birth.⁶²⁹ Like Marcion, he taught in the city of Rome. His student Tatian, an Assyrian, in turn generated Rhodon (from Asia) as his pupil. Just looking at the home countries of these scholars, we can get a feeling for the breadth of intake, the far-reaching attraction of teachers, and the range of backgrounds present at these schools. In addition, Tatian and Rhodon are good examples that even the second generation of pupils continued the discussion that existed among their masters. Rhodon mentions his teacher’s book *Problemata*, in which Tatian tried ‘to explain the obscure and hidden parts of the divine scripture’, presumably the Jewish scripture, in order to respond to Marcion’s *Antitheses*. Rhodon himself engaged with Marcion and wrote a book, *Solutions*, to his master’s *Problems*, and a commentary about the creation story of *Genesis*. He provides some information about the diversity of the pupils in Marcion’s school and the variety of their views. According to Rhodon, the discussions between school masters were not solely carried out in pamphlets; they were face to face disputes and challenges and, as Rhodon himself reports rather charmingly about Apelles, were far from being derogative in principle as later authors like Eusebius of Cesarea would have them, when they painted pictures of a first ‘dark age’ of Christian history.⁶³⁰

Apelles said that it was not at all necessary to examine one’s doctrine, but that each one should continue to hold what he believed. For he asserted that those who trusted in the Crucified would be saved, if only they were found doing good works. But as we have said before, his opinion concerning God was the most obscure of all. For he spoke of one principle, as also our doctrine does.⁶³¹

From this one glimpse, we can infer that, despite all the differences, teachers were looking for the broad common ground, be it the crucified Saviour or the belief in one God.

In the same context in which Tertullian refutes the before-mentioned Valentinus (and Valentinians), he gives an almost amiable and colourful picture of these clever,

⁶²⁸ See on similar metamorphic beliefs in the *Acts of Thomas* and the *Acts of Peter* D.R. Cartlidge, ‘Transfigurations’ (1986).

⁶²⁹ See Justin, *Dial. c. Tryph.* 120.

⁶³⁰ Even the otherwise very careful assessment of K. Greschat, *Apelles* (1999), 17–20, suffers from Eusebius’ negative frame.

⁶³¹ See Rhodon in Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* V 13,8.

sophisticated philosophers, while he presents himself in an overt understatement as a simple-minded author. But even he portrays Christianity as philosophy and introduces the 'philosopher and martyr' Justin as his prime counter-example of a learned Christian with whom he associates himself, along with Irenaeus, 'that very exact inquirer into all doctrines'.⁶³² Tertullian, thus, demonstrates that Christianity is not solely a matter for the foolish rhetorician, but that doctrines have to be understood in systematic terms.

After at least half a century of intense debates among various Christian schools, especially in the big cities, Rome, Alexandria, Antioch and elsewhere, the demarcation between the various 'heresies' in the old sense of rival schools and the proponents of their respective contradictory or complementary doctrines was still extremely difficult to establish. Tertullian criticizes the Valentinians, but he also admits that they are without 'doubt a very large body' of people, that 'they guard their doctrine', pursue and maintain 'their religious system in very earnestness', have set 'harsh conditions' before they 'enrol and admit new members to their community', provide 'instruction during five years for their perfect disciples' in order to gain 'full knowledge', and try to 'raise the dignity of their mysteries', a seemingly fair description that is followed by an explanation that these 'heretics' have no intention to break the community with their fellow Christians, but 'affirm the community of faith':

If you propose to them inquiries sincere and honest, they answer you with stern look and contracted brow, and say: 'The subject is profound.' If you try them with subtle questions, with the ambiguities of their double tongue, they affirm the community of faith. If you intimate to them that you understand their opinions, they insist on knowing nothing themselves. If you come to a close engagement with them they destroy your own fond hope of a victory over them by a self-immolation. Not even to their own disciples do they commit a secret before they have made sure of them. They have the knack of persuading men before instructing them; although truth persuades by teaching, but does not teach by first persuading.⁶³³

Tertullian's stylized picture, with cynical contours of a later period, still shows him taking notice of and challenging the other's opinion in a direct debate. He differentiates between first, second and third generations of these schools, and it becomes clear that he faced more than a little difficulty to figure out the wolves in sheep's clothing. Before him Irenaeus, who had dealt with the second-pupil generation of these schools, had an even thornier job in singling out 'heresy' from what he conceived orthodoxy should be. In his first *Apology*, addressed to the emperor Antoninus Pius (138–161), Justin admits that even the political authorities were not in a position to differentiate between the various school

⁶³² Tert., *Adv. Val.* 5 (trans. Roberts).

⁶³³ *Ibid.*, 1.

adherents, and alludes to his own previous effort in the treatise *Against all the heresies*, which he had composed for the emperor.⁶³⁴ Like Tertullian after him, Justin had admitted ‘in Rome in the middle of the second century with admirable openness’ that his opponents ‘call themselves Christians’.⁶³⁵ Means of orthodox identity were not yet developed, neither within the emerging Christian movement nor in its non-Christian environment; there was no policing of a complex network of individual communities with close family ties and generations of bishops, elders and leaders, charismatic or organizational newcomers, sponsors, politicians and civil servants; there was an unregulated explosion of literary fixations of oral traditions, and revelations or interpretations of revelations were written down in anonymous, pseudonymous, apologetic or paraenetic tracts, gospels, acts, homilies, prose and soon poetry. Justin, like his contemporaries, operated in a late antique environment that had not yet created dispute resolutions between teachers and schools in the form of banning opposite-minded professors. All they had were counter-arguments, verbal and written criticisms, encounters and discussions, revisions, re-editions of existing works and the production of new ones. However, there was a growing sense of need for both structures and strictures, even among non-Christian leading thinkers such as Diodorus (ca. 90–21 BC), and among the contemporaries of Justin, Galen or Claudius Ptolemy, who looked for some sort of clearing station between truth and myth.⁶³⁶ Similarly, Jewish Rabbis were campaigning for a more coherent and constrained form of Jewish identity after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. These endeavours, mirrored in the Christians, led to a cementing of mutual differences and eventually to losing sight of each other, with a gradual loss of Jewish interest in their Greco-Roman traditions so that, for example, even eminent Jewish philosophers like Philo of Alexandria were handed down and read only by Christians. Conversely, Christian ties to Judaism weakened, and the question of the Jewish traditions within Christianity became one of the rocks against which the spiritual and institutional unity of the Church was shattered. Marcion’s own thoughts, his endeavour to combine Paul’s writings with a gospel text into a ‘New Testament’ as opposed to the superseded ‘Old’ one, and the battle against this programme, are central to this broader process of identity search, the building of demarcation lines between ‘closer to’ and ‘further away’ from truth, and an interpretation of truth that places truth in opposition to error and separates out authenticity from forgery, miracle from magic, recognition from fabrication, delineation from tolerance, honesty from guilty and sinful falsehood, faith from superstition, and soon orthodoxy from heresy. With Justin, however, as with Irenaeus and even with Tertullian or Clement of Alexandria, we are not fully there; only with Origen in the third century will these gaps no longer be bridged. Both Marcion and Justin illustrate this earlier period, where ‘orthodoxy’ and ‘heresy’ were still in the making.

⁶³⁴ Justin, *1Apol.* 26.

⁶³⁵ C. Marksches, *Gnosis* (2003), 10; see Justin, *1Apol.* 7. 26. 35.

⁶³⁶ See C.B. Kaiser, *Creation* (1991), 4.

We know from Irenaeus that Justin had written a work against Marcion that is lost. Irenaeus, however, quotes from it more intensely than is often recognized. Indeed, he relies upon it especially in book four of his *Against the heresies*. In the preface, Irenaeus mentions that in books one and two he had refuted the Valentini-ans. In book three he had tackled a range of detailed interpretations and topics with other teachers in mind (Marcion, Ebionites, Tatian). But from what follows in book four, it becomes clear that he is now moving on to Marcion and his followers.

Irenaeus underlines that Jesus' message was directed to 'the house of Israel',⁶³⁷ and asserts that 'the law never hindered them from believing in the Son of God'.⁶³⁸ However, Irenaeus then follows Justin,⁶³⁹ and is not simply taking a clear-cut counter-position against Marcion. One reads with amazement passages that could almost stem from Marcion himself, especially those that deal with the termination of the Jewish law. As Irenaeus consistently asserts, with Justin, the law 'originated with Moses', but it 'terminated with John [the Baptist] by necessity'.⁶⁴⁰ The discussion with Marcion is ardent, but still moves within the limits of mutual challenges and enrichments. Justin had accepted Marcion's idea of two testaments, whereby the new ranked superior to the old, although he avoided Marcion's attribution of the former to the Christians and the latter to the Jews. Instead, Justin (similar to Ptolemy) saw three successive phases with regard to the law: a time before, of and after the law, the last being that of the 'new covenant' through Christ's appearance.⁶⁴¹ Similarly Irenaeus, although he speaks directly against Marcion, emphasizes more strongly than Justin that Christ 'had come to fulfil the law', elaborates on the idea of phases and develops it into a history of salvation. Yet he still accepts some consequences of Marcion's antithetical reading of (pre-)Luke 16:16 that the Jewish law has come to an end.

In non- or anti-Marcion circles this (pre-)Luke saying of Jesus was balanced out, as one can see from the milder reading in *Matthew* 11:13, but also by the textual difference between Marcion's and *Luke*'s versions. In *Luke* 16:16 we read:

It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tiny stroke of a letter
in the law to become void,

while Marcion read in harmony with the previous verse of Luke:⁶⁴²

⁶³⁷ Drawing on *Matthew* 10:6, Paul and Old Testament quotes.

⁶³⁸ Iren., *Adv. haer.* IV 2.

⁶³⁹ As can be seen from the close parallel between *Against the heresies* IV 4 and Justin's *Dialogue with Tryphon* (51:1–3).

⁶⁴⁰ Iren., *Adv. haer.* IV 4.

⁶⁴¹ See W. Kinzig, *Novitas* (1994), 131f.

⁶⁴² 'The proclamation' of 'the good news of the kingdom of God' certainly points to it being Christ who speaks.

The law and the prophets existed until John; since then, the good news of the kingdom of God has been proclaimed, and everyone is urged to enter it. But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tiny stroke of a letter of *my words* to become void.⁶⁴³

Irenaeus, like Justin before him, uses *Luke* 16:16 and combines this verse with *Matthew* 3:11 to clarify that ‘Christ had come to fulfil’ the law, take the fruit and burn ‘the chaff up with unquenchable fire’:

Wherefore ‘the law and the prophets were’ with them ‘until John’ ... [they] must have an end of legislation when the new covenant was revealed ... the administration of them [the Jews] was temporary ... And when shall these things be left behind? Is it not when the fruit shall be taken away, and the leaves alone shall be left, which now have no power of producing fruit?⁶⁴⁴

Justin, in his *Dialogue with Trypho* and his *First Apology*, had already extended his argument of announcement and fulfilment of the law to Christ’s death. With a quote from *Ps.* 96:10 (LXX) Justin states: ‘The Lord has reigned from the tree’, not from the tomb.⁶⁴⁵ In his *Dialogue*, Justin comes closer to Marcion, using text-critical observations to insist upon the Resurrection of Christ, while the Jews deny it. For theological reasons the Jews had left out the last part of this Psalm verse, ‘from the tree’, because

now no one of your people has ever been said to have reigned as God and Lord among the nations, with the exception of Him only who was crucified, of whom also the Holy Spirit affirms in the same Psalm that He was raised again, and freed from [the grave], declaring that there is none like Him among the gods of the nations.⁶⁴⁶

‘Jesus Christ’, however, ‘being crucified and dead, rose again, and having ascended to heaven, reigned; and by those things which were published in His name

⁶⁴³ See *Luke* 16:16–17. See A. Harnack, *Marcion* (1923; ²1924 = 1960), 220*. This version must accurately render Marcion’s (pre-) *Luke* text, as it is the basis for Tertullian’s discussion in *Against Marcion* (II 27), although Tertullian does not mention a textual variance to our *Luke* text, and does not seem to criticize Marcion’s reading but explicitly sides with him (‘the gospel we share’). One wonders in how many other instances Tertullian had preferred the readings of Marcion to his own *Luke* version, but the apologetic nature of Tertullian’s work *Against Marcion* rarely allows for such positive arguments and mostly refers to the dissent between the two masters.

⁶⁴⁴ Iren., *Adv. haer.* IV 4,2–3.

⁶⁴⁵ Justin, *1Apol.* 41.

⁶⁴⁶ Justin, *Dial.* 73.

among all nations by the apostles, there is joy afforded to those who expect the immortality promised by Him'.⁶⁴⁷

Different from Marcion, the Resurrection is no longer linked to Paul but to the Apostles, especially to Peter and the Zebedees, and to *Ps.* 22 manifesting the future bodily resurrection of the dead.⁶⁴⁸ The Risen persuaded the Apostles 'to read the prophecies', in which the Lord himself had foretold his sufferings.⁶⁴⁹ According to the 'memoirs of the apostles', 'no sign shall be given, save the sign of Jonah'⁶⁵⁰ which indicated 'that He would rise again on the third day after the crucifixion'.⁶⁵¹ Despite this sign of Jonah, Justin admits, the Jews had not repented, but instead

have sent chosen and ordained men throughout all the world to proclaim that a godless and lawless heresy had sprung from one Jesus, a Galilæan deceiver, whom we crucified, but his disciples stole him by night from the tomb, where he was laid when unfastened from the cross, and now deceive men by asserting that he has risen from the dead and ascended to heaven.⁶⁵²

For the first time, we learn of this Jewish anti-Christian campaign.⁶⁵³ Justin quotes from the 'memoirs', mentioned earlier in this chapter.⁶⁵⁴ Indeed, we even find in the Jewish polemical writings of the *Toledoth Jeshu* variants of the theft of Jesus' body.⁶⁵⁵

Justin is not less concerned with the Resurrection than Marcion, and demonstrates to his Jewish interlocutor that he should believe in the two advents of Christ, the first that culminated in his cross as the fulfilment of the prototype of the saving act in Egypt, and the second, the final judgement:

On the day of the passover you seized Him, and that also during the passover you crucified Him. And as the blood of the passover saved those who were in Egypt, so also the blood of Christ will deliver from death those who have believed.⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁴⁷ Justin, *1Apol.* 42.

⁶⁴⁸ So also in Justin, *1Apol.* 21, 30 (*ibid.*, 35; he gives OT parallels to the passion but does not extend this parallelism to the Resurrection).

⁶⁴⁹ Justin, *Dial.* 106; see *id.*, *1Apol.* 50.

⁶⁵⁰ See *Matth.* 12:38–9.

⁶⁵¹ Justin, *Dial.* 107.

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*, 108.

⁶⁵³ Missing, for example, in Celsus: see G.N. Stanton, 'Objections' (1994), 84–5.

⁶⁵⁴ See the theft-argument in *Matth.* 27:62–6, 28:11–5; so G.N. Stanton, 'Objections' (1994), 85, while A. Hamman, 'Résurrection' (1975), 311, sees the dependency the other way around as if the Jewish objections were historical, Justin reporting about what also is reflected in *Matthew*.

⁶⁵⁵ See G.N. Stanton, 'Objections' (1994), 85–6.

⁶⁵⁶ Justin, *Dial.* 111.

Still with Marcion's objections in mind, Justin defends the Prophets:

There is nothing said or done by any one of the prophets, without exception, which one can justly reprehend',⁶⁵⁷ as long as one reads them typologically in view of Christ's fulfilment.

Law and Prophets have found their end at the moment 'when the new covenant was revealed', but, different from Marcion, it is a fulfilment according to Justin and Irenaeus.⁶⁵⁸ Irenaeus rejects the dissociation of the new covenant from the old and the assumed ignorance of the Prophets. Instead, he sees old and new linked by salvific history, developing from promise and pre-knowledge – not from ignorance as Marcion proposed – to fulfilment and full knowledge, not to antithesis. There is a link between the Prophets and Christ, although, as in Marcion, Christians are set apart from Jews, because they did not accept the revelation to the Prophets:

In his book *To Marcion*, Justin does well say: 'I would not have believed the Lord Himself, if He had announced any other than He who is our framer, maker, and nourisher. But because the only-begotten Son came to us from the one God, who both made this world and formed us, and contains and administers all things, summing up His own handiwork in Himself, my faith towards Him is steadfast, and my love to the Father immovable, God bestowing both upon us.'⁶⁵⁹

Irenaeus seems to have used Justin's book *To Marcion* from the beginning of book four of his *Against the heresies*. He noticed the difference between the quoted text of Marcion's Gospel and the text of *Luke* 10:22. While Tertullian accused Marcion of falsifying *Luke*,⁶⁶⁰ Irenaeus does not criticize his opponent's text criticism here; instead, he compares Marcion's version with that of the parallel readings in related Gospels, *Matthew*, *Luke* and *Mark*, also notes that *John* omits the verse altogether, and accuses Marcion only of overstating his authority as author or interpreter, as if he were 'wiser than the Apostles'.

Justin had responded differently to Marcion, which shows us the developing stages of the discussion from around the mid-second century: 'Unlike Irenaeus, Justin makes no reference to the fourfold Gospel, and it is not clear that such a construct has yet been established. Justin's Jesus tradition appears rather to reflect a unified narrative, and in this respect his account is not different in principle to that of Marcion, although his narrative does appear to have been more comprehensive than that of Marcion and to have drawn on material found also in at least the three Synoptic Gospels ... Justin gives two reports of Marcion, and each seems more

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid., 112.

⁶⁵⁸ Iren., *Adv. haer.* IV 4.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid., IV 6,1–2.

⁶⁶⁰ As Marcion was accused by Tertullian to have mutilated also the text of Paul's letters.

similar to those of Rhodo, Clement, Celsus, Origen and the later Syriac tradition than they do to those of Irenaeus and Tertullian. On neither occasion when Justin mentions Marcion in his *Apology* is Marcion's attitude to apostolic writings an issue. In each instance Marcion is portrayed as a contemporary, as inspired by demons, and as someone who teaches about another God besides or superior to the Creator of the universe'.⁶⁶¹

Melito, Bishop of Sardis, is another prominent teacher who engages with Marcion and also develops a teaching on the Resurrection. Between 160 and 170 AD he delivered a Paschal homily that highlights an antithetical character of Christianity and Judaism that reminds us first of Marcion. Using Marcion's grammar, Melito develops his Resurrection theology, but he also sides with Justin against Marcion in accepting the Jewish scriptures: these are the ephemeral model against the eternal grace of God who revealed himself to the Christians alone.⁶⁶² Melito devoted a journey to Palestine and Jerusalem, to get 'precise information about the books of the Old Covenant' of which he compiled a list, so important were they for him. He made extracts from both 'the Law and the Prophets', not, however, out of interest in the Jewish scriptures themselves, but only to find announcements in them of 'the Saviour and all our faith'. The extensive excerpts Melito set down in six books of *Extracts*, and he produced 'in his preface' a 'catalogue of the acknowledged books'.⁶⁶³ Apparently, prior to Melito there was no clarity among Christians as to precisely which of these Jewish books were acceptable.

To the modern editor of Melito's works, 'there is little doubt that Melito's concern with the Old Testament is due to controversy with Marcionite and gnostic groups about the origin and authority of the ancient Scriptures. He would wish to affirm their authority and at the same time exculpate himself from any insinuation of Judaizing'.⁶⁶⁴ Melito had also composed several books *On the Incarnation of Christ* 'against Marcion'⁶⁶⁵ and against the Valentinians with a 'technical discussion of the authority of the old Scriptures'; we read literal parallels to Ptolemy.⁶⁶⁶ As others now, so does Melito believe that Christianity is based on writings, first and foremost the Jewish scriptures. No mention is made that Melito drew up a list of Christian writings, although his extant Paschal homily and the fragments of his works indicate that he knew *Revelation*,⁶⁶⁷ drew on *Matthew* and *John*, and also on the *Gospel of Peter*, while some passages hint at *Acts*; unlike this, however, and because of his sharp profile certainly in reaction to Marcion, *Luke* is hardly alluded

⁶⁶¹ A. Gregory, *Reception* (2003), 187.

⁶⁶² See Melito, *On Pascha* 2–4; on this see W. Kinzig, *Novitas* (1994), 132–6.

⁶⁶³ Melito, *Frg.* 3, 12–4 (64, 1–66, 23 Hall).

⁶⁶⁴ S. Hall, 'Introduction', in id. (ed.), *Melito of Sardis* (1979), xli.

⁶⁶⁵ Melito, *Frg.* 13, 229A (68, 13 Hall).

⁶⁶⁶ S. Hall, 'Introduction', in id. (ed.), *Melito of Sardis* (1979), xli.

⁶⁶⁷ See Melito's book(s) *On the Devil and the Apocalypse of John*, Melito, *Frg.* 5.

to, if at all, and Paul's letters too are absent! Christian texts are 'neither quoted nor referred to as Scripture',⁶⁶⁸ it seems as a result of Marcion's legacy.

With his three Gospels (*Matthew, John, the Gospel of Peter*), Melito also expounds the Resurrection, although he does not consider it to be a traditional Christian tenet.⁶⁶⁹ As with the old law, a model abolished and superseded by grace, so it is with the antithesis of the Lord who has been slaughtered and died, but is now confessed 'resurrected as God', 'immortal because of the rising from the dead'.⁶⁷⁰ Melito's harsh and radical monotheism⁶⁷¹ does not hold back from drastic and paradoxical expressions that have to be understood – similar to Marcion's thinking, emphasizing the newness of Christianity – as antitheses between the old type and the new reality that has appeared with Christ.⁶⁷² Salvation comes from the suffering Lord, our Pascha, but, as in Marcion, the Christian reality is the newness that the Lord created. Christ who was raised from the dead and taken up to the heights of the heavens, 'was not broken' on the cross, his body was 'not dissolved in the earth'.⁶⁷³ The old view of the Lord was: 'God has been murdered' and died,⁶⁷⁴ but the reality is that *he did not die*, but, instead, arose from the dead and with him those whom he saved.

Melito gives a final summary of faith in his homily, presumably directed against Marcion: it is the confession to Christ, the creator, the one through whom the Father brought this world into being, who fashioned man, was proclaimed through the Law and the Prophets, was enfleshed upon a virgin⁶⁷⁵ – four statements that were rejected by Marcion. Having marked his counter-position, Melito continues with what Marcion, too, believed, the passion and Resurrection,⁶⁷⁶ before, in the final sentence, repeating the opening with Christ, the creator. Similarly, Melito challenged Marcion in another work, *On baptism*. Because Marcion had rejected Christ's birth, youth and baptism, Melito limns the Marcionite Resurrection, and sun-Christology, to argue for Christ's baptism in the Jordan:

When the sun has with fiery chariotry fulfilled the day's course ... he sinks into the Ocean. Just as a ball of bronze, full of fire within, flashing with much light, is bathed in cold water, making a loud noise, and in the polishing process stops glowing; yet the fire within is not quenched, but flares up again when roused: just so ... when he has bathed in symbolic baptism, he exults greatly, taking

⁶⁶⁸ S. Hall, 'Introduction', in id. (ed.), *Melito of Sardis* (1979), xlii.

⁶⁶⁹ See further below on the etymology of Pascha, which, according to Melito, *On Pascha*, 46, derives from 'suffering'.

⁶⁷⁰ Melito, *OP* 3–4, 8.43.

⁶⁷¹ See, for example, Melito, *Frg.* 7 (70 Hall): 'God has suffered ...'.

⁶⁷² *OP* 4.7.58.

⁶⁷³ Melito, *OP* 70–71.

⁶⁷⁴ Melito, *ibid.*, 96.

⁶⁷⁵ See Melito, *ibid.*, 104; id., *Frg.* 15; New Fragment II.

⁶⁷⁶ See also Melito, *Frg.* 16b *On the Lord's day*.

the water as food. Though one and the same, he rises for men as a new sun, tempered from the deep, purified from the bath. ... Now if the sun, with stars and moon, bathes in Ocean, why may not Christ also bathe in Jordan. King of heavens and creation's Captain, Sun of uprising who appeared both to the dead in Hades and to mortals in the world, he also alone arose a Sun out of heaven.⁶⁷⁷

Using the same titles as in the final summary in his Paschal homily, Melito draws on the Marcionite sun-Christology according to which Christ was always 'one and the same', of glorious nature, even during his appearances on earth. Melito, who introduces the outer/inner differentiation, concludes from his poetic comparison of Christ and the sun that the inner energy transforms and purifies the outer body, and that just as Christ in his body appeared to the dead in Hades and, after his Resurrection, to mortals, so his body could undergo baptism in the Jordan. In principle, the argument is not far from Tertullian's more prose-like thought that one who can die must also be able to have been born.

As can be seen from Justin, Irenaeus and Melito, just to name a few, Tertullian was not the first (and would not be the last) author to write against Marcion. Frequently, when attacking Marcion, authors refer to the Resurrection. One reason, of course, is the prominence of the Resurrection in Marcion. Only after Marcion did *Luke* and *Acts* become writings received and quoted by others, or, as in Melito, avoided and replaced by *Matthew*, *John*, and the *Gospel of Peter*. Marcion on the one hand cautioned teachers like Melito, which prevented them from referring to Paul's letters and *Luke*; on the other hand, he sparked their interest in the Testaments, and provoked them to challenge his focus on Paul- and one Gospel by drawing on other Gospels. The engagement with Marcion and these writings naturally brought up the Resurrection.

We can also make the counter-proof. Teachers of the second century who do not polemicize against Marcion rarely display knowledge of or interest in the Resurrection. Basilides,⁶⁷⁸ for example, is frequently grouped together with Marcion. Younger than Marcion,⁶⁷⁹ he taught mainly in Alexandria.⁶⁸⁰ He shows some similarities with Marcion, for example his explicit reference to Paul⁶⁸¹ and the scriptures, but unlike Marcion he acknowledges the Jewish scriptures⁶⁸² and does not use *Luke*, preferring *Matthew* or Matthean traditions.⁶⁸³ He probably wrote 24

⁶⁷⁷ Melito, *Frg.* 8b:3 (72,20–39 Hall).

⁶⁷⁸ Often together with Valentinus.

⁶⁷⁹ See Clem. Alex., *Strom.* VII 106,4–107,1.

⁶⁸⁰ W. Löhr, *Basilides* (1996).

⁶⁸¹ See on *Rom.* 7:9 in Orig., *Com. V I in Rom.* (PG 14, 1015A).

⁶⁸² See on *Prov.* 1:7, Clem. Alex., *Strom* II 36,1 = id., *Exc. Thdt.* 16, or the reference to *Job* 14:4, see Clem. Alex., *Strom.* IV 81,1–83,1; or the interpretation of *Deut.* 5:9–10 in Clem. Alex., *Exc. Thdt.* 28.

⁶⁸³ See Clem. Alex., *Strom.* III 1–3.

books on *Interpreting [the Gospel]*.⁶⁸⁴ He has a positive opinion of the creator who can naturally be known, a knowledge that is unlimited beauty of an insurmountable creation.⁶⁸⁵ As a result, Basilides accepts marriage, and not only admits Jesus' baptism, like the Valentinians,⁶⁸⁶ but even celebrates it.⁶⁸⁷ Christ's Resurrection is not mentioned anywhere in the extant fragments. This lack could be the result of the fragmentary state of what has survived from Basilides, but it coincides with an apparent absence of any anti-Marcionite polemic. Marcion and Basilides had very different theological agendas, the latter interested in natural philosophy, the soul and its reincarnation, an ascetic training, and fight against emotional affects.

We can also compare Marcus Magus and his Pythagorean-inspired system of creation.⁶⁸⁸ Salvation happened as a result of the descent and union of the heavenly Christ with the earthly Jesus in his baptism through to the dissolution of this union in death. The crucifixion is symbolized by the number six. As according to Moses man was created on the sixth day, so also 'was the last man reborn through the appearance of the first man' on the sixth day, manifested through Jesus' death in the sixth hour of that day of preparation.⁶⁸⁹ The Resurrection does not play a role at all; nor do Paul or *Luke*.

The authors who reacted against Marcion's angelic Resurrection insisted on the reality and fleshly character of it, shown through post-Resurrection narratives where Jesus' teaching is linked with his transferring authority to preach his gospel.⁶⁹⁰

There seems to be a major divide between 'two distinctly different lines of tradition': '[e]cclesiastical writers from Ignatius and Justin to Irenaeus and Tertullian increasingly use and expound those elements of NT tradition that attest the reality of the resurrection', while others 'characteristically use and adapt those that lend themselves to interpretation as visions, such as Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalene (Jo. 20, 14–18) and the appearance to Paul (Acts 9, 3–7)'; we can ask, 'what is the basis for this divergence' and 'why does interpretation of Christ's appearances become such a crucial issue for Christians in the second century that those who develop the second type of appearance tradition are condemned as

⁶⁸⁴ See Agrippa Castor in Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* IV 7,5–8, in conjunction with the two fragments from these *Interpretations* (from books 3 and 23), which, however, do not reveal whether the *Interpretations* commented on one or more known or unknown texts or Gospels (*Luke?*): see W. Löhr, *Basilides* (1996), 30–34, 122–51, 219–54.

⁶⁸⁵ See Clem. Alex., *Strom.* V 3,2–3.

⁶⁸⁶ See Clem. Alex., *Exc. Thdt.* 16.

⁶⁸⁷ See Clem. Alex., *Strom.* I 145,6–146,4; just to note here that the *Gospel of the Ebionites* began with Jesus' baptism in the Jordan (the last fragment refers to the Paschal meal where Jesus mentions that he does not want to eat 'meat' with his disciples): see D. Lührmann and E. Schlarb, *Fragmente* (2000), 32–8.

⁶⁸⁸ See N. Förster, *Marcus* (1999).

⁶⁸⁹ Iren., *Adv. haer.* I 14,6.

⁶⁹⁰ See A. Gregory, *Reception* (2003), 322–49.

“heretics” by spokesmen of ecclesiastical tradition?”⁶⁹¹ As we have seen, ‘the two traditions bear different theological implications (that) ... lead to very different attitudes toward authority – not only in terms of doctrine, but also in terms of the social and political leadership within the communities’.⁶⁹² Tertullian and Irenaeus developed their emphasis on the ‘actual historical event’ as an argument against their opponents to position themselves as orthodox. If the approach that Tertullian deploys, however, was developed in response to an earlier tradition, we have to question the chronological order of what has been suggested as ‘lines of tradition’. Instead of the non-institutional reading as a reaction to the institutionalized form, it appears from our walk through the evidence that we are faced with a maze of interlinked processes. As far as we can see, the Resurrection was barely used at all in many of the surveyed early documents, even less did they support a hierarchical authority. On the contrary, it appears that in an apocalyptic manner⁶⁹³ the creative mind of Marcion informed by Paul argued adamantly for the novelty of Christianity and against its indebtedness to Judaism. Ironically, Marcion adopted two typical features of Pauline Rabbinic theology, his scripture orientation and his belief in the resurrection of the dead, and more specifically the Resurrection of Christ as their firstfruit. Marcion, born as a non-Jew and raised with a Greco-Roman education (like the author of *Luke*), was already so far removed from Jews and Jewish Christians that he did not notice how many Rabbinic ideas he absorbed by reading Paul. It was in reaction to Marcion, it seems, that reception grew of the type of Resurrection accounts that Charles Harold Dodd once called the ‘concise’ type in distinction from the ‘circumstantial’ one, the latter applying to Paul.⁶⁹⁴ The ‘concise’ type,

associated with kerygmatic tradition, consistently describes the disciples [the Eleven] gathered as a group, and identifies the risen One as the Jesus of their former experience. He appears in the form they know from his earthly life; he eats with his disciples, and invites them to touch him to prove his corporeality. Commentators from Dodd and Lindblom to Alsup have noted the ‘stark realism’ that marks these pericopes,⁶⁹⁵ [they show concern] for the identity of and continuity with the person of the earthly Jesus ... This Jesus appears as the One who has been raised and, therefore, in eschatological power can send the disciples to preach.⁶⁹⁶

⁶⁹¹ E.H. Pagels, ‘Visions’ (1978), 415.

⁶⁹² *Ibid.*

⁶⁹³ Related to *Rev.*?

⁶⁹⁴ C.H. Dodd, ‘Appearances’ (1957), 102; to which E.H. Pagels, ‘Visions’ (1978), 415, drew attention, again.

⁶⁹⁵ E.H. Pagels, ‘Visions’ (1978), 415–16.

⁶⁹⁶ J. Alsup, *Stories* (1975), 156.

This concise type is the contrasting answer to what Marcion, on the basis of Paul with (pre-)Luke, has developed. It is circumstantial, but its content is possibly better and more precisely described as authoritative and revelatory. The personal revelation and encounter with the Risen Christ removes the forty-day period restriction attested by Luke.⁶⁹⁷ ‘This theological position also bears direct political implications’; it challenges the claim that definitive religious authority is restricted not only to the first ‘apostolic’ generation but most specifically to the Twelve around James, Peter and John, and all those who derive their authorities as bishops from the succession of these apostles, for Irenaeus, for example, the ‘proof of their incontestable authority’.⁶⁹⁸

In response to the revelatory position, authors did not focus solely on the concise Resurrection type but sometimes used the revelatory–circumstantial type and vice versa; they certainly noticed the powerful, albeit different, frames that each tradition provided. This fact explains why the Gospels with Resurrection narratives, among them specifically those Gospels that later became canonical, found broader dissemination and acceptance, and why Gospels like *Mark* and *John* were extended specifically in their description of the Resurrection appearances.⁶⁹⁹

The Rule of Faith and the Resurrection

How did the Resurrection enter the Christian creed? There seem to have been at least two stepping stones to the creation of the first synodal creeds of the fourth century AD.⁷⁰⁰ The two forerunners of the creed were baptismal questions, asked prior to a candidate being baptized, and the ‘rule of faith’, a greatly varying attempt to summarize core contents of what Christians believe in, that emerged from school debates of the second century.⁷⁰¹

Central to the struggle in these debates was the breadth of traditions and backgrounds from which teachers and students came. In the second century, being Christian did not mean sharing a common memory. To search and create a commonality was the challenge, not a given as it was for Jews who enjoyed the Torah, Platonists who had their master’s writings, or for Greeks, Romans, Syrians, Egyptians, Persians and others with their family, local, regional and state traditions. Christians came from all these varied angles, from all levels of society, and had been raised on the most diverse cultural grounds. As much as scholars of today wonder what bound Christians together, the very same question was asked by the scholars of the second century. As we have seen, the Resurrection did not belong to the set of references until Marcion copied the Jewish tradition and came up

⁶⁹⁷ See G. Blum, *Tradition* (1963), 48; E.H. Pagels, ‘Visions’ (1978), 417.

⁶⁹⁸ E.H. Pagels, ‘Visions’ (1978), 417.

⁶⁹⁹ *Mark* 16,9ff. and *John* 20–21.

⁷⁰⁰ See M. Vinzent, *Entstehung* (1999).

⁷⁰¹ See A.M. Ritter, ‘art. Glaubensbekenntnis(se)’ (1984), 406.

with his alternative Testament, an innovation that most of his fellow colleagues embraced, imitated, broadened and developed further by integrating the Old Testament to create a Christian tradition. In parallel, the rule of faith emerged and grew hand in hand with bringing together Christian reference writings. As Gotthold Ephraim Lessing had already noted, the summaries of faith developed even before any canon of a more defined cluster of Christian writings had been established.⁷⁰² However, Lessing overlooked that much of what entered the rule of faith was influenced and determined by the content of writings and written statements that Christians produced and started to regard as forming memories. Once rediscovered by Marcion, the see-saw of an emerging rule of faith and a Christian Bible slowly moved the Resurrection into Christian consciousness and belief. That the Resurrection was not part of the Christian tradition prior to this development can be seen from the older baptismal questions that asked the candidates only whether they believed in the incarnate and suffering Christ:

Do you believe in:
 God, the almighty Father,
 in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, *who was born and suffered*,
 in the Holy Spirit, the holy church, the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the flesh?⁷⁰³

How deeply these baptismal questions, referring only to Christ's birth and passion, but without mention of the Resurrection, were rooted in Christianity, can be seen from the fact that they remained the standard formula in the Roman Catholic Church up to the year 1969!

For the introduction of the Resurrection into the emerging rule of faith, we could look to several key teachers, but we confine ourselves here first to the most important one in the West, Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon, and then to two in the East, Clement and Origen, both teaching in Alexandria.

Irenaeus is the first known author in early Christianity who, as a result of writing against the many school opinions, develops and shapes what he calls the rule of faith. Because of its polemical origin, his rule of faith mirrors the counter-structure of the beliefs of Irenaeus' opponents, a structure that may make us too quick to overlook how deeply influenced Irenaeus was by many of the positions against which he wrote. Both that indebtedness and the controversial nature of his theology can be seen even in his less apologetical work, the *Demonstration of the apostolic preaching*.

⁷⁰² See M. Vinzent, *Ursprung* (2006), 84–7.

⁷⁰³ See the so-called *Old Gelasian Sacramentary*, which, according to Wolfram Kinzig represents the oldest baptismal questions from the second century: see W. Kinzig, 'Tauffragen' (1998).

As early as the preface to this book, Irenaeus takes a critical view of those ‘chair-holders’ – ‘chair being the symbol for school’⁷⁰⁴ – who sit on chairs of arrogant people (*Ps.* 1:1), while in the second chapter he refers his own teaching to the ‘Elders, the disciples of the Apostles’,⁷⁰⁵ not to school masters. We are reminded instantly of Papias of Hierapolis. Irenaeus especially dislikes those who teach that everything has been created by another God, not by the one in whom Christians are baptized for the remission of sins, ‘in the name of God the Father and in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God who was born, died and rose, and in the Holy Spirit of God’.⁷⁰⁶ Irenaeus does not name the teacher, but we can infer that he has in mind Marcion and those who were influenced by him. Nevertheless, Irenaeus also accepts that God has not directly created the world but has done so through his intelligence, his Word, and in us through his spirit, a belief that he backs with an explicit reference to ‘Paul, his Apostle’.⁷⁰⁷ Contrary to the unspecified teacher, Irenaeus maintains that the same spirit was uttered by the Word, spoke through the Prophets, and that Jesus Christ appeared to them, an implied rebuttal of Marcion.⁷⁰⁸ Moreover, Irenaeus emphasizes that the Word appeared among men ‘visible and touchable’⁷⁰⁹ to recapitulate everything at the end of times.⁷¹⁰ It is this one and same God who is the absolute God, the one called ‘Father’ and also ‘the Just’ and ‘God of all’, a God of the Jews, the pagans and the pious.⁷¹¹ What Marcion had distinguished, Irenaeus brings together. He also alters Marcion’s disentanglement of Christianity and Judaism, without, however, abandoning the principle differentiation between Christians and Jews. Irenaeus sees God being addressed by the Christians as ‘Father’, by the Jews as ‘Lord and Lawgiver’, and by the pagans as ‘creator, demiurge and almighty’. To all, Irenaeus thinks, God is ‘nourishing, king and judge’.⁷¹² After a long digression and retelling of creation, fall and exodus, he expounds that salvation had to come through the flesh (the flesh of the paradise), because death reigned over it.⁷¹³ The incarnation is core to the salvific act, and the eternal Word reigns through the flesh.⁷¹⁴ Only in passing does Irenaeus also speak about the Resurrection, which God has manifested,

having become himself the first-born of the dead, and in Himself raising up man that was fallen, lifting him up far above the heaven to the right hand of the glory

⁷⁰⁴ Iren., *Dem.* 2.

⁷⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 5–6.

⁷⁰⁹ *Luke* 24:36ff.

⁷¹⁰ Iren., *Dem.* 6.

⁷¹¹ *Ibid.*, 7; similar *id.*, *Adv. haer.* III 16,9.

⁷¹² Iren., *Dem.* 8.

⁷¹³ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁷¹⁴ Similar Iren., *Adv. haer.* III 16,9, 19,3.

of the Father: even as God promised by the prophet, saying: And I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen; that is, the flesh that was from David.⁷¹⁵

Irenaeus focuses on Christ's birth. His Resurrection is a mere sign of men's fleshly resurrection,⁷¹⁶ and it sounds as if he had borrowed the Resurrection topic from Marcion: 'If any man will not receive His birth from a virgin', Irenaeus argues against Marcion, 'how shall he receive His resurrection from the dead? For it is nothing wonderful and astonishing and extraordinary, if one who was not born rose from the dead: nay indeed we cannot speak of a Resurrection of him who came unto being without birth.'⁷¹⁷

The argument only makes sense if the interlocutor firmly believed in the Resurrection, and even used it as a confirmation of the 'wonderful', 'astonishing and extraordinary' nature of Christ but denied his birth of the virgin – precisely what we know of Marcion.

The passage reveals Irenaeus' intimate knowledge of Marcion. And the concluding argument underlines the soteriological place that Irenaeus on the basis of Marcion's arguments gave to the Resurrection:

If He [Christ] was not born, neither did He die; and, if He died not, neither did He rise from the dead; and, if He rose not from the dead, neither did He vanquish death and bring its reign to nought; and if death be not vanquished, how can we ascend to life, who from the beginning have fallen under death?⁷¹⁸

Irenaeus does not challenge the centrality that Marcion placed on the Resurrection, but uses his opponent's argument to maintain a bodily Resurrection⁷¹⁹ and proves that even the Resurrection was foretold in the (Jewish) scriptures.⁷²⁰ He builds on Marcion's belief in the Resurrection to back his belief in Christ's birth from the virgin, and sees it announced by the Prophets.⁷²¹ He believes in Christ's existence before Moses in the beginning of the creation, quoting *Genesis* 1:1, supported by 'His disciple John' (*John* 1:1).⁷²² In addition, Irenaeus stresses the authority of those disciples who witnessed Jesus' life, death, his bodily Resurrection and ascension, and stresses that those were rightly called 'Apostles'.⁷²³ Only late in the text does Irenaeus introduce the Apostle Paul, with a quote not known from

⁷¹⁵ Iren., *Dem.* 38.

⁷¹⁶ See also Irenaeus' deviation from Paul, influenced by *John*, Iren., *Adv. haer.* V 7,1; see R. Noormann, *Irenaeus* (1994), 285, 442–3, 455–8.

⁷¹⁷ Iren., *Dem.* 39.

⁷¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁷¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁷²⁰ *Ibid.*, 72–3.

⁷²¹ *Ibid.*, 40; he develops this topic in over twenty chapters, from *Dem.* 40–67.

⁷²² *Ibid.*, 43.

⁷²³ *Ibid.*, 41.

the existing letters of Paul, ‘Love is the fulfilling of the law’, and explains ‘that he who loves God has fulfilled the law’,⁷²⁴ rejecting Marcion’s view that Christians would not need to follow the Jewish law.⁷²⁵ Irenaeus either used a non-Marcionite Pauline tradition or fabricated one to advise against despising the creator God ‘like the heretics’ whom he had refuted in his earlier work *Against the heresies*.⁷²⁶

From Clement of Alexandria⁷²⁷ (ca. 150–ca. 215) to Origen (ca. 185–254) we can trace a transition. Clement still endorses a variety of beliefs and takes part in the widely shared discourse in which ‘the adversary is close’ but where also ‘the frontiers between heresy and orthodoxy are not clearly set, where one lets those speak whom one wants to refute, and where one is directly influenced by them’.⁷²⁸ In contrast, his successor at the catechetical school of Alexandria, Origen, relies on handbook wisdom of opinions, rubricized into orthodox and heterodox, and although he did have direct acquaintance with opponents and sometimes even quotes their writings, he generally distorts the proper teaching of heretics in order to oppose and reject but no longer to engage with them.

What caused this shift? The move is predominantly one of reference. While Clement sees himself as partaking in an ongoing vivid discussion in search of truth by creating customs, practices and reference points (institutions, authorities, oral and written traditions), Origen sees himself in, but also already beyond, a pure exploratory stage, as an heir of something given that he must explicate, replicate and hand down. Open search has turned into catechetical scholarship, still creative, but subservient to tradition. Origen, the extraordinarily gifted and most prolific author of Christianity in the East, embodies the implantation of an institutionalized, traditionalized Christian scholarship. What begins with Marcion and his reference to an unquestionable, written foundation of Christianity comes to fruition and perfection in Origen. In this sense, Origen is complementing what Marcion initiated: Christianity that rests on referable foundations and a foundational exegetical philosophy. His work *On principles* both addresses and replaces Marcion’s *Antitheses*. It is a polemical, systematic introduction to the Christian ‘rule of faith’ – now no longer a building site upon which all sorts of craftsmen try to develop a project without architectural guidance, but where a systematic plan is being put forward in front of readers, laypersons, priests, *episcopi* (literally: over-seers) and deacons, to help those who oversee the building process to avoid following competing designs. The plan itself, though apologetic, is no longer meant to be part of an exchange with those alternatives but is entirely based on the written reference that started with Marcion, the New Testament, the written will of the Lord, and the works of Apostles and their disciples, yet also comprises (against Marcion) the Jewish heritage of the Old Testament.

⁷²⁴ Ibid., 87.

⁷²⁵ Ibid., 87–98.

⁷²⁶ Ibid., 99.

⁷²⁷ See the quote in Clem. Alex., *Exc. ex Thdt.* 9,1.

⁷²⁸ A. le Boulluec, ‘Place’ (1975), 58.

Although Origen knows about some unresolved questions, for the most fundamental issues he presents systematic solutions – the Resurrection, however, as we shall see, does not belong to this set of core beliefs. Origen becomes one of the first exegetes to comment on a wide range of entire books of both Testaments of the Christian Bible. Many topics become entrenched in the ‘rule of faith’, not because they are central to Origen’s own philosophy or soteriology, but because they have been discussed during earlier decades, and, more often, because they are present in the writings considered by Origen as part of the Christian scriptures.

Clement’s *Excerpts from Theodot* are very different from his successor’s works. They are not polemical. Clement quotes Valentinians, especially Theodotus, and Basilidians, and – puzzling for most modern readers – with few and minor exceptions he entirely agrees with them.⁷²⁹ He, much like Irenaeus, also embraces the reference scriptures of those whom he quotes: *John* combined with Paul.⁷³⁰ He underlines the importance of Paul, even draws on Theodot’s tenet that Paul became the ‘Apostle of the Resurrection’, although Theodot indicates that he ranks Paul among or even after the other Apostles.⁷³¹ To Clement, Paul’s message was not uniform, and should not be pressed into opposing categories of orthodox or heretical; rather, it suits different minds. To those who are afraid of knowing Christ’s spiritual being, Paul portrayed Christ ‘as begotten and passible’, while for the wise ones he taught Christ as having come ‘from the Holy Spirit and a virgin’, ‘for each one knows the Lord after his own fashion, and not all in the same way’.⁷³² Even Clement’s physical chain of salvation, leading from the universal gnostic man to the spiritual and psychic man, is borrowed directly from the gnostic teachers whom he quotes.⁷³³ The *Excerpts* state with Paul:

‘If the first fruits be holy, the lump will be also; if the root be holy, then will also the shoots.’⁷³⁴ There will be an eschatological marriage feast in which the spiritual and the psychic ones will be joined to each other and made equal to each other. After this reunion, the spiritual essence [of the two] departs from the souls and enters the pleroma.⁷³⁵

Before Clement, Irenaeus had already given an account of this Valentinian teaching that combined Resurrection, soteriology and ecclesiology, and, much like Clement, he had adopted the basic Valentinian ecclesiological soteriology. Using the same text of *Romans* (11:16) the Valentinians saw the inability of the demiurge

⁷²⁹ See the first disagreement only in Clem. Alex., *Exc. ex Thdt.* 30, interestingly accusing Theodot of believing that the Father suffered.

⁷³⁰ Clem. Alex., *Exc. ex Thdt.* 19.

⁷³¹ *Ibid.*, 23,2.

⁷³² *Ibid.*, 23.

⁷³³ *Ibid.*, 58, see also *ibid.*, 61–3, 80.

⁷³⁴ *Rom.* 11:16.

⁷³⁵ I. Dunderberg, ‘Valentinus’ (2005), 82.

overturned by the Saviour. Through the Saviour the spiritual elements of psychic man are rescued:

The expression 'first-fruits' denoted that which is spiritual, but 'the lump' meant us, that is, the animal Church, the lump of which they say He assumed, and blended it with Himself, inasmuch as He is 'the leaven'.⁷³⁶

Irenaeus accommodated this Valentinian tenet, but he incorporated the flesh or material body into the physical chain of salvation. Following Valentinian's Paulinism and stretching it further to the physical body, Christ is one of the 'firstfruits of the resurrection of man',⁷³⁷ the head of the body of everyman.⁷³⁸ As the head rose from the dead, so also all the remaining parts of the body.⁷³⁹ This adopted Valentinian Resurrection soteriology of Theodot had a huge impact on early Christianity. From Irenaeus and Clement, it made its way to Hippolytus and, in the fourth century, to Apolinarius (influenced by Marcellus of Ancyra), Athanasius and Gregory of Nyssa.⁷⁴⁰ Clement claimed that 'he is transmitting secret traditions received from a chain of teachers that began with the Apostles',⁷⁴¹ and that after his Resurrection Christ gave the gift of knowledge to 'James, the Just, John, and Peter', who then delivered it to the rest of the Apostles, who in turn passed it on to the seventy.⁷⁴²

Origen intensifies this traditionalization and apostolization of Christian knowledge. He 'considers the only true Gnostics among the Apostles to be Peter and the two sons of Zebedee'.⁷⁴³ Although he acknowledges Paul as representing the Apostolic authority, he does not value his letters as being of 'absolute character of divinely inspired words',⁷⁴⁴ an esteem that he grants only to Irenaeus' four Gospels, the 'firstfruit',⁷⁴⁵ of which *John*, again, is the 'firstfruit of the firstfruits'.⁷⁴⁶ He knows of 'very many' Gospels⁷⁴⁷ that have been composed, even of the 'rush' of writing Gospels. But only four had been chosen to be 'passed on to the churches',

⁷³⁶ Iren., *Adv. haer.* I 8,3.

⁷³⁷ 1Cor. 15:20.

⁷³⁸ See *Col.* 1:18.

⁷³⁹ See Iren., *Adv. haer.* III 19,3.

⁷⁴⁰ See Hippol., *In Daniel.* IV 11,5; *Ps.-Ath., De inc. et c. Ar.* 12; R.M. Hübner, *Einheit* (1974), 314–17.

⁷⁴¹ D.M. Parrott, 'Disciples' (1986), 214; see Clem. Alex., *Strom.* I 11,3.

⁷⁴² Euseb., *Eccl. hist.* II 1,4.

⁷⁴³ D.M. Parrott, 'Disciples' (1986), 214; see Orig., *C. Cels.* II 64, IV 16, VI 77; *Comm. in Matth.* XII 36,41.

⁷⁴⁴ Orig., *Comm. in Ioh.* I 16 (trans. by Ronald E. Heine, *Origen, Commentary on the Gospel according to John, Books 1–10*, The Fathers of the Church, Washington D.C., 1989, sometimes slightly altered).

⁷⁴⁵ Orig., *Comm. in Ioh.* I 14. 21.

⁷⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, I 21.

⁷⁴⁷ And names a few in his *Hom. in Luke* 12.

those whose authors were 'filled with the Holy Spirit'.⁷⁴⁸ Responding to Marcion's emphasis on Paul and the complementary role of his version of *Luke*, Origen makes a special case for *Luke* and differentiates the author and his sources. Luke was in a better position, as he 'has seen' the more excellent Word, while Paul only heard God's voice.⁷⁴⁹

Dealing with the Pauline and non-Pauline letters and writings, *James*, *Peter* and *1John*, Origen, like others, sees them as having been 'brought forth after the Gospels'⁷⁵⁰ but still regards them as parts of the New Testament, so that they, too, can be called 'Gospel' – using Marcion's terminology. He is more sceptical with regard to the authenticity of *Hebrews*, *2Peter*, *2–3John*, *Jude*, *Barnabas*, *Acts*, *Revelation* and *Hermas*. Clearly against Marcion, Origen maintains that the name 'Gospel' is more accurately given to the four Gospels than to the other writings of the New Testament, hence not to Paul; but halfway with Marcion, he states that 'the Old Testament is not gospel since it does not make known "him who is to come", but only proclaims him in advance'.⁷⁵¹ The set of recognized writings of his contemporary Jews, the Law of Moses, is added as the 'firstling'⁷⁵² to the 'first-fruits', but clearly ranks below the Gospel (and the Gospels). Marcion's views – although altered by Origen – still shine through, especially where Origen notes the difference between the Gospel and the Old Testament, when several times he repeats Marcion's catchword of Christian 'newness':

Nothing of the ancients was gospel, then, before that Gospel which came into existence because of the coming of Christ. But the Gospel, which is a New Testament, made the newness of the Spirit which never grows old, shines forth in the light of knowledge. This newness of the Spirit removed us from 'the antiquity of the letter'.⁷⁵³ It is proper to the New Testament, although it is stored up in all the Scriptures.⁷⁵⁴

After having repeated (if not literally quoted) Marcion, Origen adds:

The Gospel, however, which produced the gospel thought to exist in the Old Testament, too, had to be called 'Gospel' in a special sense.⁷⁵⁵

Origen's interpretative key is the rule of faith, the hermeneutical key handed down by his teachers and episcopal authorities, Clement and Irenaeus. Like them, he

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid., I 1; trans. J.T. Lienhard, *Origen* (1996), sometimes slightly altered.

⁷⁴⁹ Orig., *Hom. 1 in Lc.* 4.

⁷⁵⁰ Orig., *Comm. in Ioh.* I 15.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid., I 17.

⁷⁵² Ibid., I 14. 33.

⁷⁵³ *Rom.* 7:6.

⁷⁵⁴ Orig., *Comm. in Ioh.* I 36.

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid.

defends the bodily resurrection of men, and therefore the bodily Resurrection of Christ,⁷⁵⁶ but is hardly interested in elaborating on this topic itself.⁷⁵⁷ The Resurrection becomes part of the rule of faith, because its bodily character had been rejected by Marcion and others. Against those, as already seen by Pierre Jurieu (1637–1713), the *symbolum* presents the divinization of the historical flesh,⁷⁵⁸ a timely event and fact that is endorsed by the bodily realism in the narratives of the Gospels, the letters of Paul and other New Testament writings, and, as Irenaeus and others before Origen have pointed out, can even be found throughout the Old Testament. Quite different from these historicizing attempts, in replying to Valentinians Origen can also adopt Valentinian terminology and concepts. Christ, the ‘Truth, Life and Resurrection’,⁷⁵⁹ is one of the titles of the Word given with regard to the salvific power and activity of the Word. Christ’s Resurrection describes the eternal power, existing in God. The Word enacts this power in us to destroy death so that the first born of the dead lives with those who will rise with him.⁷⁶⁰

For all these titles are derived from His power and operations, and in none of them is there the slightest ground for understanding anything of a corporeal nature which might seem to denote either size, or form, or colour.⁷⁶¹

The divine and spiritual nature of the Risen Christ can be deduced from the fugitive apparitions of the Easter narratives.⁷⁶² Jesus’ mortal body has been transformed into one of ethereal and divine quality.⁷⁶³ Origen does not entirely agree either with Marcion or with the Valentinians, although he comes close to their views,⁷⁶⁴ and sees the Risen body as entered into God’s incorruptibility, although not being itself fully incorruptible, because it still preserves the ‘form’ or identity with the earthly person.⁷⁶⁵ Origen even seems to have adopted Apelles’ or Hermogenes’ idea of Christ’s giving up his spiritual body in the heavenly realm, interpreted as a second sacrifice for the heavenly beings after he had offered his earthly body for the human beings on earth.⁷⁶⁶ He can even speak of three separate Pascha celebrations:

⁷⁵⁶ The nexus between the two, for example, in Orig., *Frg. Tit.* (preserved by Pamphilus, PG 14, 1305B); see also id., *Frg. 1Cor.* 4: JTS 9 (1908), 234.

⁷⁵⁷ As are the scholars writing about Origen; see, for example, J. Armatage, ‘Worlds’ (1975) who does not mention the Resurrection at all.

⁷⁵⁸ See M. Vinzent, *Ursprung* (2006), 61–3; Orig., *Comm. in Matth. ser.* 33.

⁷⁵⁹ *John* 11:25.

⁷⁶⁰ See Orig., *Comm. in Rom.* I 6; id., *Hom. in Ex.* V 2; VII 4; id., *Comm. in Ioh.* X 18.

⁷⁶¹ Orig., *De princ.* I 4.

⁷⁶² See Orig., *C. Cels.* II 69; id., *Comm. in Ioh.* XXXII 25 (17).

⁷⁶³ See Orig., *C. Cels.* III 41.

⁷⁶⁴ So B. Studer, ‘R surrection’ (1978), 301.

⁷⁶⁵ See Orig., *C. Cels.* III 42; id., *Select. Ps.* 1,5.

⁷⁶⁶ See Orig., *Hom. in Lev.* I 3.

the Jewish, the earthly Christian and the heavenly one, 'which will be celebrated among myriads of angels in the most perfect festivity'.⁷⁶⁷

As one of the few to have studied the Resurrection of Christ in Origen's works has stated, however: 'Looking at the entire theological work of Origen, one certainly cannot pretend that the Resurrection of Jesus, be it seen as glorification or eternal state of glory, is one of its central themes'.⁷⁶⁸ 'It is not the Resurrection itself that interests Origen, neither the transformation of Jesus' body, nor the presence of the Risen amongst the disciples, nor the passage of the Glorified to the Father'.⁷⁶⁹

Origen is a remarkable example to show how gradually Scripture became influential and provided a theological reference frame, not least through its powerful promotion beginning with its early commentators (Papias, Ptolemy, Basilides, Heracleon, Hippolytus and Origen). As with Judaism, the birthplace of Christianity (and later with Islam, deriving from the same crèche), Christianity evolved into what Marcion intended it to be, an institution that was dominated by both a written testament (*sola scriptura*) and by its interpreting hierarchy, guided by the Spirit. While for Marcion the Resurrection had a central, theological role, cementing the authority of Paul and his written legacy secured by the Gospel, and highlighting the previously unknown, spiritual and angelic nature of Christ, in response to him the Resurrection became accepted from the specific angle of a bodily, realistic and historical event, remodelled as proof of the Lord's bodily reappearance, demonstrating and even securing the fleshly future resurrection of men. As such, it became re-narrated and explicated by the readers of the Christian scriptures, with Origen one of the first and outstanding representatives of an anti-Valentinian, -Marcionite and -gnostic reading of biblical texts. The introduction of these readings into the rituals and worship of the communities seems to have had another substantial influence on promoting the Resurrection into Christian lived experience and consciousness. Influenced by the Marcionites' practice of reading Paul and the Gospel in their liturgy, the Resurrection can be found in Origen's systematic work, *On principles*, specifically in the anti-Marcionite opening section on the rule of faith:

Jesus Christ was *truly* born and *truly* suffered (*natus et passus est in ueritate*), *not as a ghost* did he endure this death common [to man], but did *truly* die; that, in fact, He did *truly* rise from the dead, and *truly* after His resurrection He conversed with His disciples, and was taken up [into heaven].⁷⁷⁰

In his apologetic work against the pagan philosopher Celsus, the claim of the Christian statement of faith being a secret system is counter-argued as a misunderstanding-

⁷⁶⁷ Orig., *Comm. in Ioh.* X 18.

⁷⁶⁸ B. Studer, 'Résurrection' (1978), 307.

⁷⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 284.

⁷⁷⁰ Orig., *De princ.* I pref. 4.

ing of the ‘ridiculed’ ‘mystery of the Resurrection’.⁷⁷¹ How little the Resurrection has its place in Origen’s rule of faith, however, can be seen from its absence from summaries of the rule where there is mention only of the virgin birth of Jesus.⁷⁷²

The remoteness of a belief in Christ’s Resurrection during the first 140 years of Christianity is mirrored in pagan literature. ‘For the first extended pagan objection to the resurrection of Jesus we must turn to Celsus’ thorough-going attack on Christianity, which was ... written between 177 and 180’ and is only preserved by Origen.⁷⁷³ ‘Celsus claims that a dead man cannot be immortal’⁷⁷⁴ and that Christians worship a corpse:⁷⁷⁵ for the pagan philosopher the very notion of resurrection is absurd,⁷⁷⁶ though he is willing to discuss the possibility of some form of immortality.⁷⁷⁷ Celsus insists that “the fact that hope of the resurrection of the dead is not shared by some Jews (presumably Sadducees) and some Christians (presumably Gnostics) shows its utter repulsiveness, and that it is both revolting and impossible”.⁷⁷⁸ However, he does not relate this observation to the resurrection of Jesus. Hence it i[s] not surprising to find that he does not discuss the resurrection of Jesus at length: he leaves extended criticism to the Jew whom he quotes’.⁷⁷⁹ ‘At a later point in his attack on Christianity, long after he has stopped quoting a Jew, Celsus returns to the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus and mentions in passing the presence of *women* at the empty tomb, not one hysterical woman, as in the objection of the Jew.⁷⁸⁰ Rather surprisingly, Celsus himself makes nothing of the fact that Christian claims rest on the evidence of women. Instead he points out scornfully that the alleged Son of God “was not able to open the tomb, but needed someone else to move the stone”.⁷⁸¹ This is an objection which Celsus’ Jew is unlikely to have made; in a Jewish context, “Son of God” did not necessarily denote divinity’.⁷⁸²

⁷⁷¹ Origen, *C. Cels.* I 7; II 56–70; see H. Chadwick, ‘Origen’ (1948).

⁷⁷² See Origen, *Comm. in Ioh.* XXXII 16 (9); XX 30 (24).

⁷⁷³ G.N. Stanton, *Jesus* (2004), 149; see id., ‘Objections’ (1994), 79–94.

⁷⁷⁴ In Origen, *C. Cels.* II 16.

⁷⁷⁵ In *ibid.* VII 68.

⁷⁷⁶ In *ibid.* V 14, VI 29.

⁷⁷⁷ In *ibid.* V 14; see IV 56.

⁷⁷⁸ In *ibid.* V 14.

⁷⁷⁹ G.N. Stanton, *Jesus* (2004), 150.

⁷⁸⁰ See in Origen, *C. Cels.* II 55 and V 52.

⁷⁸¹ In *ibid.* V 52.

⁷⁸² G.N. Stanton, *Jesus* (2004), 150–51.

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Chapter 3

Celebrating Life and Death

Of course, we could have started our enquiry with the celebration of life and death in the early Church. It is alleged that ‘independent of the New Testament the earliest evidences about the Easter events are encountered in the liturgical tradition’.¹ Our reading of this kind of evidence is, however, easily tainted by our own liturgical upbringing and deeply rooted routine. One often connects with the existing evidence what is subconsciously already known. Similarities are stressed, although we have to reckon with very different meanings of liturgical acts, meanings that derive from a distant past and from dissimilar religious, cultural and historical environments. To avoid potentially anachronistic retrospectives we began not with the liturgical life of the early Christians, but with the Gospels, Paul’s own letters and texts of the Pauline and non-Pauline tradition, to return in this chapter to ‘the earliest evidence about the Easter events’ in the ‘liturgical’ traditions.

Immediately the term ‘liturgical’ must make us sceptical. As soon as we relocate ourselves into a Greco-Roman Jewish environment, as much or rather as little as we can make this leap, ‘liturgy’ is a hotly debated topic. In the year 70 AD Jerusalem was sacked by the Romans and turned into a Roman city, Aelia Capitolina; the Temple as the centre of Jewish liturgy was ruined, and ‘the’ liturgy ceased to exist. No longer were there celebrations, directed by a priestly, mainly Sadduceeic, hierarchy, but celebrations that had been embraced also by Pharisaic and Rabbinic Jews, by pilgrims in their thousands, merchants, business owners, money changers, bankers, tradespeople, craftsmen, peasants, prostitutes and whoever else was searching for religious festival experiences or making a living in and from the temple cult of Jerusalem. While the fate of the Sadducees faded into the darkness of history, the reaction of Pharisees and Rabbis is better known. From later sources we infer their emphasis on the synagogue, the yeshiva and the family, the great bearers of tradition. They insisted upon maintaining a living memory of the temple cult, but they also developed the synagogue not only as a community centre but as a religious institution with the reading of the Torah and the Prophets, preaching, and the development of communal prayers.² Even today, Jews know which family descends from the priestly tribe of Cohen, uniquely predestined to act as priests in the single Jewish liturgy of the Temple that will be restored with

¹ R. Staats, ‘Auferstehung II/2’ (1979), 514.

² See L.I. Levine, *Synagogue* (2000), 151–2, who advocates that ‘no public prayer was known in Judaea in the pre-70 period and that the institution of communal synagogue prayer is only a post-70 phenomenon’.

the coming of the Messiah. Yet because of the eschatological gap, the longing for what has not yet been restored, the very idea of establishing a liturgy, even a pseudo-liturgy, was, if not taboo in Judaism, then taken up with great reluctance.

Early Christian writings seem not to deviate from this Jewish position. On the contrary, it seems that Christian Jews were rather well prepared for the removal of the central temple cult in Jerusalem. Some had moved away from a realistic interpretation of the law and instead spiritualized temple, cult, circumcision, law³ and ritual. Paul himself had emphasized a non-temple- and non-law-oriented Christianity where even tasks within the community were given non-religious descriptions: bishop and deacon (*Phil.* 1:1) were at that time the job titles for supervisors of construction and engineering work⁴ and their assistants or co-workers.⁵ Neither 'priest', a term linked to the Temple, nor 'presbyter', linked to the synagogue, features in any of Paul's letters; however, they are reintroduced into Christianity one or two generations later. 'The problem for the Church in the pre-Constantine empire was the fact that it had no cult'.⁶ Whether a problem or a strength shared with Judaism, Origen and many other contemporaries spiritualized sacrifice as 'symbols of the Christian spiritual cult':

Literal observance is no longer required, as proved by the destruction of the Temple so soon after Christ's death on the Cross. Christians are not atheists, and they *do* have a cult, with its apparatus of altar, temple, sacrifices and priests; but it is entirely non-material. The correct understanding of the scriptures is this spiritual interpretation.⁷

When *Acts* refers to Paul's early communities, the author consciously or unconsciously, but certainly anachronistically, writes of presbyters in the community of Antioch and elsewhere. And when 1 *Clement* is sent from Rome to Corinth around 100 AD, the Jewish priestly, sacrificial temple liturgy provides analogies to interpret Jesus' mysteries.

If, after the year 70 AD, Christianity evolved within a Jewish environment that was cult reluctant, when did Christians begin to gather on Sundays and to celebrate Easter? How and what did they celebrate?

Pharisees and Rabbis structured their time according to the Pharisaic lunar calendar; the Samaritans, like the people of the Dead Sea Scrolls, used the solar one. Those Christians who came from non-Jewish backgrounds brought along their own religious and cultural festivals and liturgical habits, some of which we find gradually introduced into an emerging Christian liturgical directory.

³ Particularly food and purity law.

⁴ 'Overseer' is the literal translation of ἐπίσκοπος.

⁵ 'Servant' is the literal translation of διάκονος.

⁶ F. Young, 'Temple' (1972), 325.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 326–7; see Origen., *C. Cels.* I 69, III 34, 81, IV 29–31, V 4, 33, VI 4, 70, VII 26, 44, 46, VIII 13, 17, 19, 26.

We should not see ‘Sunday liturgies’ in ‘all the Easter visions of the New Testament that carry a time indication’.⁸ Conflicting evidence with regard to the time and location of Christ’s appearances should make us sceptical. Some sources suggest Saturday evening, some Sunday morning.⁹ In *Matthew* 28:1 the women go to the empty tomb at the end of the Sabbath, hence the evening of the beginning Sunday; in *John* 20:1 it is in the morning, ‘early, when it was still dark’; in *Mark* 16:2 a little later, ‘just when the sun had risen’; *Luke* 24:1 reports that it was ‘on the first day of the week, very early in the morning’. Similarly, while *Luke* and *John* locate the Resurrection appearances in or around Jerusalem, *Mark*, *Matthew* and *John* place them in Galilee; we read ‘in the country’ in the later ending of *Mark*, on the way to Damascus in *Acts* and *Paul*.

Theologians often like to deduce historical information from the Gospels, finding in that information a reflection of liturgical practices. In this case we would need to conclude that the variety in both timing and location highlights that early Christians had not developed a uniform tradition of celebrating the Lord’s day, and that the Lord’s day is not directly connected with Easter, nor does it belong to the very beginning of Christianity.¹⁰ The ‘conventional explanation of the Christian Sunday’, which has been ‘based on the fact of Jesus’ Resurrection on Easter Sunday’, an ‘opportunity for Christians to remember it every week on the Sunday’, has been dismissed.¹¹ The New Testament never refers to the ‘day of the Resurrection’,¹² a name that appears much later in Christianity; instead, any naming and dating remains closely linked to the Jewish Sabbath. Both Paul and *Luke* speak of ‘the first day after the Sabbath’ (μία σαββάτου).¹³ We find in the New Testament no trace of any linking of the Christian gathering to the Resurrection that could have suggested ‘that one should introduce a new sacred day in its memory; on the contrary one could cite Origen representing the early Christian scepticism to highlight the Sunday: “For the perfect Christian every day

⁸ Pace R. Staats, ‘Auferstehung II/2’ (1979), 514.

⁹ See *Acts* 20:6–12; Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* X 96,7; *Matth.* 28:1; *Luke* 24:28–43; *John* 20:19–26; R. Staats, ‘Sonntagnachtgottesdienste’ (1975), 244.

¹⁰ R. Bauckham, ‘Lord’s day’ (1982), 235: ‘We conclude that the accounts of the Resurrection appearances permit no demonstrable case that Sunday worship originated at that time’; ‘[t]here is no unambiguous evidence that Easter was ever called simply κυριακή’ (*ibid.*, 230); ‘even patristic defenses of Sunday observance are notable for their failure to appeal to a command of the risen Lord’ (*ibid.*, 233).

¹¹ W. Rordorf, *Sabbat* (1972), xv–xvi, is more or less a quote (not indicated) of H. Riesenfeld, ‘Sabbat’ (1958), 212; S. Bacchiocchi, *Sabbath* (1977), 74–5.

¹² See H. Riesenfeld, ‘Sabbath’ (1970), 124; although when he refers to Origen (*C. Cels.* VIII 22) his argument that the Resurrection dominated the accounts of the New Testament, including the epistles, seems anachronistic.

¹³ See *1Cor.* 16:2; *Acts* 20:7; E. Schürer, ‘Woche’ (1905), 2–3.

is a Lord's day”¹⁴. Nothing ‘indicates that the first weekday in the life of the early church was a “holy day” on an analogy with the Sabbath in the life of the Jewish people’. Indeed,

a glance at the social circumstances permits us to understand that the small groups of people mostly recruited from the lower classes of society which composed the first Christian communities had no practical possibility of simply deciding to set aside a special weekday as their holy day, turning aside from the daily habits of their surroundings. Such an assumption is unrealistic and also lacks support from the sources.¹⁵

Hence, there is no ‘simple explanation’ that ‘Sunday is observed because Jesus rose on that day’; on the contrary, it is ‘a *petitio principii*’ whereby scholars have a fixed idea according to their own weekly practice, whereas in early Christianity the celebration might just as well have been a ‘monthly or annual’ gathering and ‘still be an observance of that particular day’.¹⁶

If the origin of the ‘Sunday’ does not lie in the Easter experience, then where does the ‘Sunday’ and its combination with the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ come from? When did Christians first gather to ‘break bread’ on the first day of the week? ‘The justification of the Sunday feast with reference to Jesus’ Resurrection surfaces only in the second century with great reluctance’, and is mentioned in only three of our many sources (*IgnMagn.* 9:1; *Barn.* 15:9; Justin, *1Apol* 67:7), as we shall discuss below.

In the earliest texts which bear on the Christian Sunday there is absolutely no mention of Jesus’ Resurrection, and when the Resurrection does appear [in the three mentioned texts] one has the impression that this motivation may be a secondary addition.¹⁷

Finally, in Justin’s *First Apology* (67:7) the primary motivation for the observance of Sunday is to commemorate the first day of the creation of the world and only

¹⁴ H. Riesenfeld, ‘Sabbat’ (1958), 212; Orig., *C. Cels.* VIII 22; however, Origen here is only reflecting a cynical idea of the whole of life being a feast (see Diogenes according to Plutarch, *De tranq. an.* 20), also known from Philo, *De spec. leg.* II 42, 46; see M. Klinghardt, ‘Feiertag’ (1991), 206–7.

¹⁵ H. Riesenfeld, ‘Sabbath’ (1970), 124–5.

¹⁶ S. Bacchiocchi, *Sabbath* (1977), 75; see the earlier study by S.V. McCasland, ‘Origin’ (1930); similarly later C.W. Dugmore, ‘Easter’ (1962), 273.

¹⁷ W. Rordorf, *Sunday* (1968), 220, continues: ‘For instance, we read, in the first place, in Ignatius’ *Letter to the Magnesians* (9:1) that ... [the Lord’s day] was observed “on which *also*” (ἐν ᾧ καί) our life sprang up *through him* [sc. Jesus] *and his death* [referring our resurrection to Jesus’ death, not to Jesus’ Resurrection]. And again, one reads in the *Epistle of Barnabas* (ch. 15) that the Christians celebrate the eighth day of the week, “on which day *also* (ἐν ᾧ καί) Jesus rose from the dead”.

secondarily the Resurrection of Jesus. It is only at the end of a long process that the title ἀναστάσιμος ἡμέρα occurs for Sunday. For a long while previously it had been called ‘the first day of the week’, ‘the Lord’s day’, ‘the eighth day’ and ‘Sunday’.¹⁸

In Judaism, the first day of ‘Pentecost’ always fell on the first day of the week. However, Christian observance of this day is attested only from the second half of the second century,¹⁹ and it was not a day of joy or celebration in the Jewish calendar. Some scholars, therefore, link the Christian breaking of bread on the Lord’s day not with Pentecost, but with the Jewish Paschal meal, a stance defended, for example, by Gustav Bickell in 1872,²⁰ but called ‘very artificial’ by Anton Baumstark.²¹ Baumstark suggested instead ‘two other functions in Jewish liturgical life’ that shed light on the Christian gatherings, namely ‘the Synagogue services of the Sabbath morning’ and ‘the prayers which surrounded every Jewish meal’, ‘the meal of an almost cultic kind which the ancient world termed *cena pura*’.²² While readings of the Law and the Prophets in the synagogue²³ are attested for the Sabbath,²⁴ ‘religious rituals and practices for non-priestly Jews are not described in any of the surviving texts’.²⁵ If the synagogue of this time hardly provided religious liturgies, when did Christian communal worship, singing a hymn about Christ as God before daylight on an ‘appointed day’²⁶ as attested by Pliny the Younger in the second century, begin, and when did it become a commemoration of the Resurrection?²⁷ Is it coincidental that we learn of this connection precisely at a time when, in an argument against Marcion, we hear of a new name for this day, Sunday?²⁸

¹⁸ W. Rordorf, *Sunday* (1968), 220, summarizing H. Riesenfeld, ‘Sabbat’ (1958), 212.

¹⁹ J. v. Goudoever, *Calendars* (2^{rev}1961), 165.

²⁰ G. Bickell, *Messe* (1872; trans. 1891), 161–2 (with older lit.).

²¹ See also E. Lanne, ‘Liturgie’ (2001) (and other contributions in the volume of proceedings on this conference on Baumstark, who, although deeply affected by National Socialist ideology, was an early critic of an ideological reading of liturgical history); on the question of the relation of Easter to Pascha see the controversial literature in G. Visonà, ‘Ostern/Osterfest/Osterpredigt’ (1995), 518 (he himself sees Easter as the opening of Pentecost).

²² A. Baumstark, *Liturgy* (1958), 43.

²³ Not necessarily in a building, as *Acts* also knows of the typical name προσευχή: see *Acts* 16:13.16.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 13:14–15; see H.A. McKay, *Sabbath* (1994), 165–75.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 247.

²⁶ S. Bacchiocchi, *Sabbath* (1977), 98–9, has shown that *stato die* here probably does not refer to a fixed recurring self-same day.

²⁷ Pliny, *Ep.* X 96.

²⁸ So M. Wallraff, *Christus* (2001), 90.

Sabbath and Sunday

Before we turn to the first occurrence of the term 'Sunday', let us recapitulate what we know about the relation between the Jewish Sabbath, their first day of the week, and Christian community gatherings.²⁹

In the centuries between the Babylonian exile and the beginning of the Christian era the Sabbath observance as 'a weekly day of rest'³⁰ had become increasingly important within Judaism, and even a typical feature of Rabbinic theology. Prior to the Babylonian exile, as one can see from *2Kings* 4:23 for example, there were no detailed strictures for potential non-observances of the Sabbath. During exile, however, the Sabbath served as an identity marker for Jews, rather than circumcision shared with other Semites.³¹ As a result, the post-exile book of *Jubilee* shows a radicalized view. In its final chapter it gives a full list of Sabbath violations that carry the death penalty.³² The Dead Sea Scrolls deal with such strict Sabbath commandments, but are more moderate and explicitly exclude the death penalty.³³ In *1Maccabees* (2:32–41) pious Jews are prepared to die rather than to fight and defend themselves on a Sabbath. Josephus transmits a long list of edicts and letters proving that the Roman authorities secured and protected the Jewish customs, among which Sabbath observance was one of the best known.³⁴ Conversely, we know of some modest criticism of this custom by Roman writers. For Juvenal, the Sabbath rest proves Jewish laziness;³⁵ Persius (34–62 AD)³⁶ and Plutarch (45–120 AD?) mention the consumption³⁷ of wine on the Sabbath,³⁸ while others report fasting on that day,³⁹ although Josephus knows of Jews' resistance of fasting.⁴⁰ Because of the Sabbath, Jews were required neither to do military service,⁴¹ nor to appear in court.⁴² According to Philo, if the monthly issuing in

²⁹ See H.A. McKay, *Sabbath* (1994); S. Bacchiocchi, 'Typologies' (1986).

³⁰ See H.A. McKay, *Sabbath* (1994), 13.

³¹ See M. Klinghardt, 'Feiertag' (1991), 207–8.

³² See on this and further: R. Goldenberg, 'Sabbat II' (1998), 521; H.A. McKay, *Sabbath* (1994), 56–9.

³³ *CD X 14 – XII 7, CD XII 4* (exclusion of death penalty); see H.A. McKay, *Sabbath* (1994), 53–6.

³⁴ See Joseph., *Ant.* XIV 190–267, XVI 162–173; R. Goldenberg, 'Sabbat II' (1998), 522.

³⁵ See Juvenal, *Sat.* XIV 106; similarly Rutilius Namantianus I 391; H.A. McKay, *Sabbath* (1994), 119–24.

³⁶ Pers., *Sat.* V 184; H.A. McKay, *Sabbath* (1994), 103–7.

³⁷ Plutarch: Dionysiac consumption.

³⁸ See Plut., *Quaest. conv.* IV 6,2; H.A. McKay, *Sabbath* (1994), 115–17.

³⁹ R. Goldenberg, 'Sabbat II' (1998), 522.

⁴⁰ See Joseph., *Vita* 279; *bShab* 118–19; H.A. McKay, *Sabbath* (1994), 77–85.

⁴¹ See Joseph., *Ant.* XIV 226.

⁴² See *ibid.*, 163.

Rome fell on a Sabbath, the Roman authorities even kept and distributed grain to the Jewish populace on a Sunday.⁴³ Philo himself advocated keeping the day in the spirit and habit of Greek philosophers, with quiet contemplation and the study of virtues. ‘Contrary to the widespread Rabbinic opinion that sanctifying the Sabbath was a characteristic element of *Jewish* life, Philo assumes that *all* nations can take part in the blessings of the Sabbath.’⁴⁴

In Rabbinic literature two entire tracts of the *Mishnah* are devoted to the Sabbath, *Shabbat* and *Eruvin*.⁴⁵ Although we know relatively little detail about the Sabbath practice, we have evidence that ‘adult males of the community’ gathered in houses called *proseuche*, met to read and explain the Torah, but apparently not for ‘Sabbath worship’.⁴⁶ The *Talmud* contains one prayer, *Qiddush* (‘Sanctification’), said over a cup of wine at the beginning of the Sabbath and festive days, and another, *Havdalah* (‘Separation’), said at the end of the festival.⁴⁷ The practice of celebrating at home, and the content of the *Qiddush* as a remembrance of the creation of the world and the exodus from Egypt seem to date back at least to early Christian times.⁴⁸

The New Testament knows of two different Sabbath traditions.⁴⁹ In the Synoptics Sabbath rest was accepted in principle; for example, Jesus is portrayed as attending the synagogues – not necessarily buildings⁵⁰ – on the Sabbath ‘as was his custom’,⁵¹ and teaching there,⁵² making the Sabbath the ‘fitting symbol of His redemptive mission’.⁵³ However, the texts also report discussion of how far this observance was to be taken: ‘Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath, or evil, to save a life or destroy it?’⁵⁴ One answer was a spiritualized and asceticized reading of the Sabbath,⁵⁵ as in the *Gospel of Thomas*:

⁴³ See Philo Alex., *LegGai* 158.

⁴⁴ R. Goldenberg, ‘Sabbat II’ (1998), 522; see also H.A. McKay, *Sabbath* (1994), 65–9.

⁴⁵ See more on these R. Goldenberg, ‘Sabbat II’ (1998), 523–4.

⁴⁶ H.A. McKay, *Sabbath* (1994), 85, 131.

⁴⁷ See R. Goldenberg, ‘Sabbat II’ (1998), 524; *bPes* 99–107.

⁴⁸ See *Luke* 14:1; *Mark* 2:27.

⁴⁹ See S. Bacchiocchi, *Sabbath* (1977), 26–63; S.-O. Back, *Jesus* (1995), 194–7.

⁵⁰ See H.A. McKay, *Sabbath* (1994), 136: ‘For “synagogue” could mean a free-standing, purpose-built structure which had always been intended for use as a religious meeting-house of Jews. Or it could mean a room in a house set aside for this purpose on the Sabbath. Or it could mean a group of people gathered in a shady spot in the open air, or the gathering once constituted.’

⁵¹ *Luke* 4:16.

⁵² See *ibid.*, 4:16.31, 6:6, 13:10.

⁵³ So S. Bacchiocchi, *Sabbath* (1977), 62.

⁵⁴ *Mark* 3:4; see also *Mark* 2:23–3:6; *Luke* 6:1–11, 13:10–7.

⁵⁵ Backed by an Old Testament quote (*Matth.* 12:1–14, *Hos.* 6:6: ‘I want faithfulness and not sacrifice’; see also *Matth.* 24:20).

If you do not abstain from the world, you will not find the kingdom. If you do not make the Sabbath into a Sabbath, you will not see the Father.⁵⁶

In even bolder terms *Hebrews* claims that only Christians can properly observe the Sabbath and rest from works.⁵⁷

Christians and Jews reflected on how to observe the Sabbath. The Christian statement 'the Sabbath was made for people, not people for the Sabbath', known from *Mark 2:27*, is also attested in Rabbinic literature.⁵⁸ In both Christian and Jewish writings the Sabbath can be eschatologically oriented.⁵⁹

Paul, however, is a riddle. 'Neither sabbath nor "synagogues" are mentioned at all' in Paul's letters.⁶⁰ Was it an undisputed topic? Did Paul 'simply accept that Jews ... observed the sabbath, whereas' he and his addressees 'did not'?⁶¹ From *Galatians* we can deduce that Paul had a differentiated, even sophisticated view of any calendar observance,⁶² very similar to what can be found in Philo. Philo wrote:

Every day is called a feast according to the law with regard to the immaculate life of pious people, obedient to nature and its laws.⁶³

Paul shared the diversity of views on this topic.⁶⁴ In *Galatians* he had taught his non-observance gospel, as he sees his addressees 'observing days and months and seasons and years' (he is not speaking of weeks!) fearing that his 'work for [them] may have been in vain': 'Do you want to be enslaved to them all over again?'⁶⁵ Based on Christ's death and return to life, and the equation of fasting with death, and of eating with Christ's returning to life in *Romans 14*, Paul emphasizes that differences in ritual observances should not create rifts but ought to be followed only out of full conviction. Very different is the Paul portrayed by *Acts*, where he has become a pious Sabbath observer⁶⁶ like James.⁶⁷ Similarly, *1Clement 40:2* advocates a strict keeping of festival times, stating that the Lord

⁵⁶ *EvThom.* 27.

⁵⁷ *Hebr.* 3:7–4:11.

⁵⁸ See *MekhY Shabta* 1; *bYom* 85b.

⁵⁹ See, for example, *MekhY Ki tissa* (Shabta) 1 on *Ex.* 31:13; *mTam* 7:4; *bRHSh* 31a; *TFrag Ex.* 20:11; *BerR* 17:5, 44:17.

⁶⁰ H.A. McKay, *Sabbath* (1994), 142.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Gal.* 4:10–11.

⁶³ Philo, *De spec. leg.* II 42.

⁶⁴ *Rom.* 14:5–9.

⁶⁵ *Gal.* 4:9.

⁶⁶ *Acts* 17:2; see also 13:14, 16:13–15, 18:4.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 15:21.

commanded us to celebrate sacrifices and services, and that it should not be thoughtlessly and disorderly, but at fixed times and hours ... So then those who offer their oblations at the appointed seasons are acceptable and blessed, for they follow the laws of their master and do not sin.

John develops further eschatological and Christological elements already encountered in the synoptic tradition, fuelled by a rigour that places him close to Philo and Paul rather than to the synoptic Gospels. Without reference to Christ's Resurrection – all the more astonishing, as he expounds the Son's giving of life to those risen from death –, *John* indicates the parting of the ways between Pharisaic Sabbath observance and Christian 'breaking the Sabbath'.⁶⁸

In the Pauline tradition of *Colossians*, we notice the attempt to bridge the rejection of the observance with a spiritualized interpretation:

Therefore do not let anyone judge you with respect to food or drink, or in the matter of a feast, new moon, or Sabbath days – these are only the shadow of the things to come, but the body is Christ!⁶⁹

In view of these debates, it is difficult to believe that Jewish Christians of the first century would have easily given up a tradition like the Sabbath observance and shifted their gatherings from the seventh day to the next, the first day of the week. The inter-Christian clashes in the late second century on the breaking of the fast and the dating of Pascha tell of the zeal with which Jewish calendar traditions were still defended. The Pascha debate itself highlights how deeply Christianity was still part of the inner-Jewish and inner-Hebrew debate of different reckonings of the calendar. Jews and Samaritans had at least 'two rival countings', 'a priestly and a more popular counting': the priestly was followed by the Sadducees, the Dead Sea Scroll people and some Samaritans, and stressed the value of the first day of the week, whereas the Pharisees and Rabbis supported the popular counting, which emphasized the seventh day of the week, a counting 'whose influence was increasing in the beginning of our era'.⁷⁰ Christians initially followed this priestly calendar and, like the Samaritans, seem to have spiritualized and reduced the number of festivals.

This short survey on the Sabbath in Christianity reinforces the view that the new movement did not start with the creation of a distinct liturgical frame, and that it hardly moved outside the variety of the older Jewish ones. Christian communities continued to celebrate at least some traditional Jewish feasts, and developed these further; they do not appear to have started off by introducing new ones.

⁶⁸ See *John* 5:16–23.

⁶⁹ *Col.* 2:16–17.

⁷⁰ J. v. Goudoever, *Calendars* (2^{rev}1961), 29.

The Day on which 'Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed' (1Cor. 5:7)

When and why did Christians start meeting on the first day of the week?

Paul has been seen as providing the oldest evidence. When he writes, however, of the 'day of Christ' or 'the day of our Lord Jesus', he does not – as often assumed – relate this name to the first day of the week, but points to the special, future, eschatological day.⁷¹ And where he speaks of Christians coming together to break bread and drink of the cup to 'proclaim the Lord's death',⁷² he mentions that they are meeting 'at the same place' yet does not give any particular day. These meals do not remind him of 'the Lord's Supper'; they are gatherings at which 'when it is time to eat, everyone proceeds with his own supper. One is hungry and another becomes drunk.' If Paul knew of a particular day, different from the Sabbath, why did he not mention it? The only time he speaks about a recurring, weekly routine, he urges setting aside a gift:

On the first day of the week, each of you should set aside some income and save it to the extent that God has blessed you, so that a collection will not have to be made when I come.⁷³

Paul is writing here not of a collection within a community gathering, but of an individual ('each of you') setting aside 'some income', precisely what people in the Roman world would have been able to do on the first day of the week, which was the eighth day of the Roman week, the day of holding markets.⁷⁴ Paul does not mention a Christian meeting on the first day of the week or on any other particular day.

The only other occurrence of 'the Lord's day' in the entire New Testament is in *Revelation* (1:10),⁷⁵ a passage that mirrors Paul's eschatology. For *Rev.* it is the day of John's spiritual experience, when he was asked to write down his vision in a book.

There is one more New Testament witness for a meeting of Christians 'on the first day of the week';⁷⁶ it lasted from the evening of the just-ended Sabbath to the next morning.⁷⁷ *Acts* 20 reports the fascinating story of an unfortunate Eutychus

⁷¹ *Phil.* 1:6,10; *2Cor.* 1:14.

⁷² *1Cor.* 11:20–21,26. See S. Bacchiocchi, *Sabbath* (1977), 76: 'It is then not Christ's resurrection but rather His sacrifice and *parousia* which the Lord's Supper is explicitly designed to commemorate.'

⁷³ *1Cor.* 16:2. See S. Bacchiocchi, *Sabbath* (1977), 90–95.

⁷⁴ S. Bacchiocchi, *Sabbath* (1977), 92, rightly remarks that in Corinth the question is not about food, but money.

⁷⁵ See *ibid.*, 111–31.

⁷⁶ *Acts* 20:7.

⁷⁷ So also S. Bacchiocchi, *Sabbath* (1977), 105 (*ibid.*, earlier opinions that reckoned with Sunday evening as the start of this meeting).

who, because of Paul's over-lengthy homily during a meeting for the breaking of bread, almost fell to his death. It is a gem of a tale that plays on the name of Eutychus, meaning 'man of good fortune':

We sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said: Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.⁷⁸

This text of *Acts* is, indeed, the first and earliest report about a Christian eucharist. It took place in Troas, presumably two weeks after Pascha. The meeting started at the beginning of the Jewish day, in the evening and lasted until the next morning, before the sun rose.⁷⁹ The many lights in the upper chamber remind us of Jesus' breaking of bread in the upper chamber, an evening meal in a cheap, rented room⁸⁰ that led to his arrest the same night.

Whether this was a single occasion or a weekly or annual event is not clear. The mention of 'the first day of the week' at the end of a sequence of time indications ('sailing away ... after days of unleavened bread ... to Troas in five days ... abode seven days ... [a]nd upon the first day of the week') sounds like a further chronological statement rather than the quotation of an established name for a fixed meeting day. The account is reminiscent of an autobiographical description of Josephus in the big *proseuche* of Tiberias, where the community gathered for a political meeting on a Sabbath morning, interrupted the meeting in the afternoon, but gathered again the next morning, the first day of the week, so that when Josephus arrived, at 7am, he 'found the people already assembling in the *proseuche*, although they had no idea why they were being convened'.⁸¹ These people certainly did not gather for a regular 'prayer session' on Sunday morning, but because of an extraordinary debate that had remained unfinished the day before.

⁷⁸ *Acts* 20:6–12

⁷⁹ See R. Staats, 'Sonntagnachtgottesdienste' (1975).

⁸⁰ On upper-floor rooms as cheaper, often rental, rooms see C. Kunst, 'Wohnen' (2004), 9.

⁸¹ Joseph., *Vita* 272–303.

This night at Troas, Paul must have indulged in extremely long preaching that continued 'until midnight' and beyond. The 'breaking of bread' itself took place after midnight. After Eutychus fell from the window Paul revived him, as Jesus revived Lazarus, giving testimony to the power that resided in him. The story neither elaborates on the incident nor develops the underlying symbolism; it only emphasizes that Paul 'had broken bread', had 'eaten' and continued preaching 'even till break of day, so he departed. And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted'. If the Eutyches-revival had a relation to the content of Paul's preaching, it does not refer to Jesus' Resurrection but only to Paul's saving act.

It seems difficult to regard this account as a parallel to the stories of the women going to the sepulchre before sunrise to establish a tradition of the Eucharist as a morning meal to celebrate the death and Resurrection of Christ. The meeting does not start in the morning; it is an evening and all-night event. There is time and space for long preaching by a guest speaker and, after midnight, for the breaking of bread; people eat and continue to talk, and the guest preaches until break of day. The closest parallel seems to be the meal that according to the Gospels Jesus celebrated with his disciples.⁸² *Luke* connects the meal with the Lord addressing the disciples, and *John* expands it into a four-chapter-long homily where the breaking of bread is only mentioned in passing.

Our next evidence for a Christian gathering is to be found outside the New Testament, in the so-called *Didache*:

On the Lord's of the Lord gather, break bread and give thanks, having first confessed your sins so that your sacrifice may be pure. But do not let anyone who has a quarrel with a companion join with you until they have been reconciled, so that your sacrifice may not be polluted; for this was spoken by the Lord: 'In every place' *and time* 'offer me a pure sacrifice, for I am a great king, says the Lord, and my name is wonderful among the Gentiles' (see *Mal.* 1:11).⁸³

As clearly stated in the quote from *Malachi*, the core feature of the gathering is its ubiquity and, more importantly, the *Didache* adds its timeless nature. It is precisely the element of time that is missing in the scriptural parallel taken from *Malachi*:⁸⁴ 'In every place' *and time*, it says, 'offer me a pure sacrifice'. Time should matter as little as place. Whenever and wherever the meal took place, it had to be a pure sacrifice. This in itself explains why in the opening of the text, 'the Lord's of the Lord', must not be translated, as is often done, by 'the Lord's day'. The context

⁸² *Matth.* 26:17–30; *Mark* 14:12–26; *Luke* 22:7–38; *John* 13:1–17:26.

⁸³ *Did.* 14:1–3; trans. Ben H. Swett, at <http://bswett.com/1998-01Didache.html>, accessed 26 April 2011; text in *La Doctrine des Douze Apôtres (Didachè)*, eds W. Rordorf and A. Tuilier (1978), 63–80.

⁸⁴ See the italicized 'and time' in the quote.

forbids that ‘the Lord’s of the Lord’ indicates a particular day; the contrary is intended here: *Didache* claims that Christians can meet any day and time.⁸⁵

While there is no mention of preaching, the *Didache* adds the ‘confession of sins’, combined with sacrificial purity, although no link is made between the sacrifice of the people gathered and a sacrificial Christology as, for example, in 1 *Corinthians* 5, *Hebrews* or 1 *Clement*, where the breaking of bread is connected with the idea of Christ being the ‘Passover lamb’ that ‘has been sacrificed’. Instead, the prayers in the *Didache* focus on Christ who provides immortal life and knowledge. Paul made the further connection between the Paschal sacrifice and Christ’s Resurrection as the Pentecostal ‘firstfruit’ of the temple sacrifice,⁸⁶ which is lacking in the *Didache*, where neither Christ’s sacrifice nor his Resurrection are mentioned.

Sacrificial purity and the King topology indicate that the Christian gathering for the breaking of bread is seen as a spiritualized sacrifice. The *Malachi*-parallel to the Lord’s saying quoted by the *Didache* is an explicit reference to the delocalized and non-temporal Temple. The previous verse in *Malachi* stated: ‘I wish that one of you would close the Temple doors, so that you no longer would light useless fires on my altar.’ The ‘confession of sins’ in *Didache* recalls *Psalms* 24, a core text, as we shall see. *Psalms* 24 was sung by the priests in the Temple after the offering of the sacrifice. And, as its title in the Septuagint reveals, it was not sung on any day but was *the* Psalm of the first day of the week that insisted on purity of the gathering people:⁸⁷

Who is allowed to ascend the mountain of the Lord?

Who may go up to his holy dwelling place?

The one whose deeds are blameless

and whose motives are pure,

...

Such purity characterizes the people who seek his favour,

Jacob’s descendants, who pray to him.

Look up, you gates!

Rise up, you eternal doors!

Then the majestic King will enter!⁸⁸

⁸⁵ J.B. Thibaut, *Liturgie* (1964), 33–4, has given Greek grammatical reasons to exclude the translation as ‘the Lord’s day’ and suggests: ‘according to the sovereign doctrine of the Lord’; more arguments, including the content of *Malachi*, can be found in S. Bacchiocchi, *Sabbath* (1977), 114, n.73. A different use of the name Κυριακή appears in the *Gospel of Peter* (second half of the 2nd cent.) (35, 50), and Melito of Sardis, who wrote a treatise *On the Lord’s day*, now unfortunately lost, seems to have hinted at the first day of the week. For more later occurrences see S. Bacchiocchi, *Sabbath* (1977), 17.

⁸⁶ 1 *Cor.* 15:20–23.

⁸⁷ See the title of *Ps.* 24 in LXX; E. Schürer, ‘Woche’ (1905), 3.

⁸⁸ (*Ps.* 24,3–7). The impact of these verses on the idea of purity in relation to the *cena pura* and as part of the temple reading on the Sabbath have gone unnoticed, so far.

Christians who read or sung this Psalm must have made the connection to their own gatherings and may have linked it to the first day of the week.

As *Acts* has given a hint that Christians met on the first day of the week, we may deduce from the *Didache* why Christians could make the connection when they met on that day. People did not need to shift a tradition from the Sabbath to the next day: they regarded constraints of time as little binding as those of location. Certainly from the time of the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, perhaps even before, the breaking of bread as a pure meal may have become the spiritual replacement of both the calendar Sabbath and the physical temple-sacrifice on the Sunday.⁸⁹ The spiritualization of Jewish customs was one of the reasons why, up to the sixth century, the Sabbath observance (although often rejected) and Christian Sunday gatherings could go hand in hand in Christian communities.⁹⁰

The So-Called 'Sunday'

Justin has an important section on Christian worship in chapter 67 of his *First Apology*.

Written shortly after 151 AD,⁹¹ Justin's address and petition are presented to the emperor 'on behalf of those of all nations who are unjustly hated'.⁹² From the first chapters of the *Apology*, instead of rebuking the attacks against all Christians, Justin's strategy elucidates the diversity of Christianity, steers the attacks away from the Church, and blames dissenters who still call themselves 'Christians':

As among the Greeks those who teach such theories as please themselves are all called by the one name 'Philosopher', though their doctrines be diverse, so also among the Barbarians this name on which accusations are accumulated is the common property of those who are and those who seem wise. For all are called Christians.⁹³

Although all are called Christians, some only 'seem wise' and are 'clothed outwardly in sheep's clothing, but inwardly being ravening wolves'. They only give the appearance of being wise, but ought to 'be understood to be no Christians,

⁸⁹ See above.

⁹⁰ On the Jewish pure meal see W. Horbury, *Judaism* (2006). Aug., *In Ioh.* 120,5 (PL 35,1954): *propter parasceven quam cenam puram Iudaei latine usitatius apud nos vocant*; id., *Sermo* 221 (PL 38, 1090): *usque ad parasceven quam Iudaei etiam cenam puram vocant*; these and further evidence in E. Schürer, 'Woche' (1905), 7.

⁹¹ As the *Apology* is addressed to the emperor Antoninus Pius (147–61). In ch. 29 Justin refers to Felix as governor of Egypt (known from the Oxyrhynchus papyri as Lucius Munatius Felix, prefect from 13 September 151).

⁹² *1Apol.* 1.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 7.

even though they profess with the lip the precepts of Christ'.⁹⁴ These alone, Justin recommends to 'punish'.⁹⁵ Who are they? Having explained his own belief, Justin gives a list of 'certain men' with the sole contemporary being 'Marcion, a man of Pontus, who is even at this day alive, and teaching his disciples',⁹⁶ he and his followers are Justin's targets.

After a summary of Marcion's beliefs, Justin launches a long series of arguments in twenty-six chapters to defend his own Christian take against that of Marcion (chs. 27–53!), and to support the Jewish prophets who have foretold Christ's birth, life, suffering, Resurrection and ascension, his sitting at the right hand of the Father and his glory (with reference to *Ps. 24*; *1Apol.* 51), but also the destruction of Jerusalem, prophecies that were all rejected by Marcion; Justin even recounts the story of the translation of the Hebrew scripture into Greek⁹⁷ to highlight the value of what Marcion denigrated as Old Testament in contrast to his New Testament, names that Justin never mentions. After a short differentiation between prophecy and mythology or poetry, Justin summarizes his pro-prophecy arguments and comes back to the same dissenters as before, the most important and admired being Marcion:⁹⁸

This man (Marcion) many have believed, as if he alone knew the truth, and laugh at us, though they have no proof of what they say, but are carried away irrationally as lambs by a wolf, and become the prey of atheistical doctrines, and of devils.⁹⁹

Justin then embarks on a second attack directed specifically against those teachings that Justin has listed as Marcion's. This time, however, he begins with philosophers like Plato who, according to Justin, borrowed their wisdom from the prophets, then writes on the creation, the cross,¹⁰⁰ baptism,¹⁰¹ the Eucharist,¹⁰² and the Christian Sunday gatherings.¹⁰³ With each topic Justin wants to differentiate himself from Marcion,¹⁰⁴ but, what has been largely overlooked so far, Justin also accepts many of his opponent's views. As Marcion rejected the observance of

⁹⁴ Ibid., 16.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 7, 16.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 26.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 31.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 56–8.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 58.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 60.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 61.

¹⁰² Ibid., 65–6.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 67.

¹⁰⁴ Justin insists on baptism in 'the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe', directed against those who dare to 'utter the name of the ineffable God', obviously an element of Marcionite's baptism rite, *1Apol.* 61, refuted in the following chapters 62–3.

'days, months, seasons and years',¹⁰⁵ so did Justin rebuff 'the Sabbath and in short all feasts' of the Jews.¹⁰⁶ Others, like Marcion's co-teacher at Rome, Ptolemy, continued spiritualizing Jewish festivals, as Origen would do later.¹⁰⁷

It has gone unnoticed that Justin's description of the Sunday gatherings is still part of his anti-Marcionite line of argument:¹⁰⁸

The wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called 'Sunday', all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the *Memoirs of the Apostles* or the *Writings of the Prophets* are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But 'Sunday' is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before [= Friday] that of Chronos [= Saturn/Saturday]; and on the day after that of Chronos, on the day called 'Sunday', having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.¹⁰⁹

When we read this description as directed against Marcion, we understand why Justin wishes to stress that the community gathers in one place, on 'the day called "Sun-day"' (or: 'the so-called Sunday'), and why he mentions the reading of 'the Memoirs of the *Apostles* or the *Writings of the Prophets*'.

Justin stresses the single 'common assembly', because after the year 144 AD, and certainly by the time of his writing after 151, Marcion had established his own Christian community that certainly met separately from Justin's community.

¹⁰⁵ Gal. 4:10–11.

¹⁰⁶ See similar views in Tert., *Adv. Marc.* I 20; Justin, *Dial.* 18:2; V *Ezra* 1:31; *Diogn.* 4:5; Arist., *Apol.* 14; J. Goudoever, *Calendars* (2^{rev.}1961), 152.

¹⁰⁷ See Ptolemy, *Ep. to Flora* 8, 12, 13, 15; Orig., *C. Cels.* VIII 22.

¹⁰⁸ See M. Wallraff, *Christus* (2001), 89; G.N. Stanton, *Jesus* (2004), 75–6, 92–109.

¹⁰⁹ *1Apol.* 67.

Throughout his *Apology*, Justin is pointing out to the emperor that the Romans are persecuting the wrong Christians.

From the way Justin introduces the name of the day ('on the day called "Sunday"', and his long explanation at the end of the quote, the name 'Sunday' was not yet widely accepted among Christians at Rome.¹¹⁰ There is no similar distancing to be found when Justin writes about tenets that are commonly held by Christians.¹¹¹ The disinclination of Christians to take on board planetary names of weekdays can also be seen from the list of Christian inscriptions from within (and outside) Rome, where, with one exception, from the year 269 AD the many mentions of planetary weekday names occur exclusively from the time of Constantine (327 AD) onwards. In their reluctance, Christians shared only the general Roman experience in the second century, when these names were not yet familiar. As we know from Cassius Dio, who wrote around 200 AD, the planetary names were seen not as part of the old Greco-Roman traditions but as a recent novelty.¹¹²

Why, then, if the 'Sun-day' was a novelty for both pagans and Christians, did Justin introduce this name hesitantly for the Christian gathering, while in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, for example, he never uses it?¹¹³ The most common explanation is as follows: 'In his address to the pagan emperor [Justin] adopts a title applied to this day outside Christian circles'.¹¹⁴ As we have just seen, however, this title was far from being used 'outside Christian circles', nor was it used inside them. In addition, his explanation of the clearly new term refers neither to the Roman calendar nor to pagan astronomy. Instead, Justin adds a reference to the creation of the cosmos and the Resurrection of Christ; this combination itself reveals the anti-Marcionite character of his explanation and, hence, the origin of the term 'Sunday'. Against Marcion, to whom the Resurrection mattered for many reasons, not least because it was the definite revelation to Paul that Christ had nothing to do with the creator nor with his creation, Justin accepts Marcion's commemoration of Christ's Resurrection that, as we know, was expressed in light-terminology, and Marcion's 'sun'-termed name for the day of the gathering, the Sunday, but he balanced and complemented this novelty with the idea that the same light appeared on the first day in the creation story. If the Christian gathering for the breaking of bread on the first day of the week had previously been a spiritual replacement of the Jewish Temple sacrifice and a spiritualized commemoration of

¹¹⁰ See E. Schürer, 'Woche' (1905), 35.

¹¹¹ For example, he never says the 'so-called thanksgivings', or the 'so-called deacons'.

¹¹² Cassius Dio, *Hist. Rom.* 37,18,1–2; see C. Pietri, 'Temps' (1984), 68–9.

¹¹³ See H.A. McKay, *Sabbath* (1994), 191–2: 'In *Dialogue* 24 Justin expounds on the superiority of the Christians' *eighth day* compared with both the seventh day of the Jews and with Jewish circumcision; the blood of circumcision is obsolete, being replaced by the blood of salvation. He appears to be indulging in a word play at his supposed opponents' expense, since male Jewish babies are circumcised on the eighth day of their lives.'

¹¹⁴ F.A. Regan, *Dies* (1961), 4; so, too, M. Wallraff, *Christus* (2001), 89.

Christ's death as the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb, we understand why Marcion rejected the Jewish rendering of Christ's suffering and instead connected it with his Pauline sun-typology of the Resurrection, adopting the relevant planetary name that was neither Jewish nor Roman. Marcion, who had suggested that Christians should not celebrate the creator-given Sabbath but should instead fast on that day, a Sabbath-fasting that was, indeed, soon afterwards introduced into the Roman Church by Callistus and practised for hundreds of years,¹¹⁵ cannot have accepted the counting of the week in accordance with the Jewish calendar. The Sunday-name seems to be nothing but another 'revolutionary innovation' by Marcion.¹¹⁶ It could have suited the nature of his Christian gathering as a commemoration of Christ's sacrificial salvation in the light and glory of the Resurrection.

The Marcionite setting also sheds light on what have been seen as 'inconsistencies' in Justin's text. 'If Justin wanted to voice that Jesus Christ was crucified on a Friday and rose on a Sunday, he could have simply spoken of the day of Venus and the day of the Sun. And although he had mentioned the Sunday before, he thought it necessary to introduce it as the day after Saturday, the 'so-called Sun-day'; moreover, it must have been 'an astonishing discovery [for Justin's Christian readers] that their κυριακή was the day of the sun in the pagan planetary week'.¹¹⁷ What has been termed a 'nice' and 'accidental coincidence' of Justin referring to the idea that God created the cosmos out of darkness on the Sunday, seems to be an argument against Marcion. Justin's reluctant acceptance of his opponent's terminology explains the slightly awkward addition of the Marcionite Resurrection topic to Justin's argument from creation. Comparisons to Pascha-texts of the first two centuries prove that the link Justin makes between the first day of the week and the beginning of the creation was a traditional Pascha-argument, while the topic of the Resurrection of Christ seems to have been introduced only by Marcion.

Following on from what we have just said, it is clear why Justin points out what is being read in his Christian gatherings. While Marcion's Christian scripture was the New Testament of Paul's ten letters plus the one Gospel, Justin suggests an alternative set of readings. Avoiding Marcion's terminology, Justin speaks of the *Memoirs of the Apostles* (note both plurals!), and the *Writings of the Prophets*.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ R. Bauckham, 'Lord's day' (1982), 267 with n103; Tert., *Adv. Marc.* IV 12,7; Hippol., *In Daniele com.* IV 20,3 (GCS 234); evidently the Sabbath fasting was still practised until around 1000 AD: see M. Righetti, *L'Anno* (1969), II 39.

¹¹⁶ H. Koester, 'Kerygma-Gospel' (1989), 381.

¹¹⁷ M. Wallraff, *Christus* (2001), 90.

¹¹⁸ In other instances Justin equates 'the memoirs' with 'the so-called gospels' (*Dial.* 10:2, 100:1) and keeps the same distance towards the title 'Gospel'. Just a chapter before our passage, Justin had cautiously accepted the 'concept of a written gospel', according to Stanton, the first example of the plural εὐαγγέλια to refer to 'gospel books' in Christian literature: G.N. Stanton, *Jesus* (2004), 53–4; the only potential earlier candidates using the singular, seem to be post-Marcion: *2Clem.* 8:5 ('The Lord says in the *Gospel*'), and

Justin wrote his *First Apology* in order to protect his community from accusations and persecution. His strategy was to explain that the name ‘Christian’ *per se* does not reveal whether somebody is a reliable or untruthful philosopher and citizen. To him, it was an umbrella term for two separate communities: his own, the true Christian, and that of the dissenters, the Marcionites. In order to show that difference, Justin outlines Marcion’s theology and praxis in contrast to his own. The description of the Sunday gathering is part of this strategy. As in many other counter-arguments to Marcion, Justin accommodates plenty of Marcion’s ideas and terminologies. But he is adamant in his position against the dissociation of Christianity and Judaism, the superior God and the creator of the universe, the Risen Christ and the Jesus born from the Virgin.

It seems that it was only after Marcion that the celebration of the Lord’s day slowly moved from being a spiritualized replacement of the Temple or a commemoration of the Lord’s sacrificial death to becoming the celebration of his Resurrection. With Marcion the Lord’s day began to be read in the light of the Easter stories found in the Gospel. But despite influential theologians who began to adopt the Resurrection-typology of the Lord’s day,¹¹⁹ it was not until the time of Constantine and Apollinarius of Laodicea in the fourth century that the Resurrection became fully connected with Sunday and Easter. It seems that for Christians the combination of the Lord’s day with the Resurrection was more easily digestible than that of the Resurrection with Easter. Why this was the case we can only speculate, but it could be that the lack of an older Jewish tradition for the Sunday gatherings allowed for the content shift, whereas the Jewish-Christian tradition of Pascha had the strong Exodus tradition that linked Easter to Christ’s suffering and death, which hindered and often overshadowed the commemoration of the Resurrection. The quicker acceptance of Marcion’s combination of Resurrection and Sunday did not, however, make the new name more easily acceptable to Christians. Christian writers long sensed the heretical taste, and rejected the title too because of its popular pagan background.

The only other Christian who ‘prior to the conversion of Constantine’ made use of the title ‘Sunday’, was Tertullian. In two of his works he mentions the ‘Sunday’ ‘in a somewhat pejorative manner and in no way implies that this title had found acceptance in the Christian Church’.¹²⁰ Tertullian did not immediately reject the new name as of pagan origin, but he used it with ‘a certain hesitation’, ‘even perhaps a sense of opposition’.¹²¹ Even in the fourth century, Augustine infers that the ‘Sunday’ was a title given to the Lord’s day by his opponent, the Manichean Faustus – and Manicheans were readily lumped together with Marcionites: ‘You are accustomed to worship the sun on *what you call Sunday*. And what you call

IgnPhilad. 9:2; *IgnSm.* 5:1, 7:2, the third candidate, *The Didache*, cannot be dated more precisely than to the first or second century (*Did.* 8:2, 11:3, 15:3–5).

¹¹⁹ Melito, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, Hippolytus – to mention just a few.

¹²⁰ F.A. Regan, *Dies* (1961), 4; Tert., *Apol.* 16,11; id., *Ad nat.* I 13,3.

¹²¹ F.A. Regan, *Dies* (1961), 4.

Sunday we call the Lord's Day, and on this day we do not worship that sun but the Resurrection of the Lord'.¹²²

Barnabas and Ignatius on Celebrating Christ's Resurrection

The above-quoted *Psalm 24* is also used in a peculiar second century text, the so-called *Epistle of Barnabas*. Like Justin in his *Apology*, the author sees a relation between the Sabbath and the creation of *Genesis*:¹²³

In six days, which means, in six thousand years, all things will be brought to an end. And the words 'He rested on the seventh day', signifies: After his Son has come, and has put an end to the time of the Wicked One, judged the unbeliever, and changed the sun, the moon and the stars, only then will he rest on the seventh day.¹²⁴

To underline his eschatological reading of *Genesis*, the author quotes *Ps. 24*: before the Son returns, nobody's 'deeds are blameless and motives are pure' (*Ps. 24:4*). Accordingly, nobody can keep the Sabbath and 'sanctify the day that the Lord has sanctified'. One has to wait until 'all things have been made new by the Lord', as only then 'we will be able to sanctify that day, having been sanctified ourselves first'.¹²⁵ For now, the author adds that 'the sabbaths are unacceptable' to God, and we must wait for the one day that God will create after he has 'brought everything to an end', when he will make a new 'beginning of the eighth day, which is the beginning of another world'.¹²⁶ So far, the text seems logical and coherent. But the author adds an important verse that is not easily reconcilable with the previous argument. Whereas he clearly excludes any sanctification prior to the future eschaton, he adds a rather strange conclusion that points no longer to hope and future but to the present: 'Therefore, we keep the eighth day as a day of joy, on which also Jesus rose from the dead, and after he had appeared ascended unto heaven.'

Unfortunately, the dating of *Barnabas* is uncertain.¹²⁷ The awkward way in which the texts hints at the Resurrection ('a day of joy on which *also* Jesus rose from the dead ...') has led scholars to suggest that *Barnabas* is integrating or borrowing from somewhere else. The multiple mention of newness in this passage

¹²² Augustine, *Reply to Faustus* 18,5 (CSEL 25, 493 Zycha): *vos in die, quem dicunt Solis, solem colitis. Sicut autem nos eundem diem dominicum dicimus, in eoque non istum solem, sed resurrectionem domini veneramus.*

¹²³ *Barn.* 15:4.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 15:4–5. Own trans.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 15:7.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 15:8.

¹²⁷ See above.

alerts us to the possibility that he, like Justin, is reacting to Marcion. This would explain why he shares so many features with Marcion's antithetical position to Judaism, the rejection of Sabbath observance, for example, while at the same time – though different from Marcion and Justin – he tries to integrate Jewish traditions, the Prophets, the counting of the day to supersede these: Christians do not celebrate the first day, but the eighth. According to *Barnabas*,¹²⁸ the keeping of the eighth day as a day of joy is distinct from any Sabbath observance. As in the *Didache*, the background is a temple-theology combined with Marcion's idea of celebrating Christ's Resurrection not in the future, but now. Only in this instance does the author speak of Christ's Resurrection, while in the rest of his letter, salvation is entirely focused on endurance, on Christ's suffering and death.

The *Letters of Ignatius* are even more difficult to interpret than *Barnabas*, as their reading and dating are still under way.¹²⁹ Without adding another note to this debate, let me simply conclude with a few observations.

As shown before, Ignatius has much in common with Marcion, including knowledge of Paul, whom he mentions twice.¹³⁰ Consequently, Christ's Resurrection figures in almost all of his letters. Very similar to Marcion, in Ignatius Christ has replaced 'all that is ancient' – Judaism, law, observances, the Torah. These he calls 'old fables, which are unprofitable' and adds, 'for if we still live according to the Jewish law, we acknowledge that we have not received grace'.¹³¹ Moreover, Ignatius also provides a reflex of the Marcionites' sun-Christology. Where he explains the 'new hope' as 'no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord's [life? day?]',¹³² he adds, literally identical with *Barnabas*, that it is a day 'on which *also* our life rose', using ἀνατέλλω, the term for the sunrise, not the usual ἀνίστημι for the Resurrection. What made 'our Life rise' like the sun? Was it the Risen Christ? Ignatius, again, accords with Marcion:¹³³ it was not the Risen that made us rise, but Jesus' death.

Pascha – 'Commemorate my Death!'¹³⁴

One of the most recent accounts of the history of Easter concludes: 'The celebration of Pascha (as Easter was known) began life as the Christian version of the Passover,

¹²⁸ Whether or not on the basis of Paul: see J. Carleton Paget, 'Paul' (1996), 381.

¹²⁹ See above; W. Schmithals, 'Ignatius' (2009); O. Zwierlein, *Petrus* (2010).

¹³⁰ *IgnEph.* 12:2; *IgnRom.* 4:3. See now W. Schmithals, 'Ignatius' (2009).

¹³¹ *IgnMagn.* 9.

¹³² Although the first point of reference is the day of the Sabbath, the context allows for both interpretations: see S. Bacchiocchi, *Esame* (1974), 99–120.

¹³³ And we could add Noëtus of Smyrna.

¹³⁴ See a summary of largely conflicting positions on Easter in the first two centuries AD in S. Hall, 'Origins' (1984), with among others R. Cantalamessa advocating a continuous annual feast 'from the time of the first Exodus through the Church today' and

observed on the same day as its Jewish antecedent, and focused upon Christ as the Paschal lamb who had been sacrificed for the sins of the world, although this central theme was set within the context of the whole of the Christ-event, from his birth to his expected second coming. By the fourth century, however, the festival had changed its form and meaning. It was now observed on the Sunday following what would have been the Jewish date and constituted the final part of a three-day celebration (a triduum, as western Christians came to call it) of Friday–Saturday–Sunday, commemorating the passage of Christ from death to resurrection. Its theme was therefore no longer “Christ, the Passover lamb, sacrificed for us” (cf. *1 Cor.* 5:7) but “Alleluia! Christ is risen!”¹³⁵

‘The original focus of the celebration was not on the resurrection of Christ but rather on “Christ, the Passover lamb, sacrificed for us”’;¹³⁶ ‘any reference to the resurrection is absent’ from the early accounts.¹³⁷ Or, as another scholar summarized, ‘[t]he cross is the centre of Easter in the early Church, not from desperation of Good Friday, but from the dynamic perspective of salvation.’¹³⁸

The sacrificial tradition is already present in Paul¹³⁹ and *John*, where Jesus is identified as the ‘Lamb of God’,¹⁴⁰ although it is said that he had ‘died on the cross on the day of the preparation of the Passover (i.e., 14 Nisan) at the hour when the lambs for the feast were slaughtered’,¹⁴¹ not on the day of Pascha itself. Then, however, ‘the soldiers are said to have refrained from breaking the legs of the dead Jesus and so fulfilled the scripture requiring that no bone of the Passover lamb be broken’.¹⁴²

Jesus as the Paschal lamb was central to the traditional Quartodeciman celebration. One example is Melito of Sardis and his Pascha homily. Its editor and translator Stuart G. Hall sees the incorporation of the Resurrection topic as a result of Melito’s correcting Marcion, and the change ‘from the Quartodeciman to Sunday Easter practice’ as ‘an anti-Marcionite and anti-gnostic institution, securing as it did not only continuity with the Old Testament, but the commemoration of creation, and an emphasis upon the bodily suffering and resurrection of Jesus’.¹⁴³ In the opening section to his second part of *On Pascha* and after a long interpretation of *Exodus* as the Jewish typology for Christ, he introduces the Christian answer

W. Huber suggesting that ‘much of the Church, and especially the Church of Rome, had no Easter feast at all until the middle of the second century’ (ibid., 555).

¹³⁵ P.F. Bradshaw, ‘Easter’ (1999), 1; see also G. Visonà, ‘Pasqua’ (1988), 259.

¹³⁶ P.F. Bradshaw, ‘Origins’ (1999), 82.

¹³⁷ S. Bacchiocchi, *Sabbath* (1977), 81.

¹³⁸ G. Visonà, ‘Ostern/Osterfest/Osterpredigt’ (1995), 520 (my own trans.); similar

W. Kinzig, ‘Ostern’ (2003) 728.

¹³⁹ *1 Cor.* 5:7.

¹⁴⁰ *John* 1:36.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 19:14ff.

¹⁴² Ibid., 19:32–6; see *Ex.* 12:46; *Num.* 9:12.

¹⁴³ S. Hall, ‘Origins’ (1984), 567.

to the parallel question of the Jewish *Passover Haggadah*: ‘What do you mean by this service?’¹⁴⁴ Melito answers: ‘You have heard the account of the model and what corresponds to it; listen also to the constitution of the mystery. What is the Pascha?’¹⁴⁵ Pascha

gets its name from its characteristic: from *suffer* [*pathein*] comes *suffering* [*paschein*]. Learn therefore who is the suffering one, and who shares the suffering of the suffering one, and why the Lord is present on the earth to clothe himself with the suffering one and carry him off to the heights of heaven.¹⁴⁶

In this excerpt with its ‘false etymology of the Aramaic *pascha* ... , widespread in early Christianity’,¹⁴⁷ it is not the Resurrection but the incarnation, the Lord’s clothing with the suffering man or flesh, that rescues the latter and carries him off ‘to the heights of heaven’. While older scholarship saw the Roman practice with its centring on Sunday, not on the Jewish 14 Nisan, as based on the Resurrection, we are dealing ‘precisely’ with ‘the same interpretation and theology of the feast ... Thus, for example, Irenaeus in Gaul in the late second century says: “The passages in which Moses reveals the Son of God are innumerable. He was aware even of the day of his passion: he foretold it figuratively by calling it Pascha. And on the very day which Moses had foretold so long before, the Lord suffered in fulfilment of the Pascha”’.¹⁴⁸

Only ‘at the end of the second century in Alexandria, ... [do] we encounter a somewhat different understanding of the feast, one that focused upon “passage” rather than “passion” – the passage from death to life’.¹⁴⁹

The earliest available evidence on Pascha, dating only from the middle of the second century – although we can reasonably assume that the celebration of the feast predates its first mention – shows that Christians shared with Jews the Pascha-focus on the salvific sacrifice. As Jews varied to some extent in their interpretation of Pascha, so too did the Christians. Some of these ‘saw their observance as fulfilling Christ’s command to repeat the Passover which he ate on the eve of his passion’, while others, such as Apollinaris of Hierapolis, relied on traditions found in Paul or in *John*, ‘the coincidence of Christ’s death with that of

¹⁴⁴ Ex. 12:26.

¹⁴⁵ Melito, *Peri Pascha* 46.

¹⁴⁶ Melito, *On Pascha* 46.

¹⁴⁷ S.G. Hall, Introduction to Melito of Sardis, *On Pascha* (1979), 23 n13; see also P.F. Bradshaw, ‘Origins’ (1999), 83. Philo, *Quis rer. div. haer.* 192 had already insinuated this etymology.

¹⁴⁸ P.F. Bradshaw, ‘Origins’ (1999), 83; Iren., *Adv. haer.* IV 10,1.

¹⁴⁹ P.F. Bradshaw, ‘Origins’ (1999), 83, referring to Clem. Alex., *Strom.* II 11,51.2 and Origen, *On Pascha* 1.

the paschal lambs', while it seems that 'many early Christians did not observe the Pascha at all'.¹⁵⁰

The variety in understanding Pascha was underpinned by the varying calendar traditions, as mentioned before. According to the priestly tradition of the Jubilees, the Dead Sea Scrolls,¹⁵¹ and among the Samaritans,¹⁵² Pascha was celebrated on a Sunday.¹⁵³ We can reckon with an even broader variety, but at the beginning of the first century of our era there were certainly at least the two earlier mentioned liturgical calendars, the Rabbinic lunar and the archaic, priestly and liturgical solar type.¹⁵⁴ The latter, not the former, was eventually followed by the Christians.

The Jewish meaning and importance of Pascha can be seen from *Lev.* 23:1–8. The Pascha festival is the first of all festivals and comes directly after the weekly Sabbath within the Lord's 'appointed times':

These are the Lord's appointed times, holy assemblies, which you must proclaim at their appointed time. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, is a Passover offering to the Lord. Then on the fifteenth day of the same month will be the festival of unleavened bread to the Lord; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. On the first day there will be a holy assembly for you; you must not do any regular work. You must present a gift to the Lord for seven days, and the seventh day is a holy assembly; you must not do any regular work.¹⁵⁵

The content of the festival is described in *Ex.* 12 and *Deut.* 16. It is a feast of joy to commemorate the Lord's sparing the Israelites while he was punishing and destroying the Egyptians, 'striking down every first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast' and the 'gods of Egypt'. When Moses had summoned all the elders of Israel he said to them:

Go and select for yourselves a lamb or young goat for your families, and kill the Passover animals. Take a branch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and apply to the top of the doorframe and the two side posts some of the blood that is in the basin. Not one of you is to go out the door of his house until morning. For the Lord will pass through to strike Egypt, and when he sees the blood on the top of the doorframe and the two side posts, then the Lord will pass over the door, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you. You must observe this event as an ordinance for you and for your children forever. When you enter the land that the Lord will give to you, just as he said, you must observe this ceremony. When your children ask you, 'What does this

¹⁵⁰ S.G. Hall, Introduction to Melito of Sardis, *On Pascha* (1979), xxvi.

¹⁵¹ The Sunday before 14 Nisan.

¹⁵² The Sunday after 14 Nisan.

¹⁵³ See A. Jaubert, *Date* (1957), 55; ead., 'Jésus' (1960/61).

¹⁵⁴ A. Jaubert, *Date* (1957), 59.

¹⁵⁵ *Lev.* 23:4–8.

ceremony mean to you?', then you will say, 'It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, when he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he struck Egypt and delivered our households'.¹⁵⁶

Deuteronomy stresses from the beginning that it was 'at night' that the Lord freed Israel from Egypt.¹⁵⁷ The Lord's passing over (= pesach) has been translated by the Septuagint with παρελεύσεται ('he passed over') in *Ex.* 12:23, and ἐσκέπασεν ('he sheltered') in *Ex.* 12:27, reflecting the salvific prophecy in *Isaiah* 31:5: 'He will protect and deliver Jerusalem; as he passes over he will rescue it'.

Both texts give important hints that help us to understand Jewish and early Christian forms of celebrating the feast. From *Exodus* we learn that it is primarily the feast of one household, and that only 'if any household is too small for eating a lamb, the man and his next-door neighbour are to take a lamb according to the number of people'.¹⁵⁸ It was not a symbolic meal, but people would eat a commemoration meal until they no longer felt hungry or the lamb had entirely gone – if not, what remained had to be burned before the sun rose. The eating of the meal lasted the entire night, as confirmed by the *Book of Jubilees*,¹⁵⁹ Josephus and Philo:

They should eat the pascha meal by night on the evening of the fifteenth from the time of the setting of the sun. ... Let the children of Israel come and observe the passover on the day of its fixed time, on the fourteenth day of the first month, between the evenings, from the third part of the day to the third part of the night, for two portions of the day are given to the light, and a third part to the evening. ... and let them eat it at the time of the evening, until the third part of the night, and whatever is left over of all its flesh from the third part of the night and onwards, let them burn it with fire.¹⁶⁰

Josephus repeats that nothing of the sacrifice was allowed to remain until morning, and mentions the foundation story of the feast.

To this day we keep this sacrifice in the same customary manner, calling the feast *Pascha*, which signifies 'passing over', because on that day God passed over our people when he smote the Egyptians with plague.¹⁶¹

Important, too, are Philo's accounts, especially the one in his tract *On Special Laws*. He not only mentions that the banquet included hymns and prayers, but he

¹⁵⁶ *Ex.* 12:21–7.

¹⁵⁷ *Deut.* 16:1.

¹⁵⁸ *Ex.* 12:4.

¹⁵⁹ *Book of Jubilees* 49:1,10,12.

¹⁶⁰ See Joseph., *Ant.* III 10,5.

¹⁶¹ Joseph., *Ant.* II 14,6 (no. 4 Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard).

is already criticizing people who no longer took the commemoration historically, spiritualizing the feast and interpreting it in an allegorized, ethical sense as purification of the soul.¹⁶² Despite Philo's criticism in this tract of an allegorical reading of Pascha, on other occasions he himself proposes such allegorical interpretations: 'The Passover is when the soul is anxious to unlearn its subjection to the irrational passions, and willingly submits itself to a reasonable mastery over them.'¹⁶³ The lamb is a symbol for this progress of the soul from irrational passions to a mastering of them: 'A sheep is the emblem of improvement, as its very name shows, as *probation* [πρόβατον], derived from *probainon* [προβαίνων], meaning "to advance forward".'¹⁶⁴

Throughout his work Philo maintains that Pascha, especially in the historical commemoration of a calendar feast, is a celebration of joy:

Without waiting for a priest ... each house is at that time invested with the character and dignity of a temple, the victim being sacrificed so as to make a suitable feast for the man who has provided it and for those who are collected to share in the feast, being all duly purified with holy ablutions. And those who are to share in the feast come together not as they do to other entertainments, to gratify their bellies with wine and meat, but to fulfil their hereditary custom with prayer and songs of praise.¹⁶⁵

The early dissent within Christianity between a historical and a spiritualized reading is therefore nothing non-Jewish, but it certainly builds on the diversity of Jewish understandings of Pascha, which can occur, as we have seen, even within one and the same author. Salvation and sacrificing a victim went hand in hand, and both could be taken either historically or in an allegorical-spiritual way.

Before the destruction of the Temple, those families or fraternities in Jerusalem that intended to consume an entire lamb (or wild goat) were required to offer their animal for sacrifice at the Temple, the so-called *Korban Pesach*, the 'Pesach sacrifice'. As this was a sacred offering, ritually impure people were not allowed to make the offering or to share in the consumption of the *Korban Pesach*; this

¹⁶² Philo, *De spec. leg.* II 145–9.

¹⁶³ Philo, *Qu. rer. div. haer.* 192–3.

¹⁶⁴ Philo, *Abel* 112; similar is id., *Alleg.* III 165.

¹⁶⁵ Philo, *De spec. leg.* II 145–9; on the singing see also *Pesachim* 95b.

prohibition would apply, for example, to any uncircumcised man,¹⁶⁶ even if he was a slave of the household,¹⁶⁷ to lepers, or to those made unclean by the dead.¹⁶⁸

As far as we can tell from early Christian evidence, Paul certainly sides with Philo's allegorical reading of Pascha, and embraces and shares the Philonic understanding of the offering and celebrating community as the spiritualized Temple. Within such a spiritualized tradition it was not a big step for Paul to identify the sacrificial lamb with Jesus, based on Paul's own tradition of the Lord's Supper where the Lord himself suggested this identification.¹⁶⁹

It appears a much bigger step, however, when we recognize that not only does Paul identify the Paschal lamb with Christ, but that this typology led to an equation of Christ with Yahweh: 'This day will become a memorial for you, and you will celebrate it as a festival to the Lord – you will celebrate it perpetually as a lasting ordinance'.¹⁷⁰

Paul had argued against boasting and warned how a little misbehaviour can spread through the whole community; he deployed the example of the yeast, which led him to think of the feast of the unleavened bread, Pascha, and to then overwrite his yeast-example by introducing Christ as the sacrificed Paschal lamb:

Don't you know that a little yeast affects the whole batch of dough? Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch of dough – you are, in fact, without yeast. For Christ, the Passover lamb, has been sacrificed for us. So then, let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of vice and evil, but with the bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.¹⁷¹

The synoptic Gospels, too, interpret Jesus' Last Supper as a Pascha meal, and *Mark* especially highlights the sacrifice of the lamb.¹⁷² *Matthew* adds its eschatological character,¹⁷³ while *Luke* introduces 'the chief priests and the experts in the law who were trying to find some way to execute Jesus', and continues with the betrayal

¹⁶⁶ *Ex.* 12:48: 'When a foreigner lives with you and wants to observe the Passover to the Lord, all his males must be circumcised, and then he may approach and observe it, and he will be like one who is born in the land – but no uncircumcised person may eat of it'. The companies or fraternities are mentioned again in *Pesahim*: 'The Passover offering was not slaughtered except in three divisions each consisting of thirty men' or a total of fifty men, not all of whom could be proselytes (*Pesahim* 64b; 91b).

¹⁶⁷ *Ex.* 12:44.

¹⁶⁸ *Pesahim* 66b.

¹⁶⁹ *1Cor.* 11:23–7.

¹⁷⁰ *Ex.* 12:14.

¹⁷¹ *1Cor.* 5:6–8.

¹⁷² *Mark* 14:12–5.

¹⁷³ *Math.* 26:18. The eschatological flavour of Pascha soon gets lost; see G. Rouwhorst, 'The Quartodeciman Passover and the Jewish Pesach' (1996).

of Judas.¹⁷⁴ *Luke*, in knowledge of Paul, emphasizes a personalized interpretation of Pascha and mentions the Lord's saying also quoted in Paul: 'Do this in remembrance of me'.¹⁷⁵ As in Paul, through this saying *Luke* gives the whole story a sharpened Monarchian edge.

John takes the Pauline and synoptic tradition a step further by placing the death of Christ on the cross 'in the afternoon of the fourteenth of Nisan',¹⁷⁶ not only making Christ the symbolic Paschal lamb as in Paul and the synoptics, but also identifying him with the Paschal offering. In the beginning of *John*, we read: 'John saw Jesus coming toward him and said: "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"'¹⁷⁷ Shortly afterwards, the reason for John's disciples leaving him and joining Jesus is that Jesus is the Lamb of God.¹⁷⁸ Christ as the salvific victim reappears in *Hebrews* as shown above, and gains a central place as sacrificial 'lamb' in *Revelation*, where he is the 'victim prescribed by the Law', the 'Lamb who was killed', but comes as the global eschatological Saviour, 'Lord of lords and King of kings', the 'ruling power forever and ever',¹⁷⁹ when 'God will wipe away every tear from their eyes'.¹⁸⁰

As in Paul and *Luke*, so also in *Revelation* the distinction between the sacrificial lamb and God himself is blurred,¹⁸¹ although here – different from Philo or Paul – it is not the community but God and the lamb that are themselves the spiritual Temple.¹⁸²

Paul's sacrificial and spiritual interpretation of Pascha remained the prominent one in Pauline communities both in Rome and in Asia Minor. Ptolemy, the early second-century teacher in Rome, knows of it,¹⁸³ as does the author of the pseudonymous *Homily on the Holy Pascha*. The homilist sees Pascha as 'the spiritual feast'¹⁸⁴ of liberation from and through suffering.¹⁸⁵ Pascha is interpreted

¹⁷⁴ *Luke* 22:2–3.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 22:19; *1Cor.* 11:24–5.

¹⁷⁶ See *John* 18:28.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 1:29.

¹⁷⁸ See *ibid.*, 1:35–7.

¹⁷⁹ *Rev.* 5:6–13; see also 6:1,5,7,12,16.

¹⁸⁰ See *Is.* 25:8; *Rev.* 7:9–10.14.17; see 8:1, 12:11, 13:8,11, 14:1,4,10, 15:3, 19:7,9, 21:9,14, 22:1,3.

¹⁸¹ *Rev.* 17:14.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 21:22–3.

¹⁸³ See Ptolemy, *Ep. to Flora* 5, 13–15 (SC 24bis, 62–6 Quispel; no. 17 Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard): 'Paul the Apostle makes it clear that the Passover and the unleavened bread are images when he says, "Christ has been sacrificed as our paschal lamb" in order "that you may be unleavened bread, having no share in the leaven" – by leaven he means wickedness – "but that you may be a new dough" (*1Cor.* 5:7).'

¹⁸⁴ Anon., *Homily on the Holy Pascha* 62,1 (SC 27, 181 Nautin; no. 27d Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard).

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

in the light of the meal when Jesus gives himself away in the Eucharist and on the cross. The salvific element is knowledge, ‘spiritual, indestructible knowledge’. Likewise, around 166 AD Apollinaris of Hierapolis connects Pascha with Greek *paschein* (πάσχειν – ‘suffering’) or *pathos* (πάθος – ‘suffering’).¹⁸⁶ His *On Passover* is all the more of interest, as the author is conversant with the synoptic gospels (at least with *Matthew*), with *John* and with *Acts*, but still relates Pascha not to the Resurrection but solely to Christ’s suffering and being ‘buried on the day of the Pascha with the stone placed over the tomb’. Christ’s great sacrifice took place

on the fourteenth of Nisan on which date, therefore, Easter ought to be celebrated. His opponents, however, commemorated the Last Supper on that day according to the chronology of the synoptic gospels and dated Jesus’ execution to the fifteenth of Nisan. Neither of the two parties in this controversy, however, seems to have celebrated the day of Christ’s Resurrection. In this context further evidence from later centuries could be adduced showing how this early understanding of Easter as commemoration of the death of Christ persevered in East and West well into the fifth and even sixth centuries.¹⁸⁷

According to Eusebius, even the emperor Constantine opens his oration on Pascha, the homily *To the Assembly of the Saints*, by relating the resurrection and renovation of men’s bodies to the ‘day of the Passion’:

That light which far outshines the day and sun, first pledge of resurrection and renovation of bodies long since dissolved, the divine token of promise, the path which leads to everlasting life – in a word, *the day of the Passion* – is arrived, best beloved doctors.¹⁸⁸

Irenaeus of Lyon knows the four canonical Gospels, also *Acts* and Paul’s letters, but when it comes to describing Pascha he repeats what we know from Apollinaris, that ‘the name of the mystery is “Pathos” [‘suffering’], source of freedom’.¹⁸⁹

The equation of Pascha with suffering was not only an Asian tradition, as can be seen from Clement in Alexandria, who wrote a reply to Melito’s work giving it the same title, *On Pascha*, in which he adheres to Irenaeus’ etymological interpretation.¹⁹⁰ Although Clement was certainly influenced by his knowledge

¹⁸⁶ Apol. Hier., *On Pascha* (no. 26 Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard).

¹⁸⁷ W. Kinzig and M. Vinzent, ‘Creed’ (1999), 548–9.

¹⁸⁸ Euseb. Caes., *Laus Const.* 1.

¹⁸⁹ Iren., *Dem.* 25 (no. 29 Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard); id., *Adv. haer.* IV 10,1. The so-called Archaeus, *Frg.* (no. 31 Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard) is a corrupted version of an Irenaeus text preserved in several manuscripts where it is shown that the deviating interpretation of ‘Pascha’ here only occurs in the non-Irenaeian introduction: see H. Jordan, ‘Achaeus’ (1912).

¹⁹⁰ Clem. Alex., *On Pascha*, frg. 28 (no. 36 Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard).

of *Matthew*, *Luke* and *John*, which he quotes in the relevant passage of *On Pascha* and, hence, refers to the Resurrection, this reference is nothing more than a testimony for the right dating of Pascha, which still takes its name from the Saviour's passion. The first to complain about the 'wrong' etymology is Origen in his own work *On Pascha* written around 245 AD. He admits that 'most, if not all, of the brethren think that the Pascha is named "Pascha" from the "passion" of the Saviour', but corrects this view by arguing:

The feast in question is not called precisely 'Pascha' by the Hebrews, but *phas(h)*. The name of this feast is constituted by the three letters phi, alpha, and sigma, plus the rougher Hebrew aspirate. Translated, it means 'passage'. Since it is on this feast that the people goes forth from Egypt, it is logical to call it *phas(h)*, that is, 'passage'. Speaking Greek the name itself cannot be pronounced as the Hebrews say it, because, not using the rougher Hebrew aspirate, the Greeks cannot say *phas(h)*. Consequently the name was Hellenized, and in the prophets we read *phasek*, which upon further Hellenization has become *pascha*. And so, if any of our people in the company of Hebrews makes the rash statement that the Pascha is so named because of the passion of the Saviour, they will ridicule him for being completely ignorant of the meaning of the appellation.¹⁹¹

Origen, who, as we have seen, could have drawn on Philo of Alexandria, confirms our observation that, far into the third century, Easter was associated with Christ's suffering. It was Christ's death on the cross that was regarded as the salvific act, not his Resurrection. We find the same result when reading through the remaining documents belonging to the so-called Quartodeciman dispute of the second century about the nature and dating of the breaking of the fast on Pascha. Eusebius of Caesarea in his *Church History* – written at the beginning of the fourth century – has preserved for us fragments of the portfolio of writings pertaining to this dispute. Against the content of these documents, in his introduction Eusebius gives the Resurrection as the reason for the dating of Pascha and the termination of the fast on a Sunday.¹⁹² The difference between frame and documents indicates the shift in the understanding of Pascha from the second- to the fourth century.

We could add other documents of the second century that support Origen's view. To the end of the second century Pascha was invariably equated with Christ's suffering. Heracleon, for example, writer of the first known commentary on *John*, writes in the second half of that century:

This [was] the great feast; for it was the figure of the Saviour's passion, when the sheep was not only slain, but by being eaten, brought repose. By being sacrificed

¹⁹¹ Orig., *On Pascha* 1 (no. 37 Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard).

¹⁹² Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* V 23,1–2, 24,11; on Eusebius and his theology of the Resurrection, see below. For him, the Ogdoad is clearly linked to the Resurrection, see, for example, Euseb., *Comm. in Ps.* 6 (PG 23, 120A–B); *ibid.*, 11 (140B).

it signified the Saviour's suffering in the world; by being eaten, [it signified] the repose in the wedding.¹⁹³

*Revelation*¹⁹⁴ makes the connection between the sacrificed lamb and the wedding banquet; Heracleon draws the conclusion and points to Pascha as a joyful celebration of the Saviour's passion.¹⁹⁵ And we can cite again Justin Martyr, who in his *Dialogue with Trypho* only mentions what Origen has branded as making oneself ridiculous in the eyes of Jews:

Our suffering and crucified Christ was not cursed by the law, but made it manifest that He alone would save those who do not depart from His faith. And the blood of Pascha, sprinkled on each man's door-posts and lintel, delivered those who were saved in Egypt, when the first-born of the Egyptians were destroyed. For the Pascha was Christ, who was afterwards sacrificed,¹⁹⁶ as also Isaiah said: 'He was led as a sheep to the slaughter'.¹⁹⁷ And it is written, that on the day of the Pascha you seized Him, and that also during the Pascha you crucified Him. And as the blood of the Pascha saved those who were in Egypt, so also the blood of Christ will deliver from death those who have believed. Would God, then, have been deceived if this sign had not been above the doors? I do not say that; but I affirm that He announced beforehand the future salvation for the human race through the blood of Christ.¹⁹⁸

For Justin, as later for Irenaeus, it is the blood of Christ that saves the human race. According to Justin, Trypho gives a summary that mentions the crucifixion, the ascension, the coming again, the eternal kingdom, but not the Resurrection. Justin's answer is similar to what we have just quoted.¹⁹⁹

Even in the early third century, Hippolytus, writing at Rome, does not know of any other way to explain Pascha: 'Christ himself was the Pascha which had been foretold and which was fulfilled on the day set for it.'²⁰⁰ In the first book of his treatise *On Pascha* he notes:

¹⁹³ In: Orig., *Comm. in Ioh.* X 117; see also the Barbelo-Gnostics, who, according to Epiphanius, *Pan.* XXVI 4,5–7, identified Pascha with 'suffering', but, if Epiphanius is correct, took it as sexual passion. The idea of the wedding reoccurs in Anon., *Homily on the Holy Pascha* 17,1 (SC 27, 145 Nautin; no. 27b Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard).

¹⁹⁴ *Rev.* 19:7–9.

¹⁹⁵ See also, as shown above, Ptolemy, *Ep. to Flora* 5,8–10, 13–15 (SC 24bis, 62–6 Quispel; no. 17 Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard) and his spiritual reading of Pascha.

¹⁹⁶ See *1 Cor.* 5:7.

¹⁹⁷ *Is.* 53:7.

¹⁹⁸ Justin, *Dial.* 111 (see no. 19 Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard).

¹⁹⁹ Justin, *Dial.* 40 (see no. 18 Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard).

²⁰⁰ Hippol., *Adv. omn. haer.*, frg., in: *Paschal Chronicle* (no. 45 Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard).

He who had previously declared, 'I eat the Pascha no more', took his dinner in suitable fashion before the Pascha. He did not eat the Pascha: he suffered it. For it was not the right time to eat it.²⁰¹

And in harmony with Trypho in Justin, Hippolytus writes in the preserved fragment of *On Elkanah and Hannah* about three seasons – only the text about the first two is preserved:

Wherefore three seasons of the year prefigured the Saviour himself, that he might fulfill the mysteries prophesied about him: In the Pascha, that he might show that he was going to be sacrificed as a sheep and revealed as the true Pascha – as the Apostle says, 'Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed'.²⁰² In the Pentecost, that he might make an advance sign of the kingdom of heaven, going up into heaven first himself and offering humanity as a gift to God.²⁰³

What do we learn from the etymology of Pascha in the first two centuries? All available sources concur that Pascha is a commemoration of Christ's suffering and death. If there are additional components, then it is the eschatological outlook towards the future judgement and restoration. Nowhere is there any connection with Christ's Resurrection. The *Epistle of the Apostles* and its two paragraphs on Pascha can serve as a summary. The first paragraph opens with the admonition: 'Do commemorate my death!' Pascha is the Christian 'memorial' of Christ's suffering and death, but also of our eschatological hope in the return of the Lord for the final judgement.²⁰⁴

Between 160 and 170 AD Melito of Sardis, in his homily *On Pascha*, provides us, as shown above, with the 'most extensive theological interpretation' of Pascha that has been preserved from the first two centuries.²⁰⁵ Still set in adaptation of the Jewish *Passover Haggadah* as an interpretation of the *Exodus* story,²⁰⁶ its 'recurring theme remains "the suffering of the Lord" (v. 58) which the author finds "predicted long in advance" (v. 58), not only by "the sacrifice of the sheep" . . . , but also in many other Old Testament types . . . Though Melito in his sermon makes a few passing references to the resurrection, it is clear from the context that these function as the epilogue of the passion drama of the Passover. The emphasis is

²⁰¹ Hippol., *On Pascha*, in: *Paschal Chronicle* (no. 46 Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard).

²⁰² 1Cor: 5:7.

²⁰³ Hippol., *On Elkanah and Hannah* (no. 47 Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard).

²⁰⁴ Note, however, that in the Ethiopian version both the Ogdoad and the Lord's Day are missing: instead, the Ethiopian version reads, 'I am of his resemblance and form, of his power and completeness, and of his light. I am his complete [fulfilled, entire] Word.'

²⁰⁵ S. Bacchiocchi, *Sabbath* (1977), 82.

²⁰⁶ Ex. 12:11–30.

indeed on the suffering and death of Jesus which constitute the recurring theme of the sermon and of the celebration'.²⁰⁷

Melito's definition of Pascha/Passover does not surprise us:

What is the Passover?

Indeed its name is derived from that event –

'to celebrate the Passover' (*tou paschein*) is derived from 'to suffer' (*tou pathein*).

Therefore, learn who the sufferer is and who he is who suffers along with the sufferer (v. 46).

Some years after Melito, Tertullian links baptism and Passover: 'Passover provides the day of most solemnity for baptism, for then was accomplished our Lord's passion, and into it we are baptized'.²⁰⁸ The combination of celebration, solemnity and suffering highlights what A.D. Nock once summarized: Jesus' 'death is itself triumph'.²⁰⁹

Just as Marcion had played the significant role in the rise of the Risen Christ in the second century, so Origen played that role in establishing the liturgical tradition of Pascha as commemorating the triduum of passion, descent to Hell, and Resurrection. Origen is not only *the* speculative theologian, but also *the* early spiritual exegete who read the Jewish scriptures in the light of the Gospels.

In his *Commentary on John* Origen interprets Paul's 1Cor: 5:7 'in harmony with what the Gospel says about the lamb' in an eschatological light.²¹⁰ He is interested in historical and corporeal things as types of spiritual realities and distinguishes between three forms of Pascha, the first at the time 'of the first people', the second that of the Christians, and the third, the eschatological one. While the first is seen only as imperfect prefiguration, the second is called the true Pascha, followed by the final third one.²¹¹ In his *Commentary on Numbers* he combines *John* 1:29 ('the Lamb of God') with 1Cor: 5:7 ('Christ, our Passover lamb') and elevates the Christian Pascha above the Jewish.²¹² Origen displays a creative Philonic spiritualized interpretation of scriptures through eyes trained by Christian writings. As only Marcion before him, Origen rigorously applies a purely Christian scriptural hermeneutics, while at the same time he remains hesitant to use the titles 'Old' and 'New Testament', although he knew of them.²¹³

His ethical spiritualism is apparent in his apologetic work *Against Celsus*, where he builds on his interpretation of Pascha as 'passing over', yet also ethicizes and detemperizes a eucharistic understanding of Paul's statement in 1Cor: 5:7:

²⁰⁷ S. Bacchiocchi, *Sabbath* (1977), 82.

²⁰⁸ Tert., *De bapt.* 9.

²⁰⁹ A.D. Nock, 'Resurrection' (1928), 48.

²¹⁰ Orig., *Comm. in Ioh.* (no. 38 Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard).

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² Orig., *Comm. in Num.* 23,6 (no. 38 Cantalamessa/Quigley/Lienhard).

²¹³ W. Kinzig, 'Καινή διαθήκη' (1994), 531.

If a man has understood that 'Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed',²¹⁴ and that he ought to 'keep the feast'²¹⁵ by eating the flesh of the Logos, there is not a moment when he is not keeping the Pascha, which means 'offerings before crossing over'. For he is always passing over in thought and in every word and every deed from the affairs of this life to God and hastening towards his city. In addition to this, if one is able to say truthfully, 'we are risen with Christ', but also that 'he raised us up with him and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ',²¹⁶ one is always living in the days of the Pentecost – particularly when, like the apostles of Jesus, one goes up 'to the upper room'²¹⁷ and gives time to supplication and 'prayer',²¹⁸ so as to become worthy of the 'mighty rushing wind from heaven',²¹⁹ which compels the evil in mortals and its consequences to disappear, and so that one becomes worthy also of some share in the fiery tongue given by God^{220, 221}.

With Origen we are moving beyond the scope of this study, which has endeavoured to outline the history of belief in Christ's Resurrection in the first two centuries. With the solidifying of Christian scriptures as the lens for reading the development of the Christian movement during that period, Christian writings have become the reference works and through them Christ's Resurrection one of the elements in the liturgical triduum of Pascha, before, as we need to show in a future monograph, it becomes one of the central, if not to some traditions *the* central tenet in the Christian creed. In the first two centuries, however, Christ's Resurrection was soon of little theological importance and influence to the wider Church, except for Paul, and only began to become recognized when Marcion of Sinope made Paul's writings resurface, and when he introduced the Gospel into Christianity. Without Marcion, the Christian creed might have ended with the passion, as the earliest baptismal questions did: do you believe in Jesus Christ – who was born and suffered (*natum et passum*)?

²¹⁴ 1Cor. 5:7.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 5:8.

²¹⁶ Eph. 2:5–6.

²¹⁷ Acts 1:13.

²¹⁸ See *ibid.*, 1:13–14.

²¹⁹ See *ibid.*, 2:2.

²²⁰ See *ibid.*, 2:3.

²²¹ Origen, *C. Cels.* VIII 22.

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(Abbreviations mainly follow Siegfried M. Schwertner, *Internationales Abkürzungsverzeichnis für Theologie und Grenzgebiete*, Berlin ²1993).

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