

*The Apostolic Age
in Patristic Thought*



EDITED BY

A. HILHORST

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THE APOSTOLIC AGE IN PATRISTIC THOUGHT

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AND LANGUAGE

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INTRODUCTION

In March 2001, the Dutch Foundation for Early Christian Studies celebrated its fortieth anniversary with a conference entitled *Aetas Apostolica*—Tertullian's term for the founding period of Christianity. As could be expected, the theme proved to be a most rewarding one. Any movement or association will tend to assign a special prestige to its starting time, but in the case of nascent Christianity this prestige was plainly due to the divine stature of its founder, Jesus Christ, who had personally commissioned his Apostles and assured them of the unfailing guidance of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, the authority of the Apostolic Age was acknowledged by all who regarded themselves as Christians, no matter whether or not they were accepted as such by a later orthodoxy. It was appealed to in questions of doctrine, of ritual and conduct, and it mirrored itself in literature and art. Thus, the speakers at the conference could choose from a number of important subjects. Their papers, duly revised and footnoted, are collected in this volume. Below is a summary of the contents.

There has been much discussion about the origin of the office of apostle. Korteweg shows that a Jewish precedent is hardly plausible. An *apostolos* is an unspecific term for someone sent. Paul introduces a specific sense for the word—to him, an apostle is a messenger sent by God from heaven. There may be a connection with an ancient oriental concept, as discussed by G. Widengren and W. Schmithals. After Paul, a horizontal dimension becomes prominent: an apostle is sent by the earthly Jesus, from Palestine and Jerusalem. The apostles are identified with the Twelve; the concept of apostolic succession comes into being.

Studying the earliest liturgy of the Eucharist, Ysebaert considers that from Homer onwards a sacrificial meal was normally a full meal. This holds well for the Jewish Passover meal, the Last Supper, and all Christian Eucharistic meals. The consecrated bread and wine were consumed together with other food taken from home. The typical order of blessing the wine first continues a Jewish tradition and is still found in *Didache* 9, 1 Cor. 10.16 and parts of the Syrian tradition. The conflict in Antioch, Gal. 2.11–14, is due to the new situation that Gentile Christians might take unclean food with them.

The abuse in Corinth encourages Paul to separate Eucharist and love-meal, and to place the blessing of the wine after the meal, 1 Cor. 11.17–34. His appeal to the Lord makes him contradict his own words in 1 Cor. 10.16. Instead of the blessing he makes the institution words the moment of consecration.

Hilhorst considers the idealized image of the apostolic age in the Muratorian Canon and in the Letters alleged to have been exchanged between Paul and Seneca. The idea emerging from these texts of the starting time as a period of internal harmony and prestige with the outside world is, however, found not to be restricted to apocryphal and patristic sources but already present in a number of books of the New Testament, notably the Acts of the Apostles.

Van Deun sets out to investigate the usage of the Greek term *apostolikos*. Absent from the New Testament and attested for the first time with Ignatius, it is used in quite a number of contexts, for instance to denote the apostolic origin of a church or a conformity with the doctrine of the Apostles, or also to refer to the Apostle par excellence, Paul. Eusebius is the first author to use it for the notion of an apostolic era.

Miracles were a prominent feature of the apostles' time but lost importance in later periods. Theologians, Den Boeft argues, used to interpret the shift as a sign of divine pedagogy: initially, people had to be won over by visible means, later on, prime importance was attached to ethical and spiritual values. Nevertheless, the importance of miracles remained unaffected in the cult of the saints; and Bishop Ambrose even hailed the miracles accompanying the invention of the bones of the martyrs Gervasius and Protasius as a return of the apostolic age. Augustine agreed with such a view, although earlier he had taken the position that miracles belonged to the past.

Liturgical customs have always been legitimised by an appeal to the foundational period of Christianity. Rouwhorst works this out for the celebration of Passover/Easter. The Quartodecimans had good reason to celebrate it on 14/15 Nisan, whatever the day of the week, but from the second century onward they were opposed by those who practised Easter on Sunday, the day of the Resurrection. These opponents, who grew more and more numerous, went so far as to claim apostolic authority for their own view and eventually depicted the Quartodeciman claims as those of a sect disturbing the unity of the Church.

Roukema examines the previous history of the New Testament

canon in a number of authors of the late second and early third centuries. Previous, indeed, because in that period there was not yet any such thing as a New Testament canon in the sense of a closed list of books declared authoritative by the Church. Rather, the question was whether a given book or an orally transmitted teaching was a pure witness of the apostolic tradition as the foundation of faith and ecclesiastical practice. However, a tendency to define a list is perceivable in Tertullian and in the Muratorian Fragment.

Gnostics, just like early orthodox Christians, appealed to Jesus Christ for their doctrines, but they deliberately distinguished themselves. They claimed, as Luttikhuisen explains, either a right understanding of Jesus' pre-paschal teachings which their opponents allegedly lacked, or they referred to special revelations. The receivers of these revelations in some texts are the assembled apostles but more often privileged witnesses: Peter, John, James, Jude Thomas or Mary Magdalene.

Benjamins deals with two passages in Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses* in which the author puts forward the apostolic character of the preaching against Gnostic and other dissident groups. Conceding that the Apostles could disagree on such minor points as the validity of the Mosaic Law, Irenaeus maintains that they were of one mind concerning the identity of the Old Testament God with God Father of Jesus Christ. He denies the claim of his opponents that there was a secret doctrine hidden behind the apostolic testimony.

Ledegang demonstrates that, for Origen, not just those in office but all who follow Christ are bearers of the apostolic tradition. They all are 'sent' to preach the Gospel and called to live accordingly.

Since 1970, our knowledge of Mani and Manichaeism has been exceptionally enriched by the discovery of the so-called *Cologne Mani Codex*, which informs us both of Mani's life and ideas. Van Oort studies the many new insights this document provides. On the basis of a series of revelations, Mani apparently considered himself to be the new Apostle of Christ as well as the incarnation of the Paraclete. In this quality, it was his vocation to found a new and final Christian Church. A number of interesting parallels between the *aetas apostolica* and Mani's version of it are discussed. In particular, however, Mani's apostolate shows striking parallels with Jesus' ministry.

Provoost asks how early Christian iconography in its different periods reflected the body of ideas of the apostolic period. His material is the frescos and sarcophagi found in Rome and Ostia. Remarkably,

the supply of material is most copious in the three quarters of a century before the Church Peace.

Davids collects the information Eusebius of Caesarea provides on the apostolic period. The Church historian pays attention to the apostles and their succession, the family of Jesus, the Jews, including the fall of Jerusalem, and the heretics, with Simon the Magician as their patriarch. According to Eusebius, Philo of Alexandria, when describing the ascetic way of life of the Egyptian Jewish Therapeutae, was thinking of the first Christians.

More than any other movement in the early Church, the monks were driven by the ideal of a revival of the earliest Christian community described in the Acts of the Apostles. Bartelink points out that this ideal took various forms. For some it meant a farewell to the world, others interpreted it in the sense of a missionary fervour, still others saw it embodied in the charisma of working miracles. Also, the expectation of the imminent return of the Lord regained strength in monastic circles.

The early Church had a strong sense of a continuity based on the authoritative status of the apostolic age. On the other hand, as Dehandschutter shows, a historical awareness of the difference between the origin and the present was by no means lacking among the Church Fathers. Thus we do find the opinion that Acts 6 does not point to the diaconate, or that the later differentiation between presbyters and bishops, or deacons and bishops, has no New Testament foundation.

Jerusalem was the Holy City for Jews and Christians. For the Christians it held the special attraction that it was also the seat of the first Christian community. For many Fathers of the Church, therefore, Jerusalem with its history and its significance, was a favourite topic. Bastiaensen treats Augustine's elaborations on the subject in its various aspects: Jerusalem as the old capital of the Jewish people; the church of Jerusalem as the model Christian community; the unanimity reigning in this community viewed as an image of the unity of the Persons of the Trinity; the heavenly Jerusalem depicted as the future abode of the faithful. While Jerusalem is an inexhaustible source of inspiration for Augustine, he avoids dealing with the heavenly city as the beloved Bride of the Lord, in line with his reservedness vis-à-vis the biblical Song of Solomon, seen as a glorification of bridal love.

The earliest period of the Church soon became normative for its

members and, as a result, eventually had an immeasurable impact on human history. In this process, the views on the apostolic age current in the first four centuries have played a crucial role because they have influenced, indeed dictated, the convictions of later ages. Hence the interest of the essays assembled in this collection, even though they can only cover some of the aspects involved.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BG	Berlin Gnostic Papyrus (Papyrus Berolinensis 8502)
CCSG	Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
CMC	<i>Cologne Mani Codex (Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis)</i>
CPG	M. Geerard and F. Glorie, <i>Clavis Patrum Graecorum</i>
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
GCS	Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller (continuous serial numbers)
NHC	Nag Hammadi Codices
OOSA	Opera Omnia di Sant'Ambrogio
PG	Patrologia Graeca
PL	Patrologia Latina
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
VC	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

Abbreviated titles of patristic works usually follow the dictionaries of Lampe for Greek and Blaise for Latin.

References to Old Testament passages conform to the Septuagint and the Vulgate; in case of difference—mainly in the Psalms—the numerotation of the Hebrew text is added in brackets.

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ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE APOSTOLIC OFFICE

Theodore Korteweg

In order to trace the beginnings of the apostolic office as it is documented in early Christian literature, we have to travel far back into the past. At least if we should believe the Swedish scholar Geo Widengren who suggests that in this respect too, in the words of the title of a well-known book, 'History begins at Sumer'.¹ The oldest predecessor of the apostle would then be the divine priest-king who, like the early Christian apostle, is sent from heaven, entrusted with a divine secret, sometimes in the form of a heavenly book, to be a shepherd to the people and to establish a reign of justice on earth.² In the same vein, the figure of Moses is portrayed in the literature of the ancient Samaritans,³ while in a Jewish document like the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* Levi also appears as a kind of priest-king, who is transported to heaven and there receives a divine commission to be a minister (*leitourgos*) of the Lord, announce his secrets (*must'ria*) among mankind and be a herald (*k'ruxeis*) of the redemption of Israel.⁴ This is again reminiscent of the apostle Paul when he describes himself in his Epistle to the Romans 15.16 as 'minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, serving the Gospel of God as a priest'.⁵ This Gospel of God is of course often characterized as the revelation of a divine secret or mystery and on several occasions

¹ S. N. Kramer, *History Begins at Sumer* (New York 1956).

² G. Widengren, *The Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book* (Uppsala and Leipzig 1950). A summary of this and several later studies of the same subject can be found in G. Widengren, *Religionsphänomenologie* (Berlin 1969) 626-9 and index in voce 'Apostel' and 'Ausgesandter'.

³ See Widengren 1950 (n. 2) 48-50 and J. E. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord* (Tübingen 1985).

⁴ *T. Lev.* 2.10.

⁵ Although J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16* (Dallas 1988) 860 considers St Paul's transformation of this cultic imagery by applying it to his missionary work to be very striking, the only consequence he derives from it is that in this way the division between cultic and secular, and thus between Jew and Gentile, has been broken down. Obviously he cannot imagine that St Paul really conceived of his ministry within a cultic setting!

St Paul makes it very clear that he had received his Gospel not by way of human tradition but directly from heaven.

In addition to this vertical dimension, however, which seems to dominate St Paul's self-consciousness and is excellently accounted for by a theory such as that of Widengren and, more or less in his wake, the German scholars Walter Schmithals and Hans Dieter Betz,⁶ there is also a much more horizontal approach to be found in those texts where the apostles (in many cases numbering twelve) appear together as the historical founders of the Church, its Creed, its canon and its several traditions and institutions. From the second century onwards, this concept, which is often connected with the writings of St Luke and the phenomenon of so-called 'early Catholicism',⁷ has become by far the most common, in fact so common that it is still difficult for us to imagine an apostle other than as a disciple of Jesus, sent by him from Jerusalem to preach the Gospel and to found the worldwide Christian Church. This may, for example, partly explain how even as recently as 1994 the Dutch scholar J. Ysebaert could try to prove that in the earliest Christian documents, i.e. the epistles of St Paul, the word 'apostle' already functions as a *terminus technicus* indicating a member of the Twelve. That St Paul can also speak of 'apostles of the churches' charged with organizing the great collection for the Church of Jerusalem is then seen as a kind of allusion to the official title of the Twelve, which would already have become 'so technical that there was no more fear of misunderstanding'.⁸

Now, it is obvious that St Paul, although he unmistakably uses the words 'apostle' and 'apostolate' with reference to both St Peter and to himself,⁹ nowhere clearly identifies the apostles with the Twelve as such. Dr Ysebaert is of course quite aware of this too. But in his opinion, St Paul's usage, when it is not clear in itself, has to be explained according to that of roughly contemporary sources like the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles and there the identification is

⁶ W. Schmithals, *Das kirchliche Apostelamt: Eine historische Untersuchung* (Göttingen 1961) and H. D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia 1979) 74–5.

⁷ Here, of course, one has to mention the influential book by G. Klein, *Die Zwölf Apostel: Ursprung und Gehalt einer Idee* (Göttingen 1961).

⁸ J. Ysebaert, *Die Amtsterminologie im Neuen Testament und in der Alten Kirche: Eine lexikographische Untersuchung* (Breda 1994) 15.

⁹ Gal. 2.8.

certainly found.¹⁰ In that case, of course, when tracing the origin of the apostolic office we need go no further back than the horizontal concept, which from the second century onwards was coming to be the common view of mainline Christianity: Jesus chose the Twelve as his disciples and after his Resurrection made them into apostles charging them to depart from Jerusalem to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

But why was the relatively obscure word 'apostle' selected for this purpose at all? Why would terminology more strongly rooted in biblical or contemporary usage, such as *euangelist s* (cp. the Hebrew *mebass r*) or prophet on the one hand and *aggelos* (the usual Greek word for messenger), *presbeut s* (cp. 2 Cor. 5.20) or *k rux* (cp. the frequent New Testament use of *k russein* and the well-known figure of the Cynic 'herald of God') on the other, not suffice? Of course, in the word 'apostle' there is a particular stress on the functional aspect of being sent, even more than on the delivering of the message itself. In fact, this applies to such an extent that when we read in Mark 6.30 that the 'apostles' returned to Jesus, we need not assume the use of a technical title here at all: they are just the ones who according to 6.7 had been sent out on a missionary journey, so that *apostoloi* is in this context merely the equivalent of *apestalmenoi*. This also seems to be the most natural understanding of the 'apostles of the churches' mentioned by St Paul in 2 Cor. 8.23 and of Epaphroditus being called 'your apostle' in his Letter to the Philippians (2.25). To assume here an allusion to the office of the Twelve, as Ysebaert does, is really quite unnecessary. Should Epaphroditus return to Philippi, that would have meant the end of his mission and there would be no further reason to call him an apostle in any meaningful sense of the word.

In other cases, however, titular use of the term 'apostle' cannot be denied. And certainly in some of these cases there seems to be more behind the use of the terminology than the simple fact of being sent out, for example when St Paul brings his being an apostle into

¹⁰ Although not without exceptions, e.g. Acts 14.4,14, see the commentaries ad loc. Of course, one can always suspect a reminiscence of an earlier, perhaps Antiochene source or even assume a special Antiochene conception of the apostolate in contradistinction to a Jerusalem one, as, e.g., K. Berger does in his *Theologiegeschichte des Urchristentums* (Tübingen and Basel 1994), 181 ff. Cp. also our discussion of Mark 6.30 in the text below.

connection with 'having seen Jesus'¹¹ or with the possession of a specific authority (*exousia*).¹² Do these connotations betray the presence of a more or less definite idea of apostleship that may even predate Christianity itself? As we have already indicated, the word 'apostle' in itself suggests nothing of the kind. Its specific use in the sense of 'naval expedition', sometimes also 'naval commander', seems to be of Attic origin. From Herodotus onwards we find the neutral sense of 'messenger', 'envoy', which also appears once in the Septuagint.¹³ And although Harnack thought that he had found this meaning in Flavius Josephus *AJ* 17.300 too, there it is really used in the sense of *apostol*, 'embassy'. Thus the only conclusion we can draw from a survey of the lexicæ seems to be that, leaving aside specific military and commercial usage, the meaning 'messenger', although very sparingly attested in the extant documents, has been available since Herodotus.¹⁴

On the other hand, precisely this neutral sense with its strongly functional overtone may have made it a suitable candidate for adoption by early Christianity as a title for a religious office that as such had no roots in an already existing institution. So, from J. B. Lightfoot onwards, a number of scholars have considered the word 'apostle' in its Christian sense to be a semantic Christianism at least from a strictly linguistic point of view.¹⁵ Among them is Kirsopp Lake, in whose opinion the word even 'seems to have no history' and is 'the most markedly and exclusively Christian of all the technical terms of the New Testament'.¹⁶ However, even he thinks that in the final

¹¹ 1 Cor. 9.1, at least according to what looks like a general consensus, although interestingly K. Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of St Paul* (London 1919) 228 ff. disagrees.

¹² E.g. 2 Cor. 10.8 and 12.10. Cp. also 1 Thess. 2.7.

¹³ Although K. H. Rengstorf, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* i.397-448 at 413 in the interest of his thesis tries to deny it, the LXX use of *apostolos* in 1 Kings 14.6 entirely corresponds with that of Herodotus.

¹⁴ Since J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (London 1884) 92 n. 2 *apostolos* is often regarded as 'an instance where the Attic usage has ruled the literary language, the word having meanwhile preserved in the common dialect the sense which it has in Herodotus'.

¹⁵ Cp. G. J. M. Bartelink, *Lexicologisch-semantische studie over de taal van de Apostolische Vaders* (Utrecht 1952) 90, who observes that words that we find relatively seldom or even sporadically in profane literature frequently become of exceptional importance in LXX, the New Testament and later Christian authors.

¹⁶ K. Lake in F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity*, i.5 (London 1933) 50.

account there must be a Semitic concept and also a Semitic equivalent behind it. According to him, at the root of the designation is Jesus' choice of the Twelve who, as it is correctly represented in the Gospel of Mark, in consequence of their preaching in Galilea, were called *shelichim*. Later on, before or after the Resurrection, other disciples were given the same title, but in the end this proved to be only a temporary development, and so at last the apostles were definitely identified with the Twelve, to whose number only St Paul was added.

Other scholars have gone much further. Although, as far as purely linguistic matters are concerned, they generally concede that the use of the Greek word is a Christian innovation, and there is even widespread consensus for its having been coined sometime during the first century in the surroundings of Antioch,¹⁷ behind the Christian terminology they nevertheless surmise, again in the wake of Lightfoot and later on the Jewish scholars Krauss and Vogelstein and the Christian scholars Harnack and Rengstorf, not only a Semitic or Jewish concept but even a full-blown Jewish institution.¹⁸ From patristic and rabbinical evidence they infer that from early times the Jerusalem authorities, during the Hellenistic period represented by the Sanhedrin, used to send emissaries into Palestine, and later on also into the Diaspora, in order to deal with legal and religious questions. Their name would have been *sheluchim*. Certainly after the destruction of the second Temple in AD 70, this would then have become the title of a special kind of functionary charged with the collection of dues from the Diaspora to the Jewish Patriarch in Palestine. Although at first sight it might seem rather problematic to derive the Christian apostolate from a Jewish institution of which a more or less clear picture can only be drawn for the period after AD 70, and, moreover, these Jewish emissaries were certainly no more than financial deputies without any missionary purpose whatever,

¹⁷ The importance of Antioch as a kind of cradle for Gentile Christianity is considerably played down by M. Hengel and A. M. Schwemer, *Paul between Damascus and Antioch: The Unknown Years* (Louisville, Ky., 1997) 279 ff.

¹⁸ J. B. Lightfoot (n. 14) 92 ff.; S. Krauss, 'Die jüdischen Apostel', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 17 1905 370–83; H. Vogelstein, 'The Development of the Apostolate in Judaism and its Transformation in Christianity', *Hebrew Union College Annual* 2 1925 99 ff.; A. von Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Leipzig 1924⁴) 340 ff.; Rengstorf (n. 13) 397 ff.

Harnack is sure that a link with the Christian apostolate must exist since even St Paul was charged with a collection for the Church in Jerusalem as soon as he was recognized as an apostle by the Jerusalem authorities.¹⁹ The difficulty with this argument is, of course, that in this case these authorities themselves were, at least partly, also called apostles and in their case financial duties seem to be entirely out of the question. Another, perhaps minor, problem is that the Greek rendering of these *sheluchim* as *apostoloi* is only attested in Christian sources of the fourth century, except for one Jewish inscription which is not easy to interpret.²⁰ But even if we could be sure that by the time of St Paul this use of *apostolos* belonged to the vocabulary of the Greek Diaspora, it is hardly conceivable that the Christian designation derives from a Jewish institution like this. It is rather the 'apostles of the Churches' of 2 Cor. 8.23 who could perhaps be accounted for in this way, but since 'apostle' can be a quite unspecific designation for any envoy or deputy as such, in their case such an explanation is entirely superfluous. On the other hand an apostle like St Paul with a lifelong commission that goes back to a heavenly call seems to have nothing in common with deputies of a Jewish authority who were only *sheluchim* for the time of their charge.²¹

The unlikelihood of comparing St Paul's apostolate with the specific Jewish institution under review may well have been one of the reasons why, beginning with K. H. Rengstorf, the above argument is nowadays usually presented in a somewhat attenuated version: the origin of the apostolic office lies not in the juridical or civic Jewish institution as such but in the concept on which it is based, the idea expressed, for example in *Mishnah Berakhot* 5.5: 'a man's agent is like to himself.' This so-called judicial principle of agency, whereby the

¹⁹ Harnack (n. 18) 342–3.

²⁰ D. Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe*, i (Cambridge 1993) no. 86. It seems to date from the fifth or sixth century and is sometimes used to prove that Jewish apostles, like their Christian counterparts, were sent out in pairs. But see Schmithals (n. 6) 97. Cp. also C. Spicq, *Notes de lexicographie néo-testamentaire: Supplément* (Fribourg Suisse and Göttingen 1982) 55 n. 3.

²¹ See, however, H. Lietzmann, *An die Römer* (Tübingen 1971³) 24, who thinks that St Paul's opponents criticized him precisely because he did not behave like that kind of deputy, i.e. as an 'apostle of the church (or churches)'. In his opinion, St Paul has elevated the apostolic office above the Jewish analogy which had up till then still been customary in Christian circles. Thus, indirectly, he would have been the cause that henceforth the title could no longer be applied in a wider sense, but was restricted to the Twelve and himself.

person sent has to be treated as if he were the person he is representing, would, according to scholars like K. H. Rengstorf and, more recently, J.-A. Bühner, be the nucleus not only of the Jewish designation of *shaliach*, but also of the Christian apostolate as we find it in the New Testament.²² In Rengstorf's opinion, the apostle is not so much charged with a mission of his own and for which he is personally responsible, but with the authority of his sender, whose mouthpiece he has to be during the whole course of his mission. This is why he draws a vast distinction between a prophet, who according to him is never called a *shaliach* in later Jewish literature but is in possession of a kind of personal office, and an apostle, who has solely to act as the representative of the authority by whom he is sent. On this point J.-A. Bühner has adduced a number of Jewish texts where in fact prophets are called *sheluchim*, so that Rengstorf's distinction no longer seems to hold and we can explain why St Paul, who undoubtedly considered himself to be an apostle, can at the same time give us a prophet-like self-description.²³ But on the main point Bühner shares Rengstorf's conviction to the full: behind the Christian terminology is not primarily the functional aspect of being sent on a mission, connected with the Greek word, but the specific Semitic and Jewish concept of representative authority which is implied in the designation of *shaliach*.

On the face of it, this may all seem rather convincing. As a matter of fact, St Paul's letters are the only early documents from which a reconstruction of apostolic self-consciousness seems at all possible and, as we have already seen, there the idea of representative authority is certainly present. God or Christ is speaking through his mouth,²⁴ like the prophet Jeremiah he is given authority to build up and destroy,²⁵ the same expression used in the prophetic book itself to describe God's own activity, and, in his Letter to the Galatians, he appreciates the fact that his readers received him 'as an angel of God, indeed as Christ Jesus'.²⁶ Of course, this is reminiscent of sayings

²² J.-A. Bühner, *Der Gesandte und sein Weg im 4. Evangelium* (Tübingen 1977) 271 ff.; id., 'ἀπόστολος', *Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, i. 342-51.

²³ In Gal. 1.15 his model may as well have been the prophet Jeremiah as the Servant of Isa. 49, who is also in the background in 2 Cor. 6.1-2, while Jeremiah figures again in 2 Cor. 10.8 and 13.10.

²⁴ See, e.g., 1 Thess. 2.13; 2 Cor. 5.20 and 13.3.

²⁵ 2 Cor. 10.8 and 13.10.

²⁶ Gal. 4.14. On the likeness of apostles (and prophets) to angels, not only in

as in Matthew 10.40: 'Whoever receives you, receives me and whoever receives me, receives the One who sent me' and Luke 10.16: 'Whoever hears you, hears me and whoever rejects you, rejects me and whoever rejects me, rejects the One who sent me.' The ideas of sending and of representative authority seem here to be intimately related. Now, since in the Old Testament, especially within the deuteronomistic tradition, the Hebrew verb *shalach* is regularly used for the sending of prophets and the normal rendering of *shalach* in the Septuagint is *apostellein*, we may compare these Synoptic sayings in their turn with a passage like Matthew 23.34 ff., where the 'prophets, wise men and scribes' who from time to time had been sent to Israel and to Jerusalem receive the general designation of *hoi apestalmenoi pros aut n*. Here the background is certainly the deuteronomistic tradition.²⁷ This shows indeed that Rengstorf's distinction between the office of a prophet and that of a *shaliach/apostolos* as primarily a bearer of representative authority is entirely artificial and that one can even with less justice oppose the religious vocation of a prophet to that of the *shaliach* as a 'juridical institution'. Quite the contrary. It is precisely the sending of prophets that is by itself a basic idea in the deuteronomistic tradition as it is the sole fact that it is God who is behind it that invests the words and the actions of these messengers with divine authority. So, as far as this last element is concerned, neither the word *apostolos* on itself (which, as we have seen, can also be used for an occasional messenger, sent on a financial errand) nor its supposed Hebrew equivalent are decisive, but rather the religious context in which the terms are used and which itself derives from the deuteronomistic tradition.

In this way we can explain why in St Paul's eyes it is not a horizontal chain of human tradition but a direct divine call or a heavenly vision that is constitutive for his apostleship. And there seems to be no reason to suppose that this would have been different in the case of the other apostles mentioned by him. The picture we receive from his letters is the same which also appears from a passage like Matthew 28.16–20: it is the heavenly Lord who commissions and instructs his earthly messengers and is the direct source of

Christian but also in Mandaean and Manichean sources, see C. A. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology* (Leiden 1998) 171 ff. and on Gal. 4.14 in particular 315 ff.
²⁷ See the fundamental study by O. H. Steck, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten* (Neukirchen-Vluyne 1967).

the traditions handed over by them to the communities.²⁸ This picture still appears in many later texts, such as divers Church Orders and Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, and, especially in the Syriac tradition, it even affords a pattern according to which the office of Bishops is also delineated.²⁹ But on the whole, of course, the development went in a rather different direction. For, since in mainline Christianity ecclesiastical and especially episcopal authority was, as a result of the struggle against deviant groups like the Gnostics, construed as entirely derivative of the Apostles, the episcopal office was increasingly seen as primarily a guarantee for the purity of the so-called apostolic tradition. Consequently, the Bishops, like the Apostles and even the Lord Himself now no longer appeared in the first place in their quality of Messengers from Heaven, but became part of a chain of tradition stretching out over time, and thus on a purely horizontal plane. The concept of Apostolic Succession and with it that of Salvation History was born.³⁰

As far as our argument is concerned, this development gave rise to two significant changes. First, with regard to the semantics of the word 'apostle', the connotation of authority became more prominent now than ever before: the Apostles were henceforth seen as above all the historical founders of the Church and the source of its established traditions and institutions and, therefore, as a strictly limited group, located in place and time, with their own indispensable role in Salvation History. This in turn explains why, for example, Origen in his *Commentary on St John* now has to defend the much more general use of the word 'apostle' in John 13.16 by expressly stating that anyone who has been sent by somebody can be so called. In the same manner, St Hippolytus in his *Commentary on Canticles* can permit himself a wordplay by calling the women on the first Easter Morning 'apostles to the apostles'.³¹ This shows that in standard Christian usage,

²⁸ That the visions of the resurrected Lord have to be interpreted above all as reports of call experiences is argued, amongst others, by U. Wilckens, *Rechtfertigung als Freiheit: Paulusstudien* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1974) 12–13. One has to ask, therefore, whether the concept of tradition behind 1 Cor. 15.1 ff. has not also to be seen in the light of 1 Cor. 11.23: the source is not the Jerusalem or Antiochene community, but the heavenly Lord!

²⁹ On the close similarity of Bishops to the Apostles and even to Christ Himself in the Syriac tradition see the inspiring study by R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition* (Cambridge 1975) 195 ff.

³⁰ On the importance of St Irenaeus in this respect see H. von Campenhausen, *Urchristliches und Altkirchliches* (Tübingen 1979) 20 ff.

³¹ Origen *Jō.* 32.17; on St Hippolytus cp. Ysebaert (n. 8) 16; cp. also Justin

the word had now really become a frozen *terminus technicus* indicating a definite group of well-known biblical persons from the origin of the Church. The second change, related to the first, is that, with regard to the concept of apostleship, the horizontal approach now became entirely dominant at the cost of the vertical dimension that is so characteristic of the original picture. Apostles no longer came directly from the heavenly Lord, they came from the earthly Jesus and they came from Palestine and Jerusalem. In St Paul's letters, on the other hand, even the concept of tradition is still a vertical one and the churches founded by the apostle, are also in fact the result of a direct divine initiative: 'You are God's plantation, God's building' (1 Cor. 3.9). Not only the origin but also the future of his churches is seen by St Paul in an exclusively vertical context: he wants to present them as a pure bride to her husband, who is the heavenly Lord (2 Cor. 11.2).³²

So, even without reviewing ancient Mesopotamian or later Gnostic literature, we can conclude that in their general picture of the origin of the apostolic office Geo Widengren and Walter Schmithals may have been right after all. The Apostle to the Gentiles did not conceive of himself at least as a link in a horizontal chain of tradition. He was called from heaven and although he had to proclaim God's mystery on earth, this was only to bring a message of other-worldly salvation to mankind. In the final account, his own destiny and the destiny of the churches he had founded, just like so many heavenly plantations and temples holy to the Lord, was to be in heaven again. And the goal for which he longed was certainly not a position of honour in the historical record of Christianity, but that Day of the Lord which he saw always approaching and on which the churches he had founded would be his pride and his joy.³³

1 Apol. 63.5 and Tertullian *Praescr.* 20.4 who offers an explanation of the Latin *apostoli* as adopted from the Greek as a title for the Twelve.

³² Cp. 1 Thess. 3.13 and 4.17: 'And so we will stay for ever with the Lord', i.e. in the heavenly region. On the Church as God's plantation in the Syriac tradition cp. Murray (n. 29) 104 ff. who on p. 199 n. 4 also considers the relationship with the description of the Qumranic community as God's plantation in *1 QH* 8.4-5. Cp. also J. N. Bakhuizen van den Brink, *Ecclesia*, ii (The Hague 1966) 77 ff. On 'planting' and 'building' as an activity of Christ, an apostle or a divine messenger or saviour-figure in general, cp. H. Schlier, *Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu den Ignatiusbriefen* (Giessen 1929) 48-54 and P. Vielhauer, *Oikodome*, ii (Munich 1979) passim.

³³ 1 Thess. 2.19.

THE EUCHARIST AS A LOVE-MEAL (AGAPE) IN
DIDACHE 9–10, AND ITS DEVELOPMENT IN THE
PAULINE AND IN THE SYRIAN TRADITION

Joseph Ysebaert

From Homer onwards we hear of sacrificial meals. It was always a festive happening with plenty of meat. The gods received their part, which could be achieved by burning some portions for them or putting them before an image of the god. Within the Jewish tradition an offering could be burnt totally but, if a meal followed, this of course was a full meal. This fact is important for the understanding of the relation between Eucharist and love-meal but has been much neglected.

1. *The sequence of cup—bread in the Jewish Passover meal*

The Jewish Passover meal as described in the Mishnah, Pesa im 10.1–7, is a full meal. It begins with a blessing over a cup of wine mixed with water and then over the food that is brought in. This sequence is not found for other meals, notably not in Essenic communal meals. The explanation for the unusual order in Pesa im 10.1–7 may simply be that the first cup replaced the usual aperitif of wine with some food in the case of a festive meal. This was taken in another room but at the Passover there must have been lack of rooms for so many participants who at sunset all should recline on couches or pillows. As the second cup is mixed one listened to the story of Exodus, the third cup was for the chief dish, and during the fourth one was singing psalms. Cf. Mark 14.26, Billerbeck 4.1.54–76 and 4.2.611–39.

2. *The text tradition in Luke 22.17–20*

The institution narrative or more precisely the consecration words in the gospel of Luke include a well-known *crux* because in the majority of manuscripts the blessing of the cup is mentioned twice, once

before the blessing of the bread and again after it, Luke 22.17–20. The so-called shorter text (the one without vv. 19b–20) is found in the Greek text of D (codex Bezae) and in the old Latin version of the Itala to the exception of the codices *b* and *e* which put v. 19a before 17 to arrive at the usual order of bread-wine; likewise the Syriac tradition supports the short text: the so-called Curetonian Syriac places 19 before 17; the Sinaitic Syriac does the same but adds before 17 ‘after they had supped’ and after 17 ‘this is my blood, the new covenant’, borrowed from 20; the Peshitta Syriac omits 17 and 18 to obtain the sequence of bread-wine in 19–20.

Westcott and Hort rejected the second blessing of the cup. One does not understand, indeed, why this passage would have been suppressed to arrive at the unusual sequence of cup—bread. On the other hand, this unusual order may have occasioned the addition of the verses 19b–20 which are almost exactly the same as in 1 Cor. 11.24b–25 and seem to be borrowed.

According to the traditional explanation the first cup belongs to the Jewish Pascha but, if so, one wonders why the Jewish blessing of the bread is lacking and, even if this is supposed to be included in the mentioning of eating in 16–17, the main problem remains that the new Pascha now does not replace the old but is added to it.¹

In fact, starting from the hypothesis that the sequence of cup—bread in 17–18 is original but was inverted in the liturgical practice (see section 8a below), one understands why its presence in the manuscripts is weak and how the various adaptations could arise. Nevertheless, the Nestle editions from 1993 onwards have removed the double square brackets. See also section 8a.²

¹ E.g. the *Bible de Jérusalem* (1956¹) comments: ‘Ne comprenant pas cette construction théologique et s’étonnant de trouver deux coupes, des témoins anciens ont omis le v. 20 ou même la fin du v. 19; certainement à tort’ (E. Osty).

² Cf. B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart 1994²) 148–50, 164–6. The author explains the suppressing of the second cup ‘in terms of the disciplina arcani’; the majority of the editorial Committee ‘impressed by the overwhelming preponderance of external evidence supporting the longer form, explained the origin of the shorter form as due to some scribal accident or misunderstanding’ 150.

3. *The passing of the cup according to Mark 14.23–4*

The genitive absolute ‘As they were at table eating’ which introduces the section on Jude in Mark 14.18, is resumed in v. 22. Follows the blessing of the bread: ‘... he took the bread, and blessed, and broke . . . : Take; this is my body.’ Then the text goes on, 14.23–4: ‘And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them: This is my blood of the covenant . . .’

Here v. 24 is remarkable because Jesus pronounces the consecration words when several apostles did already drink from the cup. From a formalistic point of view, they received unconsecrated wine.³ Moreover, it was unusual that the cup passed, although there are classical parallels. A dramatic example is found in Herodotus 3.11. Apparently, the group was not yet lying down. There may have been a room free because the group coming from Galilee had begun the month one day earlier than the Jerusalem people. See the next section. As a matter of course we must assume that Jesus blessed all the wine and all the bread and, as the Passover was a family feast, the women who did the cooking were present in the room as far as their work allowed.

As the designation of the traitor occurs during the meal, this was after the initial blessing of cup and bread, Mark 14.20; Matt. 26.23; John 13.26.

4. *The Emmaus disciples and the Eucharistic love-meal in Acts 2.42–6*

According to Luke 24.30 the disciples of Emmaus recognized the Lord when he took the bread, blessed and broke it and gave it to them (εὐλόγησεν καὶ κλάσας ἐπέδιδου). Luke uses twice in the gospel and four times in Acts the words ἄρτον κλάω. They are a technical expression for the Eucharistic meal. It then includes normally the

³ J. Jeremias, *Die Abendmahlsworte Jesu* (Göttingen 1960³) 103, remarks that such accompanying words were unusual. In fact it is difficult to imagine another occasion where a blessing of a meal could be given such a special significance. He does not reckon Mark 14.24 to the original words. Cf. E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus* (Göttingen 1967¹⁷) 303–4: ‘Dann kreist der also gesegnete Becher unter den Tischgefährten’; J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* 1989³) 244 n. 26: ‘Theologische Konsequenzen sind aus dieser Hysteron-Proteron-Konstruktion nicht zu ziehen.’

full rite with bread and watery wine and other food. If the Emmaus disciples did eat something more than dry bread, the Eucharist included a normal meal.

The life of the early Christian community as reported by Luke in Acts 2.42–6 shows some similarity with that of Essenic communal life, as has often been observed. The breaking of bread (2.42,46) is again a technical term, supposed to be known to the readers. It includes the eating of ordinary leavened bread and other food. This food was most probably not supplied by the owner of the house but taken along from home by each according to his financial circumstances. Thus the common meal was the Eucharist and a love-meal or agape at the same time. Again the words ‘to break (the) bread’ are a technical expression for a Eucharistic meal of bread, wine and other food, and not for the eating of dry bread.⁴

5. *The Eucharist in the Didache*

As I noticed elsewhere, the term ἀπόστολος in *Did.* 11.3–6 is used as a technical term because it is supposed not to need any explanation for the addressees. It can therefore only be understood as referring to the Twelve. This fact takes the origin of the *Didache* back to the period immediately after the martyrdom of Stephen when the Greek speaking Jewish Christians were expelled from Jerusalem. Their sudden flight from the city to the country and further on to Antioch and Cyprus created a new situation described in Acts 8; 11.19. Herewith the details mentioned in the *Didache* perfectly fit in: baptism without unction, rules for the reception of wandering missionaries, for hospitality and the founding of new communities by the refugees themselves, *Did.* 7–8; 11–13; 15.1.⁵

⁴ H. Lietzmann, *Messe und Herrenmahl* (Berlin 1955³) 239–46, does not see this and supposes the expression to refer to a dry bread meal (*Brotkommunion*) as long as there is no mention of water or wine. He does so in all the instances of the New Testament including Luke 24.30,35 (Emmaus); Acts 20.7,11 (Troas); 27.35 (Malta); *Hom. Clem.* 14 (Eucharist by Peter); *Acts of John* 106, 109–10 (ed. M. Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, ii.1 [Leipzig 1898 = Hildesheim/Darmstadt 1959] 203 ff.; by John) and the *Acts of Thomas* (see section 9b).

⁵ See J. Ysebaert, *Die Amtsterminologie im Neuen Testament und in der Alten Kirche* (Breda 1994) 18 and 203–4. The Hellenists as Greek speaking Jewish Christians were relatively modern and more prone to release the rules of Mosaic life. When they were expelled, the apostles first remained in Jerusalem but then had to visit the refugees.

This is also true for the description of the Eucharistic meal in *Did.* 9–10. In the first place, we find for this meal the sequence of cup—bread as is typical of the Jewish Passover, whereas the rubric of 9.5 has the common sequence of eating and drinking. Secondly, the thanksgiving over cup and bread is not followed by the institution narrative and the consecration words. Apparently, this is not considered to be essential: ‘As to the Eucharist (εὐχαριστία) give thanks (εὐχαριστήσατε) thus: first for the drink: We give thanks (εὐχαριστοῦμεν) to you, our Father, for the holy vine of David . . . As to the broken bread: We give thanks (εὐχαριστοῦμεν) to you, our Father, for the life and knowledge . . .’ *Did.* 9.1–3.

It would be mistaken to think of a Eucharist with one (little) piece of bread and one draught of wine. Nevertheless some scholars have doubted to find here the Eucharist on the very ground that this was a full meal: ‘After being satisfied (ἐμπλησθῆναι), give thanks (εὐχαριστήσατε) thus: We give thanks to you, holy Father . . .’ 10.1–2. As in Acts 2.42,46, the Eucharist is a full meal with ordinary, i.e. leavened bread and watery wine taken from home.⁶

6. *The development of the terminology*

Hebr. *barak* ‘to praise, to speak well of’ esp. said of God but also of other persons and of things, is in the Septuagint constantly translated by εὐλογέω, εὐλογία, εὐλογητός. In Aramaic the meaning of *berak* pa. ‘to say well’ develops into ‘to say grace’ after meal. In the Septuagint the synonyms εὐχαριστέω, εὐχαριστία are rare and only found in texts written originally in Greek. This Greek verb has no passive but it has the advantage of expressing clearly the notion of thanksgiving. Thus the gospels have εὐλογέω in Matt. 14.19 parr. but εὐχαριστέω in John 6.11. The Latin versions show the difference

W. Rordorf, ‘La Didachè en 1999’, *Studia Patristica* 36 2001 289–90, does not understand this. Cf. for an early dating of the *Didache* also E. Mazza, ‘L’eucaristia di I Corinzi 10.16–17 in rapporto a Didachè 9–10’, *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 100 1986 193–223.

⁶ Cf. for instance J.-P. Audet, *La Didachè* (Paris 1958) 430, and B. Reicke, *Diakonie, Festfreude und Zelos* (Uppsala 1951) 10 n. 1, who distinguishes between three opinions for each of which he notices some authors: Eucharist and agape were (a) originally distinct, (b) distinct but linked ritually, (c) originally identical.

by translating the former with *benedicere*, *benedictio*, and the latter with *gratias agere*, *gratiarum actio*.

Thus in *Did.* 9.1–5 the verb εὐχαριστέω and the noun εὐχαριστία have obtained a new technical meaning of ‘Eucharistic thanksgiving’. In 9.5 the noun refers to the elements of bread and wine. On the other hand, in 10.1–2 the verb is used in the general sense of ‘to give thanks’.⁷

7. *The Eucharist in Antioch and in Jerusalem*

The Jerusalem agreement of 49 discharged Gentile Christians from observing the law of Moses, Acts 15.19–20. The compromise was reached on the conditions proposed by James and found in Lev. 17–18. As a matter of course the Jewish believers were not forbidden to observe Mosaic law. But were they still obliged? In his letter to the Galatians Paul blames Peter for his attitude towards the Gentile believers. After a message from James in Jerusalem he feared the circumcision party and drew back from the common meals with the Gentiles, Gal. 2.12. Paul does not make a distinction between a love-meal and a Eucharistic meal as such a distinction did not yet exist. What upsets him is the fact that the converted Gentiles would again be obliged to live as Jews (ἰουδαίειν Gal. 2.14), and even more that a complete separation between two groups of believers was threatening.⁸

When Paul arrived in Jerusalem at the end of his so-called Third Missionary Journey the segregation between Jewish and Gentile Christians in the Holy City indeed appears to be total. Fear exists that Paul does exhort Jewish Christians to forsake Moses. To the Gentile Christians in Jerusalem itself James has sent a letter (ἔπεστέιλμεν) to inform them that they should (only) abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, from blood and from incest, Acts 21.25.⁹

⁷ See the dictionaries; also H. W. Beyer, ‘εὐλογέω’, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* 2.751–63, and H. Conzelmann, ‘εὐχαριστέω’, *ibid.* 9.397–405.

⁸ For more details, see J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (Louisville, Ky., 1990) 148 ff. The author does not see that the vehement commotion of Paul in his letter to the Galatians can only be explained at a date after the Jerusalem council when the incident at Antioch has made Paul aware of the interpretation given by James, which turns the agreement into a misunderstanding (and makes it invalid). Cf. Ysebaert (n. 5) 209.

⁹ In Matt. 5.32; 19.9; Acts 15.20,29; 21.25 and 1 Cor. 5.1 πορνεία means ‘incest’.

For him a common meal with these Gentile Christians was unthinkable. And this we can now better understand because the Gentile Christians could take from home other food that was ritually unclean. This problem did not yet exist when according to Gal. 2.3 Titus as Paul's test case took part in the Eucharistic meals during the Jerusalem Conference.¹⁰ Here we find the essential point in the misunderstanding between James and Paul.

8. *The Eucharist in 1 Cor. 10–11 and in the Pauline tradition*

a. *1 Cor. 10–11*

In 1 Cor. 10.3–4 Paul refers in the usual sequence to the supernatural food and drink the Israelites received in the desert, likewise in 10.7 (Exod. 32.6) and in 11.22, but in 10.16 he explains the cup of blessing and the bread as a participation in the blood and the body of Christ. Choosing now the sequence of cup—bread and blood—body, he must have had in mind the Eucharistic model.

The account Paul gives in 1 Cor. 11.20–34 of the Christian Eucharistic meal is occasioned by an abuse in the Corinthian community and it is generally assumed that the apostle refers to a love-meal or agape as distinguished from the Eucharist. But what does he exactly disapprove? 'When you meet together, it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat. For in eating, each one takes beforehand his own meal (ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον προλαμβάνει), and one is hungry and another is drunk' 1 Cor. 11.20–1.

In this context the preposition and prefix *προ-* 'before', when taken in the local meaning, does not make sense, nor does it in the metaphorical meaning although one has tried to translate as 'hastily, in a hurry', a sense not mentioned in Liddell-Scott s.v. But the temporal sense fits in well: each one takes his own meal beforehand, i.e. before the proper Eucharistic meal begins. And they do so without sharing with the poor and waiting for one another. They have their own houses to take such meals, Paul remarks, and if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home.

This has been clearly argued by H. Baltensweiler, 'Die Ehebruchsklauseln bei Matthäus', *Theologische Zeitschrift* 15 1959 340–56; *Die Ehe im Neuen Testament* (Zürich 1967) 87–102.

¹⁰ Cf. Ysebaert (n. 5) 23–7.

Yet, in Paul's view the abuse is part of the Eucharistic gathering with a full meal: all members (ἕκαστος) start eating and drinking too early. By his intervention Paul achieves the following effects: (a) although the Eucharistic meal remains a full meal (cf. below Acts 20.7,11; 27.35), he occasions the introduction of separated love-meals (cf. below Jude 12; 2 Peter 2.13; see also Pliny *Ep.* 10.96.7), (b) probably without being aware of the fact, he makes the Antiochene unclean food problem disappear, and (c) in order to avoid the abuse of wine he postpones the blessing of the cup to the end of the meal. The latter Paul achieves by asserting that Jesus at the Last Supper blessed the cup after the meal (μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι 1 Cor. 11.25). He received this knowledge from the Lord, he says, but as a Jew he knew doubtless that this is wrong, and he is in contradiction with his own words in 1 Cor. 10.16. One could say that he tells a lie, but the apostle's concern was not with the historical details of the Last Supper. The blessing is now embedded in a solemn institution narrative with the consecration words, which makes the text very appropriate for liturgical use. This sequence came into the final redaction of Matt. 26.26–9 and Mark 14.22–4, and a second cup was added in Luke 22.20.

Concerning the contribution for the brothers in Jerusalem Paul advises that as in other churches each put something aside on the first day of every week and store it (κατὰ μίαν σαββάτου . . . παρ' ἑαυτῶ τιθέτω θησαυρίζων) so that contributions need not be made when he comes, 1 Cor. 16.1–2. The first day from Sabbath, i.e. the first day of the week, began on Sabbath at sunset, as this was the way how Jews and most others reckoned a day. We find this day also mentioned in *Did.* 14.1. For Jewish Christians the Sabbath as a day of rest was not suited for a communal meal, but the Saturday evening after sunset, which was also the day of the Resurrection, was the most obvious time. And of course the contribution should be stored not at home every week but by the deacons of the church administration.¹¹

¹¹ Cf. W. Rordorf, *Der Sonntag. Geschichte des Ruhe- und Gottesdiensttages im ältesten Christentum* (Zürich 1962) 190–212. This author begins with the Roman calendar which reckons the day from midnight to midnight and concludes that the Eucharist was originally celebrated on Sunday evening. Likewise W. Rordorf and A. Tuilier, *La Doctrine des douze apôtres (Didachè)* (Paris 1978) 66.

b. *A love-meal in Eph. 5.18–20*

In his letter to the Ephesians Paul (or an anonymous author) refers to a gathering in which psalms are being sung and not too much wine should be drunk: ‘Do not get drunk with wine . . . but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another with psalms and hymns . . .’ Eph. 5.18–19. It is difficult to see here a Eucharist. Apparently there existed yet another more cheerful type of gathering: the love-meal.

c. *The Eucharist in Troas during the night of Saturday on Sunday, Acts 20.6–12*

The breaking of the bread as mentioned in Acts 20.7 refers to the Eucharist during Paul’s stay in Troas. This occurred on the first day from the Sabbath, i.e. on Saturday after sunset, and in fact after midnight. There is no mention of a love-meal.

d. *The Eucharist on board a ship near Malta, Acts 27.35*

When after a tempest of a fortnight the wind dropped, Paul exhorted the 276 passengers and crew to take some food: ‘And he took bread and giving thanks to God in the presence of all he broke it and began to eat. Then they all were encouraged and ate some food themselves’ 27.35–6. One may be surprised at such a public celebration of the Eucharist, but passengers had to take their own food with them, such as bread or cakes, smoke-dried meat and fruit, the crew only providing fresh water. Eating with his own group, Paul says the blessing only for them. And he may have done so every day, even when the watery wine was wanting.¹²

¹² According to S. Dockx, ‘Luc a-t-il été le compagnon d’apostolat de Paul?’, *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 103 1981 358–400 at 395–6 the itinerary used by Luke in the so-called ‘We-sections’ is the work of Timothy who accompanied Paul during these periods. Timothy and Luke were both in Rome during the Roman captivity of Paul from March 56 to February 58. Bo Reicke, ‘Die Mahlzeit mit Paulus auf den Wellen des Mittelmeers, Act 27.33–38’, *Theologische Zeitschrift* 4 1948 401–10, suggests that Luke has inserted the verses 27.33–8 under the influence of the Gospel narratives on the miraculous multiplication of bread, but Reicke rather seems to have been influenced by these narratives to find too much in the itinerary. Cf. also F. Meijer, *Paulus’ zeereis naar Rome* (Amsterdam 2000) 134.

e. *A love-meal in Jude 12*

A passage of the Letter of Jude blames love-meals for the misconduct of some participants: 'These are blemishes on your love-meals (ἀγάπαι) as they boldly carouse together, looking after themselves . . .' Jude 12. The Greek word appears now as a technical term for the Christian love-meal. The text suggests no connections with the Eucharist and this points to a full separation between the two events.

f. *The reference to a love-meal in 2 Pet. 2.12–14*

The second Letter of Peter also blames the excesses of the love-meals. The text is similar to that of Jude 12 but the tone is stronger: 'These, like irrational animals . . . (will be) suffering for their wrongdoing. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime (ἐν ἡμέρᾳ already before sunset; or: at the (Sun)day; cf. 3.10). They are blots (σπίλοι) and blemishes, revelling in their dissipations (ἐν ταῖς ἀπάταις), carousing with you' 2 Pet. 2.12–13.

The author, i.e. his secretary, seems to depend on Jude 12 and tries to strengthen and extend the images. He replaces the unclear σπιλάδες 'peaks of rocks' by σπῖλοι 'blots'. Thus one sees better that he chooses ἀπάται with a pun on ἀγάπαι. This gives an indirect evidence for the existence of love-meals. For the rest, this pun has not been remarked upon in many commentaries. Some argue that the meals before supper were considered as gluttony and therefore could not be love-meals. Indeed, Christians had their love-meals rather in the evening and thence the shameless people joining them (συνευωχούμενοι) as well. Then, ἐν ἡμέρᾳ is an emphatic expression for 'the day of the Lord', and the author refers to 'the carouse on the day (of the Lord)'.¹³

g. *The day of the Lord in Rev. 1.10*

The author of the Book of Revelation, who announces himself as John, writes: 'I John, your brother . . ., was on the island called Patmos . . . I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day (ἡ κυριακή), and

¹³ This instance of pun (*Wortspiel*) is not mentioned in F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and F. Rehkopf, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch* (Göttingen 1990¹⁷) §488, and emphatic use of words is not mentioned at all. See among the commentaries e.g. K. H. Schelkle (Freiburg 1964) and H. Paulsen (Göttingen 1992).

I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet' Rev. 1.9–10. The author supposes the term to be known to the seven churches to which he writes. It can therefore only be the technical term for the Sunday as already in *Did.* 14.1.

9. *The Eucharist in Syria and further to the East*

The early Syrian liturgy of the Eucharist has attracted the attention of scholars because there are indications for an old tradition of a rite without an institution narrative and without consecration words. This gives a remarkable link with *Didache* 9–10. In antiquity, the Syrian liturgy with Syriac as its liturgical language extended from Antioch and Edessa to Mesopotamia and the Syro-Malabar Christians of India. The principal sources are the *Acts of Thomas*, the Anaphora of Addai and Mari and other anaphoras in Syriac manuscripts.

a. *The Acts of Thomas and the Acts of John*

The *Acts of Thomas* recount the missionary work of the apostle Judas Thomas in India. This document may have had its origin in Edessa. It survives in Syriac and in Greek, and the latter is usually supposed to be a translation from the first. Some Gnostic features may have been wiped out for the convenience of the readers. The Eucharistic meal is mentioned several times as following baptism.¹⁴ The formula is: 'breaking bread (or: bread of the blessing) he (Judas Thomas) gave (or made the baptized partakers of) the Eucharist' *Acts of Thomas* 27, cf. 29, 49–50, 120–1, 133, 158 (*AAA* 2.2.142 ff.) When a queen Mygdonia orders her nurse to take bread and mixed water, the nurse would rather fetch flagons of wine. The queen refuses this and the ceremony is now described this way: 'after breaking bread and taking a cup of water (ποτήριον ὕδατος), he (Thomas) made her a partaker in the Body of Christ' 121.

As has been mentioned in section 4, the words ἄρτον κλάω are a technical expression for the Eucharistic ceremony which includes the drinking of watery wine. This is now called a mixture of water (κράσις ὕδατος 120 twice). The word mixture includes the fact that

¹⁴ For the baptismal rite combined with an anointing, see J. Ysebaert, *Greek Baptismal Terminology* (Nimeguen 1962) 311–14, 343–6, 360–2.

the water is mixed with another liquid, which in the context must refer to wine. It is therefore probable that the cup of water in the following chapter 121 refers to the same mixture.¹⁵

A prayer said by the apostle is mentioned as preceding or accompanying the Eucharist in 49–50, 121, 133 and 158. He may have always done so and several times the Eucharist is called a blessing and a thanksgiving but there is no trace of the institution narrative and the consecration words. The fact that something is not mentioned does not prove its absence but it seems probable that these words were not considered to be essential. This is in keeping with *Didache* 9. The sequence, however, is always that of bread—cup.

One passage of the *Acts of John* is here of interest because the apostle says a rather long prayer before the breaking of the bread without any reference to the institution narrative and the consecration words, *Acts of John* 105–9. The Acts are dated about AD 200 and as many of the events described have some connection with Ephesus, the text may have its origin in that region. For the anaphora this would mean some evidence outside Syria.

b. *The anaphora of (composed by) the Apostles Addai and Mari*

The church of Edessa traces its origin back to Addai, which is Syriac for Thaddaeus, and his disciple Mari. Addai should have been one of the seventy disciples sent out by Christ according to Luke 10.1.

¹⁵ Greek nouns in -τις and -σις denote an action such as mixing or the result of an action such as mixture. M. Bonnet in his edition of the text (*Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, ii.2 [Leipzig 1903 = Hildesheim/Darmstadt 1959] 230.15,19), suggests without manuscript evidence a correction into κρασίον. This is a very rare word which may have the meaning 'cup for mixing', in this case for the mixing of water with wine. As the author of the *Acts* regards Mygdonia's frugality, he may mention the water instead of the wine or suggest that in this case only water was used. The only known instance for κρασίον is in John Moschos, *Prat.* 113 (PG 87.2977): κρασίον ὄξους 'a little (mixing) cup of poor wine or vinegar (τὸ ὄξος)', cf. G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford 1961–8) s.v. For the rest, a good instance for the use of water without wine is found in the *Acta Petri cum Simone* (Vercelli Acts) 2 (ed. R. A. Lipsius, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, i [Leipzig 1891 = Hildesheim/Darmstadt 1959] 46): *optulerunt autem sacrificium Paulo pane et aqua*, but Justin Martyr mentions bread and a drinking-cup with water and a mixture (ἄρτος καὶ ποτήριον ὕδατος καὶ κράματος) in his description of the Eucharist in Rome, which may suggest that for him the water is at least as important as the wine, *1 Apol.* 65.3, cf. 67.5, and *Dial.* 70.3–4, referring to Isa. 33.16. Epiphanius mentions for the Ebionites unleavened bread and water, *Haer.* 30.16.1; for Marcion water, 42.3.3; for the Encratites water instead of wine, 47.1.7; and for the Quintillianites bread and cheese, 49.2.6. Cf. Lietzmann (n. 4) 246–8, who mentions the earlier literature.

Although the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari*, also named the Anaphora of the Apostles, is only preserved in Syriac manuscripts from the 16th century onwards, there can be no doubt about some very archaic features. This concerns notably the absence of the institution narrative and the consecration words.

A. Gelston¹⁶ gives the following reconstruction of the two essential sections H and I, in Botte's edition 9 and 10.¹⁷ Gelston suggests that we can arrive at yet an earlier version when the words between square brackets are left out (55, 123):

H (9 Botte) Epiclesis: 'And let thy Holy Spirit come, O my Lord, and rest upon this offering of thy servants [and bless it and sanctify it] that it may be to us, O my Lord, for the pardon of sins and for the forgiveness of shortcomings, and for [the great hope of] the resurrection of the dead, and for new life in the kingdom of heaven [with all who have been pleasing before thee].'

I (10 Botte) Anamnesis: 'And for [all] thy [wonderful] dispensation which is towards us we give thee thanks and glorify thee [without ceasing] in thy Church redeemed by the precious blood of thy Christ, with open mouths and unveiled faces offering glory and honour and thanksgiving and adoration to thy [living and] holy [and life-giving] name, now and at all times and for ever and ever. Amen.'

The epiclesis shows its Semitic origin by the parallel structure. It begins with an invocation of the Holy Spirit and the anamnesis with a thanksgiving to God for his [wonderful] dispensation. The intention of a Eucharistic meal is supposed to be made sufficiently clear by the invocation of the Holy Spirit and the thanksgiving. This epiclesis is not yet found in *Didache* 9 and in the Eucharistic prayers of the *Acts of Thomas*. According to orthodox theology of the Eastern churches who followed Nestorius in his schism after the Council of Ephesus in 431 the consecration is effectuated by the descent of the Holy Spirit invoked by the prayer of the epiclesis.¹⁸ However, as has

¹⁶ A. Gelston, *The Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari* (Oxford 1992) 55. Earlier editions, translations and studies may be found in the Bibliography. Notice esp. W. F. Macomber, 'The Maronite and Chaldean Versions of the Anaphora of the Apostles', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 37 1971 55–84 at 55–6.

¹⁷ B. Botte, 'L'Anaphore chaldéenne des Apôtres', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 15 1949 259–76; 'Problèmes de l'Anaphore syrienne des apôtres Addai et Mari', *L'Orient Syrien* 10 1965 89–106.

¹⁸ See W. de Vries, *Sakramententheologie bei den Nestorianern* (Rome 1947) 233–40. The author refers to an opinion rejected in a Syriac manuscript that paten and cup are consecrated by the mere fact that they are put on the altar (240). This

been observed by Hofrichter, the epiclesis of the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari* does not say a word about the consecration of bread and cup. Again this is supposed to be clear enough from the ceremony itself.¹⁹

c. *The Epistula Apostolorum*

The *Epistula Apostolorum*, originally written in Greek but only extant in Coptic and Ethiopic versions and in a Latin fragment, is dated about AD 160, and originates from Syria. The Eucharist and the Agape are mentioned as rather distinguished events. The mention of the remembrance may include an anamnesis. The drinking of the cup is mentioned without the breaking of the bread and thus seems to be yet the first and more prominent part of the Eucharist. The absence of the consecration words suggests that they at least were not yet considered to be essential. The Lord says to the Apostles: 'And you therefore celebrate the remembrance of my death . . . And when you complete my Agape and my remembrance . . . (so the Ethiopic MS, the Coptic has: 'the remembrance that is for me, and the Agape') . . . And we said to him: O Lord, have you then not completed the drinking of the passover? Must we then do it again? And he said to us: Yes' *Epistula Apostolorum* 15 (J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 565). See also below, section 9f.²⁰

d. *Other Syriac evidence*

The institution narrative with the consecration words occurs in the Byzantine liturgy and, perhaps because Nestorius had been bishop of Constantinople, also in the Syriac liturgy of the Nestorians. Yet, anaphoras without these words have been used among the Maronites in West-Syria,²¹ the Christians of Nisibis and Seleucia-Ctesiphon near

would mean that the essential point is in the intention of the celebrant; cf. in the sections 2, 9b, and 9f.

¹⁹ P. Hofrichter, 'L'anaphora d'Addai et Mari dans l'Église de l'Orient: Une eucharistie sans récit d'institution?', *Istina* 11 1995 95–105 at 104.

²⁰ For the dating and origin see J.-N. Pères, 'L'Épître des Apôtres et l'Anaphore des Apôtres: Quelques convergences', *Apocrypha* 8 1997 89–96; 'La solidarité fraternelle dans la célébration de l'agape pascale selon l'Épître des Apôtres', *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 114 2000 62–8; H. Manders, 'Sens et fonction du récit de l'Institution', *Questions Liturgiques* 53 1972 203–18.

²¹ Cf. I. E. Rahmani, *Les liturgies orientales et occidentales* (Beyrouth 1929) 314–35, esp. the comment 315. M. Hayek, *Liturgie maronite: Histoire et textes eucharistiques* (Paris 1964).

Baghdad²² and the Malabar Christians on the S.W. coast of the Indian subcontinent.²³

Moreover, in a description of the consecration words in Syriac anaphoras as found in manuscripts from the Vatican Library and elsewhere, A. Raes mentions several manuscripts which have the institution narrative but without the consecration words.²⁴ The core of the text runs in the Latin translations by Raes: 'acceptit panem in manus suas, gratias agens benedixit ac sanctificavit et fregit et dedit discipulis suis et dixit: Accipite, manducate ex eo vos omnes in remissionem peccatorum et in vitam aeternam . . . Similiter et calicem benedixit ac sanctificavit et dedit apostolis et dixit: Accipite, bibite ex eo vos omnes in remissionem debitorum et in vitam aeternam.'²⁵

e. *The latinization*

The Maronites and the Malabar Christians used more than one anaphora, which may have occasioned some interference especially with regard to the institution narrative. However, when these groups came in touch with the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches, this brought about a process of purgation from heretical (Nestorian) influences and of orthodox traditions reaching to such details as the making of the sign of the cross. The adaptations in the liturgy effaced much of the old state of affairs.²⁶

²² Cf. E. C. Ratcliff, 'The Original Form of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari: A Suggestion', *Journal of Theological Studies* 30 1929 23–32.

²³ Cf. R. H. Connolly, 'The Work of Menezes on the Malabar Liturgy', *Journal of Theological Studies* 15 1914 396–425, 569–89, esp. 407 with note 2: the author compares two texts of the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari*, one with the institution narrative (J. F. Raulin, *Historia Ecclesiae Malabaricae cum Diamperitana Synodo* [Rome 1745 = Westmead 1969] 316–18) and the other without (from the Syriac missal *Liturgia . . . Adaei et Maris* [Urmiae (Persia) 1890], translated in F. E. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern* (Oxford 1896) 246, 290, col. 2 before the prayer 'Glory be to thee'). See also F. C. Burkitt, 'The Old Malabar Liturgy', *Journal of Theological Studies* 29 1928 155–7. G. B. Howard, *The Christians of St Thomas and Their Liturgies* (Oxford 1864 = Farnborough 1969), gives several anaphoras, among them the *Anaphora of St Peter* without and the *Anaphora of the Twelve Apostles* with the institution narrative, 267–90; cf. also 124.

²⁴ A. Raes, 'Les paroles de la consécration dans les anaphores syriennes', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 3 1937 486–504.

²⁵ The texts lacking the institution narrative and the consecration words can be found in the Corpus of Syriac Anaphoras, edited by A. Raes and others, as 5, *Anaphora Syriaca Duodecim Apostolorum*, and 19, *Anaphora S. Thomae Apostoli*. Cf. also 13 *Anaphora Ioannis Sabae*.

²⁶ At the Synod of Diamper (near Goa) in 1599 A. de Menezes (cf. n. 23) as

f. *The explanation of the absence*

The absence of the relevant passage has been explained in different ways. Supposing that the consecration words were original, one thinks of a copyist's error, an omission out of reverence, or the need of shortening an anaphora that had become too long.²⁷ However, it may now be clear that we find here an early tradition which goes back to the *Didache*. The essential point was the intention to celebrate the Eucharist, which could be done with an appropriate prayer. To this end a community needs an ἐπίσκοπος and a διάκονος to replace the wandering missionaries, *Did.* 15.1. When later the epiclesis was considered to be the essential moment, the insertion of the institution narrative may have met with some reluctance as to the consecration words so that in some anaphoras they were left out.

Conclusion and summary

In the Jewish Passover tradition the blessing of the first cup replaced by lack of rooms for so many people the aperitif that was usual at festive meals. When at the Last Supper Jesus pronounced the consecration words, this was to elucidate what was already included in the initial blessing or thanksgiving. The eating and drinking of the Eucharist substituted the Jewish Passover and was as any sacrificial meal in antiquity a full meal. From Luke 22.17–19 it appears that Jesus blessed first the cup and then the bread. The first Christians did the same with wine, ordinary leavened bread and other food taken by the participants from home for a full meal. This situation is found in Acts 2.42,46; *Did.* 9 and 10.1 and Gal. 2.11 ff. (for Antioch). The abuse among the Corinthians of the Eucharist as a full meal urged Paul to intervene. This action led to the introduction of a love-meal or agape as separated from the Eucharist, whereas

the Portuguese archbishop of Goa reorganized the Malabar Church. J. P. M. van der Ploeg, *The Christians of St. Thomas in South India and their Syriac manuscripts* (Rome 1983) 65, remarks that at this synod the consecration words were out of discussion. This is correct, but for the Portuguese missionaries this problem was most important and must have been solved from the beginning. Cf. Hefele-Leclercq and C. de Clercq, *Histoire des Conciles* (Paris 1949) 11.1.45–6 and 60.

²⁷ See Raes (n. 24) 489 and 501–4 for the earlier literature and for Raes himself. Add B. Botte, 'Les anaphores syriennes orientales', *Eucharisties d'orient et d'occident* (Paris 1970) 2–24 at 11, and van der Ploeg (n. 26) 62.

the latter within certain limits remained a full meal. To avoid any abuse of wine at the Eucharist Paul put the blessing of the cup after the meal. To this end he referred to the Lord himself at the Last Supper, knowing that this was not correct but not aware of the contradiction with himself in 1 Cor. 10.16. He now embedded the blessing of cup and bread in a solemn institution narrative with the consecration words. This he did with so much emphasis that he arrived at its classical form, which was taken over in the synoptic gospels and generally accepted in all the churches outside Syria. There the tradition of the *Didache* persisted, but variants were introduced. So even the epiclesis could be considered to be the moment of the consecration.

The separation of Eucharist and love-meal solved most probably by itself and not on purpose the Antiochene problem of unclean food combined with the Eucharist. One would like to know whether James and Paul got aware of this effect and discussed it during their second meeting in Jerusalem, but Luke only notices the complete segregation.

ROMANTIC FANTASIES: EARLY CHRISTIANS LOOKING BACK ON THE APOSTOLIC PERIOD

Ton Hilhorst

The life of Jesus and the first stages of the movement he brought about have always aroused keen interest, but the ideas formed about them have diverged widely as historical insights changed. This paper will provide an impression of the views current in antiquity by discussing some early Christian texts both inside and outside the New Testament. The authors of the samples chosen are unknown, although some of the texts purport to have been written by famous persons. The first half of this contribution will be devoted to what might loosely be called apocryphal literature; then the New Testament will be examined.

Muratorian Canon

One of the oldest lists of books of the New Testament is the fragment known as the *Muratorian Canon*. Published in 1740 by the indefatigable archivist Lodovico Antonio Muratori, it has been an object of investigation ever since. In 1973, A. C. Sundberg argued for a dating of the text to the fourth century; nevertheless, it is still generally held to date from the later second century.¹ There is consensus about Greek being its original language, but what has come down to us is a translation in what some scholars shudderingly describe as 'barbarous Latin'. In the eighth-century manuscript that transmits the list, it is a continuous text of 85 lines which contains a reasoned catalogue of New Testament writings. It begins at the point where the author is concluding his discussion of St Mark's

¹ A. C. Sundberg, 'Canon Muratori: A Fourth-Century List', *Harvard Theological Review* 66 (1973) 1–41. For the subsequent debate see the bibliography provided by K. Zelzer, 'Canon Muratorianus (Fragmentum Muratori)', in K. Sallmann (ed.), *Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur der Antike*, iv (Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft viii.4; Munich 1997) 348–9; add L. M. McDonald, *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon* (Peabody, Mass., 1995²) 209–20, who sides with Sundberg.

gospel, and it ends while dealing with books that are rejected by some people or by the author himself.

The MS has the following digression on St John's gospel (ll. 9–16):

quarti euangeliorum; iohannis ex decipolis
 cohortantibus condiscipulis et $\overline{\text{ep}}\text{s}$ suis
 dixit conieiunate mihi; odie triduo et quid
 cuique fuerit reuelatum alterutrum
 nobis enarremus eadem nocte reue
 latum andreae ex apostolis ut recognis
 centibus cuntis iohannis suo nomine
 cun^cta discrib^ret

For convenience, it is presented here in a normalized form, following mainly Hans Lietzmann, and in the close translation by W. Schneemelcher – R. McL. Wilson:²

Quartum euangeliorum Iohannis ex discipulis. Cohortantibus condiscipulis et episcopis suis dixit: Conieiunate mihi hodie triduo, et quid cuique fuerit reuelatum, alterutrum nobis enarremus. Eadem nocte reuelatum Andreae ex apostolis, ut recognoscentibus cunctis Iohannes suo nomine cuncta describeret.

The fourth of the Gospels, that of John, (one) of the disciples. When his fellow-disciples and bishops urged him, he said: Fast with me from today for three days, and what will be revealed to each one let us relate to one another. In the same night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the apostles, that, whilst all were to go over (it), John in his own name should write everything down.

I am not going to discuss the grammar and textual criticism of the passage here, and will take the correctness of the translation just quoted for granted. What does interest me is the statement about

² H. Lietzmann (ed.), *Das Muratorische Fragment und die monarchianischen Prologe zu den Evangelien* (Kleine Texte für Vorlesungen und Übungen 1; Berlin 1933 = Bonn 1902) 5; W. Schneemelcher and R. McL. Wilson (eds.), *New Testament Apocrypha*, i: *Gospels and Related Writings* (Cambridge and Louisville, Ky., 1991) 34–5. A facsimile of the text is in S. P. Tregelles, *Canon Muratorianus: The Earliest Catalogue of the Books of the New Testament Edited with Notes And a Facsimile of the MS. in the Ambrosian Library at Milan* (Oxford 1867), after p. 10; photographs may be consulted in H. Leclercq, 'Muratorianum', *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* 12 1935 543–60, after col. 552. There are no recent commentaries as far as I know. Useful old ones include M. J. Routh, *Reliquiae Sacrae*, iv (Oxford 1818¹) 7–37; Tregelles *ibid.* 29–65; B. F. Westcott, *A General Survey of the History of the Canon of the New Testament* (Cambridge and London 1881⁵) 534–8; T. Zahn, *Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons*, ii (Erlangen and Leipzig 1890) 14–128; and M.-J. Lagrange, *Introduction à l'étude du Nouveau Testament*, i: *Histoire ancienne du canon du Nouveau Testament* (Paris 1933²) 71–4.

the fellow disciples. Since its interpretation is still controversial, I will have to spend some time on it before being able to use it as a source. Summarizing my view as concisely as possible, I would say that fellow disciples = bishops = apostles. The first equation seems to be made expressly in the text. What, however, about the second one? The New Testament gospels use the word disciple in both wider and narrower senses. In the narrower sense the word may denote the 'inner circle' of Jesus' followers. Matthew 10.1; 11.1; 28.16, and also the apocryphal *Gospel of Peter* 59, use the designation 'the twelve disciples', i.e. the twelve apostles.³ The narrower sense must be meant in the passage in the *Muratorian Canon*, for John's epithet '(one) of the disciples' precisely distinguishes him from Luke, who is mentioned just before (ll. 6–7) as having 'not seen the Lord in the flesh'. The author might have called John 'one of the apostles', as he does Andrew, but the wording may well have been inspired by John 13.23: 'One of his disciples (*unus ex discipulis eius* Vulgate), whom Jesus loved, was lying close to the breast of Jesus.' If, then, John's designation as '(one) of the disciples' serves to denote him as an apostle,⁴ the same applies to his 'fellow disciples'; they are apostles just like John, and Andrew, for that matter.

Our double equation conflicts, however, with two traditional ideas, namely that John wrote his gospel after the deaths of the other apostles, and that apostles and bishops are mutually exclusive quantities. Therefore, scholars have done their best to harmonize this passage with the familiar ideas.

First, there is the time of writing of St John's gospel. M.-J. Lagrange states that the author of the *Canon* cannot have contradicted what was common knowledge in his time, apparently including John's advanced age at the time of writing the gospel.⁵ From this he tacitly

³ Cf. W. Bauer, K. Aland, and B. Aland, *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literatur* (Berlin and New York 1988⁶) s.v. μαθητής 2b; G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford 1961–8) s.v. μαθητής 2a. Also, for instance, in the Coptic *Apocryphon of James* (NHC I.2) 1.24–5; 2.9–10, as Gerard Luttikhuisen pointed out to me.

⁴ For a challenge to this idea, see C. A. Credner, *Geschichte des Neutestamentlichen Kanon* (Berlin 1860) 158–60, who believes that the Canon speaks of two people called John, a disciple who wrote the gospel and 1 John and the apostle who wrote 2–3 John and Revelation, and A. Ehrhardt, *The Framework of the New Testament Stories* (Manchester 1964) 14–15. I owe these references to Theo Korteweg.

⁵ Lagrange (n. 2) 71–2; cf. also his *Évangile selon saint Jean* (Études Bibliques; Paris 1948⁸) lxi–lxiv.

deduces that John's *condiscipuli* cannot have been the apostles, for they had all died by that time. The mention of John's fellow disciples and the apostle Andrew, he argues, only seems to contradict this conclusion. The *condiscipuli* are not John's colleagues but his subordinates: they are 'ses disciples, condisciples entre eux'. However, if a *discipulus* is mentioned, the *condiscipuli* mentioned immediately afterwards normally denote his fellow *discipuli*, and here the formula *cohortantibus discipulis* instead of *cohortantibus condiscipulis* would have been essential to avoid misunderstanding if indeed John's disciples were meant. Furthermore, if the *condiscipuli* are the disciples of John's advanced age, what sense would it make to have them review what John had written? They were not eyewitnesses of Jesus' public life so their judgement would be without particular importance. Lagrange seems more or less to concede this point, given his comment: 'Tous ne pouvaient évidemment attester la réalité des faits. Ils certifient simplement que c'est bien Jean qui a écrit ou dicté'. As for Andrew, Lagrange takes the mention of his apostleship to exclude the same quality for the *condiscipuli*: 'Ses condisciples ne peuvent être d'autres apôtres, puisqu'André va paraître sous ce nom.' I fail to see the cogency of this claim. In addition, it leads to the curious conclusion that precisely the person not included in the *condiscipuli* whom John invited to fast and expect a revelation was the receiver of that revelation. And furthermore, in his commentary on John's gospel, Lagrange affirms that the mention of Andrew as an apostle does not exclude John's apostleship, although John is introduced as *ex discipulis* and not as *ex apostolis*.⁶ Why should this reasoning be valid for the *condiscipuli* but not for the *discipulus*? Later on in the text, ll. 48–9, yet another feature turns up militating against a late dating. We read there that Paul in writing his epistles followed the example of his predecessor John (*prodecessuris sui iohannis*), who wrote the seven epistles incorporated in Revelation 2–3. According to the author of the *Canon*, therefore, John wrote his Revelation very early; Lagrange himself suggests that he had in mind a date under Claudius, the period

⁶ Lagrange (n. 5), lxiv: 'André seul est nommé Apôtre, ce qui d'ailleurs ne veut pas dire que Jean ne l'était pas.' Ehrhardt (n. 4), feels indeed that the different description aims to represent John 'as a disciple, but not an Apostle, i.e. one of the Twelve'. H. von Campenhausen, *Die Entstehung der christlichen Bibel* (Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 39; Tübingen 1968) 301–2, rejects Ehrhardt's opinion.

mentioned by Epiphanius.⁷ It is hardly reasonable to suppose that he wrote his gospel half a century later.

Then there is the problem of the apostles being bishops. Lagrange solves this problem simply by asserting, as we have seen, that the *condiscipuli* are not apostles but disciples of John. He thinks the bishops are those of Asia Minor appointed by John and mentioned as 'angels' in Revelation 2–3.⁸ On the side of Lagrange are a statement by Victorinus of Pettau (c. 230–304) and two by Jerome about Asian bishops urging John to write the gospel.⁹ But both Andrew and the checking of the text by the other disciples are lacking here, and the earlier testimony by Clement of Alexandria in Eusebius *h.e.* 6.14.7 mentions John as writing his gospel *προτραπέντα ὑπὸ τῶν γνωρίμων*, 'admonished by his acquaintances', which is compatible with the idea that they were his fellow apostles. Anyhow, whether there are differences or not, as long as we cannot accept that the *condiscipuli* are John's disciples we have to come to terms with the phrase *condiscipulis et episcopis suis*. Among the older scholars trying to explain the reference to bishops is Theodor Zahn. His tacit premiss is, like Lagrange's, that we cannot suppose the author to claim things (in this case, apostles being bishops) that contrast with familiar traditions. Therefore he assumes a mistranslation. The original Greek, he suggests, read *προτραπόντων αὐτὸν τῶν συμμαθητῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπισκόπων* (or *τῶν ἐπισκόπων*); the translator incorrectly applied *αὐτοῦ* to the second noun as well and rendered *cohortantibus condiscipulis et episcopis suis*.¹⁰ But in the absence of additional arguments the assump-

⁷ Lagrange (n. 2) 73 n. 3. The passage in Epiphanius is *Panarion* 51.33.9.

⁸ For an overview of the theories concerning the meaning of the angels of Revelation 2–3 see D. E. Aune, *Revelation* 1–5 (World Biblical Commentary 52; Dallas 1997) 108–12. The idea that they are the bishops is mostly rejected nowadays, but cf. J. Ysebaert, *Die Amtsterminologie im Neuen Testament und in der Alten Kirche: Eine lexikographische Untersuchung* (Breda 1994) 22.

⁹ Victorinus *Commentarius in Apocalypsin* 11.1: *conuenerunt ad illum de finitimis ciuitatibus episcopi et compulerunt eum, ut ipse testimonium conscriberet in dominum*; Jerome *Vir. ill.* 9.1: *Ioannes apostolus . . . nouissimum omnium scripsit Euangelium, rogatus ab Asiae episcopis*; id. *Prologue to the Commentary on Matthew*: *coactus est ab omnibus paene tunc Asiae episcopis et multarum ecclesiarum legationibus de diuinitate saluatoris altius scribere . . . ut ecclesiastica narrat historia, cum a fratribus coeretur, ut scriberet, ita facturum respondisse, si indicto ieiunio in communi omnes deum deprecarentur; quo expleto reuelatione saturatus in illud prooemium caelo ueniens eructauit: in principio erat uerbum et uerbum erat apud deum et deus erat hoc uerbum: hoc erat in principio apud deum.*

¹⁰ Zahn (n. 2) 35 and 141. For the sake of completeness I should mention that Routh (n. 2) 3, puts a comma after *episcopis*, thus substantivizing the possessive pronoun *suis*, a solution of despair, in my opinion.

tion of a mistranslation opens the door to arbitrariness. We might also try a palaeographic approach. The manuscript uses the abbreviation *eps* (i.e. *episcopis*) with a line over it. Should this be a mistake for *aps* (i.e. *apostolis*), a difference of just one letter, then the text would simply state that John's fellow disciples were apostles, which would be nothing special. However, it seems to be wiser to stick to the one witness we have to the text and read *episcopis*.

Indeed it is perfectly possible to explain the text as it stands. The common notion of apostle is that it is a disciple of Jesus commissioned by him, and such apostleship therefore cannot be transmitted to others. The apostles appointed bishops as their successors, who in turn could appoint others. This excludes the equation of apostle and bishop. However, as time went on there was an increasing tendency to stress the highness of the episcopal office. In Western Christianity this led occasionally to the idea of the apostles themselves being bishops. This was already casually suggested for our passage by G. Volkmar in 1860, but seems to have met with little approval.¹¹ It can, however, be substantiated by passages in St Cyprian of Carthage († 258) and later authors.¹² Thus Cyprian remarks in *Ep.* 3.3.1:

Meminisse autem diaconi debent quoniam apostolos id est episcopos et praepositos dominus elegit, diaconos autem post ascensum domini in caelos apostoli sibi constituerunt episcopatus sui et ecclesiae ministros.

But deacons ought to remember that the Lord chose the Apostles, that is, the bishops and leaders, but, after the Ascension of the Lord into heaven, the apostles appointed deacons for themselves as ministers of their episcopate and of the Church (trans. R. B. Donna).

And in dealing with the election of Matthias in Acts 1.15–26 Cyprian says, *Ep.* 67.4.2:

¹¹ In his edition of Credner (n. 4) 153 n. 8: 'Das Joh.-Ev. soll also in jeder Beziehung, selbst seiner Veranlassung nach, das der Apostel überhaupt sein. Diese gelten für altkatholische Begriffe zugleich als Vorangänger der Bischöfe, die ersten Bischöfe aller Orte. Uebrigens wird das *con(discipulis) auch zu episcopis* zu denken sein, also gleichsam *co-episcopis*.' I owe this reference to Theo Korteweg.

¹² Cf. A. Blaise, *Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens* (Turnhout 1967) s.v. *episcopus* 2; G. W. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage Translated and Annotated*, ii: *Letters 28–54* (Ancient Christian Writers 43; New York, NY and Ramsey, NJ, 1983), 167–8. For the Christian East cf. Lampe (n. 3) s.v. ἐπίσκοπος II B 1 b ii and 2a.

quando de ordinando in locum Iudae episcopo Petrus ad plebem loquitur.

When Peter is speaking to the people concerning the bishop to be ordained in the place of Judas (trans. R. B. Donna).

We cannot even exclude that Cyprian took the term ἐπισκοπή (Vulgate, *episcopatus*) in Acts 1.20, which we render as ‘office’, in the sense of ‘episcopate’. Indeed, the borderline between the apostle and the bishop was not closed altogether. Peter came to be presented as the first bishop, first of Antioch and then of Rome (Jerome *Vir. ill.* 1.1), and James the son of Alphaeus, identified with James the Lord’s brother, was said to be the first bishop of Jerusalem (Eusebius *h.e.* 2.23.1; 3.5.2; 7.19; Jerome *Vir. ill.* 2.1), as Andrew was the first archbishop of Constantinople.¹³ In later centuries, James the son of Zebedee ranked as the first archbishop of Spain: Santiago de Compostela.

If our interpretation is acceptable, we can conclude that the passage is a typical example of projecting an institution of one’s own time, in this case the office of bishop, back into the founding time. In its context, however, the mention of bishops is a marginal feature. What the passage is really about is the drastic representation of the gospel’s authenticity. On the one hand, heaven itself ratifies the recording of the gospel by granting the revelation which John solicited. On the other, the apostles, apparently in Jerusalem before departing for their respective missionary regions, endorse the document written down by John with their authority. Obviously, the idea Christians nursed about their earliest past was one of palpable direction by God and permanent intimate, cordial and unanimous contacts between the disciples, a continuation so to speak of the gathering in the upper room of Acts 1.

Paul and Seneca

After this look at the internal life of the *Urgemeinde* provided by the *Muratorian Canon* we now will consider a document that gives an impression of how the relationship with the outside world was imag-

¹³ For a detailed treatment see F. Dvornik, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the Legend of the Apostle Andrew* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies 4; Cambridge, Mass., 1958).

ined. It is the correspondence alleged to have been exchanged between the two most famous first-century AD letter-writers, the Stoic philosopher L. Annaeus Seneca and the Christian preacher Paul. This collection is of a later date than the *Muratorian Canon*, i.e. the fourth century. Its vogue is not only evident from the surviving numbers of MSS that have come down to us, more than three hundred,¹⁴ but also from its mention by two Church fathers not totally devoid of critical sense, Jerome and Augustine.¹⁵ We might call this correspondence an epistolary novel in which Seneca, who is at Nero's court, and Paul exchange remarks on Paul's letters and way of acting. We learn about the impression Paul's message made upon the emperor, Seneca having submitted Paul's letters to Nero for his inspection. Poppaea, the emperor's wife, is mentioned, and a cautious allusion is made to the fire of Rome, on which Tacitus had written. Local colour is provided by the mention of the famous park, the Horti Sallustiani. People mentioned include Lucilius, a historical figure to whom authentic letters by the real Seneca have been directed, and Theophilus, known from Luke 1.3 and Acts 1.1 and mentioned in the apocryphal *Third Letter to the Corinthians* as one of the writers of a letter to Paul.

I will not discuss the substance of this piece of literature here, nor will I touch upon its stylistic qualities, although I cannot help deploring the lost opportunity to imitate the manner of such outstanding stylists as both Seneca and Paul. What interests me here is the notion that Paul associated with and indeed was admired by one of the authoritative thinkers of his time and even kindled the interest of the emperor of the immense Roman Empire.

Strictly speaking, this fantasy is not wholly contrary to the known historical facts. Seneca and Paul were contemporaries. Acts 18.12–17 relates that in Corinth Paul was protected by the proconsul, Gallio, an elder brother of Seneca.¹⁶ And Seneca indeed sojourned at Nero's court, Nero did have a consort Poppaea, Paul did visit Rome, the fire of Rome killed many Christians and, even more importantly,

¹⁴ L. Bocciolini Palagi (ed.), *Epistolario apocrifo di Seneca e san Paolo* (Biblioteca Patristica; Bologna 1999), 45.

¹⁵ *Ib.* 19–23.

¹⁶ Cf. W. Eck, '[II 15] L. I. Gallio Annaeanus', *Der Neue Pauly* 6 1999 67.

there are certain points of agreement between the realms of thought of Seneca and Paul, respectively.¹⁷

Nevertheless, the correspondence is bound to be fictitious. As already said, stylistically speaking nothing of either literary master is to be found in it. The real Paul would certainly never have used the honorary title of 'master of all men' (*magister tanti principis, etiam omnium*, letter 2) for Seneca. Conversely, not the slightest evidence has been found of the influence of Christian tenets in Seneca's works,¹⁸ and as late as the fourth century, Lactantius is of opinion that Seneca never met Christians.¹⁹ In an important article, Alfons Fürst recently argued that the aim pursued by the author was to enhance Seneca's prestige with Christians by making him a personal friend of Paul, the embodiment of apostolic authority.²⁰ He may be right, although his material seems to suggest that this would be something like carrying coals to Newcastle, since, as he demonstrates, Christians of late Antiquity had a high opinion of Seneca. In my view, the purpose was rather to show that Christians enjoyed the esteem of the elite of Graeco-Roman civilization from the outset, including intellectuals like Seneca and rulers like Nero.²¹

New Testament

It would be easy to expand this kind of testimony with naive stories in popular literature and less naive suggestions in the works of serious theologians. And the material increases as time goes on. Here, however, my aim is to show that the glamorizing tendency was already present in the earliest stages of the Christian movement as represented in the books of the New Testament. Admittedly, it is absent from its oldest documents, the letters of Paul. His writings cannot be regarded as looking back on an earlier period: they are part of it. Even if their interpretation is complicated by the author's

¹⁷ But the resemblances are mainly superficial, see the thorough investigation by J. N. Sevenster, *Paul and Seneca* (Supplements to *Novum Testamentum* 4; Leiden 1961); cf. also A. Fürst, 'Pseudepigraphie und Apostolizität im apokryphen Briefwechsel zwischen Seneca und Paulus', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 41 1998 77–117, esp. 80 and 109–13.

¹⁸ J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford 1993) 547.

¹⁹ Bocciolini Palagi (n. 14) 19.

²⁰ See n. 17.

²¹ For Nero's inconsistent image in the correspondence cf. *ibid.* 102.

passionate involvement in the subjects he is dealing with, the facts he provides, for instance his conflict with Peter in Galatians 2.11–14, are precious historical data. The remaining New Testament books, however, all anonymous or pseudonymous and dating from the decades after AD 70 (only Mark might be slightly earlier), reveal numerous retrospectives on the founding period of Christianity.

Let us cast a glance at one of the less frequently read New Testament books, the Letter of Jude, a ‘book’ of twenty-five verses. Jude introduces himself as the brother of James. Which James? He might be some person of that name known to the addressees but unknown to us, but if we suppose, as has always been done, that he is James the brother of the Lord, then Jude himself is also a brother of Jesus. Jesus, James and Jude are mentioned together in Mark 6.3, where the inhabitants of Nazareth ask about Jesus: ‘Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Jude and Simon?’²² However, it is hard to accept that Jesus’ brother Jude really wrote this letter. To begin with, he calls himself ‘Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James’. Would anyone call himself his own brother’s servant?²³ But this is not the only sign pointing to a Christian author from a later period. In verses 17–18 he exhorts his readers in the following way: ‘But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; they said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions”’. The apostles, we may presume, are the twelve apostles. They apparently already belong to the past and they are presented as a doctrinal authority. A third clue is the way verse 3 speaks about faith. The term *pistis* no longer serves as the expression of the personal attitude but denotes the *depositum fidei*, the orthodox doctrine, from which one should not deviate. Indeed, the readers are warned against a false doctrine creeping in.

Another letter in turn depends on Jude and claims to have been written by the apostle Peter. We cannot be absolutely sure that it depends on Jude and not the other way round, but this is the more probable option given the fact that it seems to complete the Letter

²² Biblical quotations are from the Revised Standard Version, occasionally slightly adapted.

²³ One might compare Jesus’ proof in Mark 12.35–7 that he is not David’s son: in that case David would not have called him his lord in Psalm 109(110).1.

of Jude and to remove its imperfections.²⁴ Here again we find warnings against false teachers. One of the problems is the return of the Lord failing to materialize. The author's solution is to remind his readers that 'with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day' (2 Peter 3.8), which is in striking contrast with statements by Paul.²⁵ This author has his own methods to prove he is the real Peter. Thus he points to his being an eyewitness to the Lord's transfiguration on the mountain (1.16–18), he expressly states that this is his second letter to the readers (3.1), and finally he refers to the letters of 'our beloved brother Paul', which apparently were already circulating as a collection, remarking that 'there are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures' (3.15–16).

Although we could browse through other New Testament letters, the Pastoral Letters in particular would yield interesting material, our most rewarding source is the book which expressly deals with the earliest congregation: the Acts of the Apostles. They are the clearest demonstration of the tendencies we are discussing. On the one hand they highlight the unity reigning among the first disciples, on the other they picture the esteem nascent Christianity experienced from thinkers and rulers of the ancient world.

First, then, there is the unity. There was, Acts suggests, 'a complete unity and harmony of the church as guided by the apostles, who agree on every issue and resolve every problem through the direction of the Spirit'.²⁶ Thus the question of the circumcision of converts from paganism is solved during the Apostles' Council reported in chapter 15. This report, however, raises a number of difficulties; for instance, it is hardly imaginable that Peter, as a Jew, would have described the law as 'a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear' (15.10)²⁷ or that James, Jesus' brother, would

²⁴ H. Conzelmann and A. Lindemann, *Arbeitsbuch zum Neuen Testament* (Uni-Taschenbücher 52; Tübingen 2000¹²) 425–6.

²⁵ 1 Thessalonians 4.15–17; 1 Corinthians 7.29–31; 10.11; Romans 13.11–12; Philippians 4.5.

²⁶ B. D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (New York and Oxford 2000²) 137.

²⁷ Cf. E. Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament; Göttingen 1968⁹) 387 n. 1. The question keeps scholars divided, however, cf. J. Nolland, 'A Fresh Look at Acts 15.10', *New Testament Studies* 27 1981

have cited Scripture according to the Greek version and in a sense conflicting with the Hebrew text (15.16–17).²⁸ This is obviously the view of an author without an intimate knowledge of the circumstances in Palestinian Christianity before the year 70. Another example of the author's aim to emphasize the unanimity is his treatment of the role of Stephen in chapter 6. The tension, he suggests, is the result of the neglect of the Hellenist widows in the daily distribution; therefore the apostles appoint Stephen and his associates to serve at the tables, which 'pleased the whole multitude'. But Stephen's subsequent activities have nothing to do with serving at table. The real problem appears rather to have been a conflict between factions, which the author tries to dispose of not quite successfully as a question of domestic matters.

The second feature is the respect early Christianity allegedly encountered in the Graeco-Roman world. Acts dwells upon this in the narratives about Paul in particular. Through his travels, Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, frequently came into contact with the Hellenistic world and the Roman authorities. The classic example is, of course, Acts 17, Paul in Athens. Here the apostle behaves like a Greek intellectual. Like a second Socrates, 'in the market place he argued every day with those who chanced to be there', he exchanged views with Epicureans and Stoics, and in a spirited address, in which he managed to remain acceptable to his highbrow audience for a long time, he quoted a Greek poet, Aratus, verbatim. Admittedly, in the end he failed to win general approval, but some at least of his listeners were convinced by his argument. Can we believe that Paul, in the very centre of Greek civilization, in hallowed Athens with its philosophical schools, held debates with the intellectual *crème de la crème* of his time? It sounds too good to be true, and in Paul's letters no trace of it is to be found.

Furthermore, Paul's encounters with the worldly powers are painted in such a way as to make us believe that he was a person of consequence. He was born a Roman citizen and impressed the Roman tribune, who had had to buy citizenship for a large sum (22.28–9).

105–15; J. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (The Anchor Bible; New York etc., 1998) 548; J. Jervel, *Die Apostelgeschichte. Übersetzt und erklärt* (Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament; Göttingen 1998) 392–3.

²⁸ Haenchen (n. 27) 389; Fitzmyer (n. 27) 555–6.

Consequently, he was treated with consideration: two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen, an almost grotesque escort, brought him to Felix the governor in Caesarea (23.23). We may also think of Paul's stay in Rome. He had appealed to Caesar, as we read in Acts 25.11, and thus had to be tried in Rome. But during his voyage the prisoner was regarded and acted as as a man with authority (27.3,31–6,43). In Rome, 'he was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier that guarded him' and could freely speak with the local leaders of the Jews, whom he called together himself (28.16–17). The climax comes in the last two verses of the book:

And he lived there two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and welcomed all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly and unhindered.

Not a word about the trial before the emperor, although it was common knowledge that it ended in his death. His execution simply did not fit the image of the prestige the Christian preacher enjoyed with the pagan rulers.

Conclusion

It is now time for a conclusion. In the very first period of Christianity the faithful were convinced of the nearness of the kingdom of God. When the parousia failed to materialize and the initial fervour subsided, people began to look back and an idealized image of nascent Christianity developed which we may summarize as follows. The earliest Christians were like a close-knit family. Customs, ideas and institutions of the Church originated with the apostles. Externally, Christianity was a respectable quantity in Graeco-Roman society and was treated accordingly by the cultural and administrative elite.²⁹ This view of the starting time is not restricted to apocryphal and patristic sources but is already present in a number of books of the New Testament.³⁰

²⁹ Cf. K. M. Fischer, *Das Urchristentum* (Kirchengeschichte in Einzeldarstellungen i.1; Leipzig 1991²) 151–62.

³⁰ Gerard Lutikhuisen kindly commented on an earlier version of this paper.

THE NOTION ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΣ: A TERMINOLOGICAL SURVEY

Peter Van Deun

In opposition to its Latin equivalent *apostolicus*, the Greek adjective ἀποστολικός has hitherto not been the object of a thorough study; except for the excellent book of F. Dvornik,¹ we only find some marginal information.² The present article aims to fill up this lacuna and elucidate the subtle differences characterizing this notion, which will prove to be more complicated than one would think at first sight.

As ἀποστολικός is one of the hit words of Greek Christian literature, we have to cope with a mass of references. Fortunately we could start from the latest CD-ROM version of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG-E), which covers the whole vocabulary of pagan antiquity, as well as that of the Septuagint and New Testament, and of quite a few Greek Church Fathers (such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa,³ Basil of Caesarea, John Chrysostom) and of a small portion of Byzantine

¹ *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the Legend of the Apostle Andrew* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies 4; Cambridge, Mass., 1958). For the Latin adjective *apostolicus* see the literature in H. J. Sieben, *Voces: Eine Bibliographie zu Wörtern und Begriffen aus der Patristik (1918–1978)* (Bibliographia patristica: Supplementum 1; Berlin and New York 1980) 237 and the studies mentioned below, n. 2.

² Cf. G. J. M. Bartelink, *Lexicologisch-semantische studie over de taal van de Apostolische Vaders: Bijdrage tot de studie van de groeptaal der Griekse christenen* (Utrecht [1952]) 89–90; I.-M. Dewailly, 'Notes sur l'histoire de l'adjectif apostolique', *Mélanges de science religieuse* 5 1948 141–52; H. Holstein, 'L'évolution du mot "apostolique" au cours de l'histoire de l'Église', in *L'Apostolat* (Problèmes de la religieuse aujourd'hui; Paris 1957) 41–61; M. Réveillaud, 'L'apostolicité de l'Église chez les Pères', *Études théologiques* 40 1965 149–64; J. N. D. Kelly, 'Die Begriffe "Katholisch" und "Apostolisch" in den ersten Jahrhunderten', in *Katholizität und Apostolizität: Theologische Studien einer gemeinsamen Arbeitsgruppe zwischen der Römisch-Katholischen Kirche und dem Ökumenischen Rat der Kirchen (Kerygma und Dogma. Beiheft 2; Göttingen 1971) 9–21*; A. Faivre, 'Apostolicité et pseudo-apostolicité dans la Constitution ecclésiastique des Apôtres: L'art de faire parler les origines', *Revue des sciences religieuses* 66 1992 19–67; J. Zizioulas, 'Apostolic Continuity of the Church and Apostolic Succession in the First Five Centuries', *Louvain Studies* 21 1996 153–68.

³ Here one must also look at ἀποστολικός, ἡ, ὅν in F. Mann, *Lexicon Gregorianum: Wörterbuch zu den Schriften Gregors von Nyssa*, i (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne 1999) 498–9.

literature (mostly the oecumenical councils, the *etymologica* and the historians). To this information has been added what we find in our dictionaries and also the modest contribution of our own readings. The harvest is considerable: nearly 2,700 records of ἀποστολικός, in all its cases.

1. *Chronology*

The first problem we have to discuss here concerns the age of this notion. In the past some have maintained that ἀποστολικός was not used in pagan literature of classical antiquity,⁴ but this must be rejected; ἀποστολικός indeed has a previous history in pagan literature. However, one thing is certain: as expected, the use of the word is very rare in pagan texts (about 5 passages) and all these records date from late antiquity; we find the oldest pagan example in the *Deipnosophistae* of Athenaeus, an author who worked in the early third century AD, and this is—as we shall show—younger than the oldest Christian records. We also have to point out that the pagan ἀποστολικός is used in a very specific literary meaning: it is a kind of song, the ἀποστολικόν (i.e. μέλος), sung upon the departure of a diplomatic delegation or written by someone abroad who sent his poem afterwards.⁵ So, Christian literature does not have the monopoly of the word; it is also a fact that ἀποστολικός is allotted there to a totally different context.

⁴ See e.g. the article of I.-M. Dewailly (n. 2) 141 ('Il n'est donc ni profane ni biblique'), shading this (read n. 2 of the same page) by quoting one record in pagan antiquity; the same author is also mistaken in saying that the word wasn't used in papyri; see e.g. ἀποστολικός in the *Diccionario griego-español*, where a papyrus text of the fifth century AD is mentioned.

⁵ The pagan material concerns the following texts: Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 14.631d, edited by C. Burton Gulick, *Athenaeus. The Deipnosophists* (The Loeb Classical Library; London and Cambridge, Mass., 1937 = 1959) (where the ἀποστολικά and another kind of songs, the παρθένια, have been mixed up); Photius, *Bibliotheca, codex* 248.322a, l. 34–5 in the edition of R. Henry, *Photius: Bibliothèque*, v, 'Codices' 230–241 (Collection byzantine; Paris 1967) (in a *codex* devoted to the philosopher Proclus); the *Scholia Londinensia* to the *Ars Grammatica* of Dionysius Thrax, p. 450 ll. 11–12 of the edition of A. Hilgard, *Scholia in Dionysii Thracis Artem Grammaticam* (Grammatici Graeci I.3; Leipzig 1901 = Hildesheim 1965); two records in the *Scholia vetera* to the *Carmina* of Pindar: *scholion* 6b, ll. 2–3 to the second Pythian Ode, and *scholion* Inscr. a, ll. 1–3 to the second Isthmian Ode, both in the edition of A. B. Drachmann, *Scholia Vetera in Pindari Carmina*, ii: *Scholia in Pythonicas*; iii: *Scholia in Nemeonicas et Isthmionicas* (Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana; Leipzig 1910 and 1927).

Remarkably, the word is totally absent from the Septuagint and the New Testament. But we see that ἀποστολικός does show up in our earliest Christian texts. At the beginning of the second century AD, Ignatius of Antioch greets the Asia Minor community of Tralles and wishes it to be full of grace, just like the apostles, or better just as *the* apostle, Paul: ἀσπάζομαι ἐν τῷ πληρώματι ἐν ἀποστολικῷ χαρακτῆρι.⁶ This is not just a stroke of luck, for the word shows up regularly in the second century AD and even in the first half of this century. The notion has already become current and is used for persons as well as for objects. Thus we find ἀποστολικός several times in the work of Irenaeus of Lyons (second half of the second century AD). In his *Adversus haereses* he speaks about ἀποστολικά, i.e. the Letters of Paul, and elsewhere, in more general terms, about apostolic sayings.⁷ Elsewhere, Irenaeus explains the importance of the knowledge of the apostolic tradition of the Church.⁸ In the collection of Greek remnants of lost works by Irenaeus (*CPG* 1315) the adjective also occurs several times; but only once is it said to be an authentic fragment from Irenaeus: in that passage Polycarp, as an immediate successor of the apostles, is characterized as blessed (μακάριος) and apostolic (ἀποστολικός).⁹ The same laudative words about the bishop of Smyrna can be read in the *Martyrium Polycarpi*, which probably dates from 156–160.¹⁰ Furthermore there is the testimony of the

⁶ We find these words in the title of this letter; see the edition of P. T. Camelot, *Ignace d'Antioche. Polycarpe de Smyrne. Lettres. Martyre de Polycarpe* (SC 10; Paris 1969⁴). The so-called letter of Mary to Ignatius, sent from the mysterious city of Cassobola at an unknown date, addresses Ignatius as the bishop of the apostolic church of Antioch (ἐπισκόπῳ ἐκκλησίας ἀποστολικῆς τῆς κατὰ Ἀντιόχειαν); see the edition of J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, ii.3 (London 1889² = Hildesheim and New York 1973) 135–6.

⁷ *Adversus haereses* 1.3.6 and 1.8.1 (καὶ οὐ μόνον ἐκ τῶν εὐαγγελικῶν καὶ τῶν ἀποστολικῶν πειρῶνται τὰς ἀποδείξεις ποιεῖσθαι and προσαρμόζειν πειρῶνται τοῖς εἰρημένους ἥτοι παραβολὰς κυριακάς ἢ ῥήσεις προφητικὰς ἢ λόγους ἀποστολικούς); see the edition of A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau, *Irenée de Lyon. Contre les hérésies. Livre I*, ii (SC 264) 61 and 113.

⁸ *Adversus haereses* 3.3.3 (τὴν ἀποστολικὴν τῆς ἐκκλησίας παράδοσιν γνῶναι) again in the edition of A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau, *Irenée de Lyon. Contre les hérésies. Livre III*, ii (SC 211) 37.

⁹ See fragment 2 taken from Irenaeus' lost work *Ad Florinum de monarchia* (*CPG* 1309) and transmitted in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Eusebius 5.20.7 (SC 41); for two other fragments in which ἀποστολικός is used (numbers 7 and 35), the authenticity has been rejected (cf. *CPG* 1315, numbers 2 and 21).

¹⁰ 16.2 (οὗτος γέγονε ὁ θαυμασιώτατος Πολύκαρπος, ἐν τοῖς καθ' ἡμᾶς χρόνοις διδάσκαλος ἀποστολικός καὶ προφητικός γενόμενος ἐπίσκοπός τε τῆς ἐν Σμύρνη καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας) in the edition of B. Dehandschutter, *Martyrium Polycarpi: Een*

Gnostic Ptolemy from the middle of the second century AD, who speaks in his *Epistula ad Floram* (CPG 1135) about the apostolic tradition.¹¹ In the report of the anti-Christian pogrom at Lyons in the year 177, a certain Alexander, who will die a martyr, is characterized as someone who shares in the apostolic grace.¹² Finally we find ἀποστολικός often in the works of Clement of Alexandria; he is still an author of the end of the second and the beginning of the third century AD.

2. Semantics

Now we must deal with the subtle distinctions within ἀποστολικός and with the problem which words are mostly used with it. On the one hand, it is a transparent and common word formation with the suffix -ικός; there is no doubt about its general meaning: 'of one apostle', 'of the apostle', 'of the apostles'. On the other hand, it is remarkable that the term is used in so many contexts with each time just a small difference in meaning.

In a first nuance it means something like 'consisting of apostles', 'compound of apostles'. Thus we find the adjective frequently with words like χορός and χορεία ('the choir of the apostles', 'the crowd of the apostles') (about 90 references), or in a more military context, with the word τάξις ('the battle array of the apostles', 'the apostolic ranks').

A second, and often attested, nuance has to do with the religious doctrine transmitted by the apostles orally or in writing. Sometimes it refers in the most general way to the words of the apostles: e.g. λόγοι ἀποστολικοί or φωναὶ ἀποστολικάι or γραφαὶ ἀποστολικάι. But more often it has a more specific meaning: a quotation 'from the apostle', i.e. 'from Paul'; so ἀποστολικός is combined with words as γραφή ('text'), φωνή ('saying, testimony'), μαρτυρία ('testimony'), διήγησις ('exposition'), παραίνεσις ('admonition'), and particularly with λέξις, λόγος, λόγιον, ῥῆμα and ῥητόν ('word, saying'); the substantivated τὸ

literair-kritische studie (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 52; Louvain 1979).

¹¹ 7.9 (SC 24bis).

¹² For the *Epistula Ecclesiarum apud Lugdunum et Viennam* (CPG 1324), see again Eusebius *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.1.49 (SC 41): ἦν γὰρ καὶ οὐκ ἄμιρος ἀποστολικῶς χαρίσματος.

ἀποστολικόν is also used in this same restricted meaning, i.e. ‘a quotation from one of the Letters of Paul’.¹³ The Letters of Paul and the other canonical Letters are often quoted with the neuter plural τὰ ἀποστολικά; in this case, this part of the New Testament is often opposed to or seen in correlation with the four Gospels (τὰ εὐαγγελικά) and the prophetic books of the Old Testament (τὰ προφητικά). The neuter, sometimes combined with the noun τεύχος or βιβλίον (‘book’, ‘volume’), can mean in a more extensive way a collection of New Testament Letters assembled in one volume. Thus in his edition of the Letters of Paul (*CPG* 3642) the deacon Euthalius, who lived in the fourth century AD, speaks of an ἀποστολικόν τεύχος,¹⁴ but the most remarkable cases are related to Marcion who in the Church of Rome in the first half of the second century AD circulated a specific selection of the Letters of Paul (without the Pastoral Letters e.g.): this corpus is called τὸ ἀποστολικόν.¹⁵ One would perhaps expect that τὸ ἀποστολικόν was also used with the meaning of ‘a liturgical reading from the Letters of Paul’, or ‘a liturgical book containing these Letters’, but in Patristic and Byzantine Greek texts this is the case only once, as far as we know;¹⁶ the Byzantine Church uses more the term ἀπόστολος or the broader word παραπόστολος for this lectionary. Finally, we have to note that the New Testament Acts of the Apostles are indicated with the expressions Πράξεις τῶν Ἀποστόλων or Ἀποστολικαὶ Πράξεις.

A third category of instances of the word ἀποστολικός concerns persons or things which have the character of the apostles, which are closely related to the apostles, which are typical of the apostles, which are worthy of the apostles, which resemble the apostles, which follow the example of the apostles. As said, persons and things are characterized in this way, even if the material for persons is not very large; apparently one was afraid of calling someone ‘apostolic’ too

¹³ Only once did we find a passage where the expression τὸ ἀποστολικόν does not concern a text of Paul but a saying of John the Baptist in the Gospel of Matthew (3.12); see Clement of Alexandria *Eclogae prophetae* 25.1–2 (GCS 17.143).

¹⁴ PG 85.720C2–3.

¹⁵ See e.g. several passages in the Dialogue of Adamantius, author of the fourth century AD (*CPG* 1726), in the edition of W. H. van de Sande Bakhuyzen, *Der Dialog des Adamantius* Περὶ τῆς εἰς Θεὸν ὀρθῆς πίστεως (GCS 4), e.g. p. 10 l. 19; p. 66 ll. 9–10; p. 188 l. 14.

¹⁶ See the second speech on the Annunciation sometimes attributed to Gregory Thaumaturgus (*CPG* 1776): PG 10.1161C7–8.

quickly; nonetheless persons like Job, Polycarp, Ignatius, Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, Barnabas, etc., received the label 'apostolic'. On the other hand, there are hundreds of examples of things. Thus we read *ἀποστολικός* in combination with words like *καρδιά*, *ψυχή*, *φρένες* and *φρόνημα* ('disposition', 'character', 'mental constitution'), *χάρις* ('grace'), *ζήλος* ('enthusiasm', 'efforts', 'devotion'), *ἀνδρεία* ('courage'), *σύνεσις*, *διάνοια* and *σοφία* ('perception', 'wisdom'), *κατορθώματα* ('successful virtuous acts and qualities'), *πειρασμοί* ('efforts', 'afflictions'), *τὰ σπλάγχνα* and *εὐσπλαγχνία* ('sympathy', 'mercy'), *χαρακτήρ* ('character'), *τὰ θαυμάσια*, *τὰ θαύματα* and *τὰ τερατουργήματα* ('miracles'), *βαθμός*, *ἀξία* and *ἀξίωμα* ('grade', 'status', 'dignity'), *ἐξουσία* and *ἀρχή* ('power', 'authority'), etc. Special attention must be given to the combination with *βίος* ('to live an apostolic life'), an ideal which is especially crucial for the Western Middle Ages, but which is also important for Eastern Christianity; we found the expression some 40 times; our oldest testimonies are in Origen.¹⁷ The same can be said of the notions *πολιτεία* and *φιλοσοφία*, 'a Christian way of life' sometimes called 'apostolic'. For the rest there are the references to the *ἀποστολικοὶ χρόνοι*, the 'apostolic times', a notion with which we will deal later.

A fourth group of attestations is very rare—we found only 10 records. In this case *ἀποστολικός* is connected with words like *στολή*, *ἐσθής*, *σχῆμα* and *ιμάτιον*, which all refer to the immaculate white dress of the apostles, an outfit which often characterizes monks, bishops, especially the patriarch of Constantinople.

A fifth and last group of records in Greek brings us to the meaning 'derived from the apostles', 'who or which traces his or its roots to the apostles', 'who or which is in agreement with the traditions of the apostles'. More than half of all our references belongs to this category in which *ἀποστολικός*, as one will notice, shows up more and more in the dogmatic field.

The Christian doctrine, the religious beliefs, liturgical acts and canon law rules derive much of their influence from their apostolic character. Let us give some examples and figures. 'Apostolic' are called the *κήρυγμα* or the *κηρύγματα* ('the Christian message'; 94 instances), the *παράδοσις* ('the Christian tradition'; 97 times), the *δόγμα* or the *δόγματα* ('the Christian doctrine'; 166 times), the

¹⁷ *Hom. in Jer.* 14.14 (GCS 6); *Comm. in Mt.* 15.2,24 (GCS 40.352 and 421–2).

διδασκαλία or the δίδαγμα or the διδάγματα ('the Christian doctrine'; 204 times), the νόμοι or κανόνες ('the rules of the Church'; also 204 cases), and in the first place the πίστις ('the Christian faith'; 279 times).

Quite often ἀποστολικός is joined to another adjective, καθολικός, 'catholic', 'universal', 'concerning the whole Christianity', 'orthodox'. In this way the orthodoxy wants to oppose itself to the heretical movements. However, these heresies also appeal to the apostolic tradition. Thus there is one heresy which feels very strongly about its apostolic character and which therefore is called 'Αποστολικοί; it is a sect which wants to get rid of all earthly, all material things in a radical way—whence they are also called 'Αποτακτικοί, 'those who give up all things' and live a very severe ascetic life.¹⁸

For the same reasons the Church is often characterized as 'apostolic', because it was founded by the apostles and because it continues and preserves the tradition and the doctrine of the apostles; we can give here 253 examples. And here too ἀποστολικός is often combined with the quality καθολικός (in 179 times of these 253 places). To add more weight to this thought the indications τοῦ θεοῦ ('of God') and ἁγία or ἁγιωτάτη ('holy' or 'very holy') are often added. Thus we read in innumerable conciliar texts and in confessions of faith something which must have been a sort of standard formula, with an invariable sequence of words: ἡ ἁγία τοῦ θεοῦ καθολικὴ καὶ ἀποστολικὴ ἐκκλησία. The same recurs with the term θρόνος ('throne, chair of a bishop, a metropolitan or a patriarch'; 179 records); less usual in this context is the combination with καθέδρα, which has the same meaning as θρόνος.

Very frequently the notion of apostolicity is used for those ἐκκλησίαι or θρόνοι of which the roots go back to the apostles, they say, because they were founded by an apostle. The fact that one of the disciples of Christ had preached there for the first time, makes these churches feel superior to others.

Here we encounter a fundamental distinction between Western and Eastern Christianity. In the West the pope and the Church of Rome will quickly be called 'apostolic'; this apostolic origin is willingly used, for example by papal legates on their visits to the East

¹⁸ See Epiphanius of Salamis *Panarion* 61.1.1–8.5 (GCS 31.380–9), and also John of Damascus *Liber de haeresibus* 61 (ed. B. Kotter [Patristische Texte und Studien 22; Berlin 1981] 36).

and this already from the fourth century AD on. In the East the situation is completely different. In the beginning the apostolic character of the five patriarchs will not be used or only with great reserve. There are different reasons for this. First there is the prominent role of the emperor in ecclesiastical matters, so that the idea of an apostolic church remained in the background for a long time. In addition there is the fact that the Church in the East, much more than in the West, will organize itself in accordance with the civil structures of the old Roman Empire; so some dioceses, like that of Alexandria, present themselves as more important and mightier than others; this has nothing to do with a possible apostolic foundation, only with the fact that the city in civil context already took a leading role. It is only from the seventh century AD that the notion of apostolicity really becomes general in the Christian East.

It must be noted here that thinking about the notion ἀποστολικός is not just a game of words, but that this adjective is really important for the history of the Church in the East. Let us evoke very briefly two examples illustrating this importance. First of all there is the well-known legend of the apostle Andrew, the 'first-called' disciple of Christ (πρωτόκλητος); he brought Christianity to Thracia and Constantinople, as can be read in sources from the fourth-fifth century AD on; the idea of apostolicity played an important part in the acceptance of Constantinople as the fifth patriarchate of the Church.¹⁹ The second example concerns the independence, the autocephaly, of the Church of Cyprus. The Cypriote Church had to defend itself against the claims of the patriarchate of Antioch. Under the reign of the emperor Zeno the dispute was revived by the patriarch Peter the Fuller who said that the Church of Cyprus was converted from Antioch. Our legendary sources tell us that the Cypriots then found a coffin containing the remains of Saint Barnabas. Legendary or not, the fact is that the claim of Antioch was rejected, because it was now clear that Cyprus was an apostolic foundation, securing in this way its autocephaly.²⁰

¹⁹ For all the details, see the book of Dvornik (n. 1).

²⁰ In this note I have gathered all the literature concerning this question: J. Hackett, *A History of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus from the Coming of the Apostles Paul and Barnabas to the Commencement of the British Occupation (A.D. 45–A.D. 1878) together with some Account of the Latin and other Churches existing in the Island* (London 1901) 13–33; archimandrite Chrysostomos, 'Ο Ἀθηναϊκὸς κώδιξ τῶν Πρακτικῶν τῆς γ' Οἰκουμενικῆς Συνόδου καὶ τὸ αὐτοκέφαλον Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Κύπρου', *Πρακτικὰ τῆς Ἀκαδημίας*

3. *Apostolic times*

A third and last part of this article will be devoted to the question whether or not, and to what extent the notion of an apostolic era, of apostolic times, ἀποστολοκοὶ χρόνοι, lived in the Greek Patristic times and in Byzantium. A quick survey showed that this question must receive an affirmative answer. But one thing is clear also: the material at our disposal is not very large; we have found only 20 records of the adjective ἀποστολικός in combination with χρόνος or χρόνοι, and another 14 places where χρόνος or χρόνοι are used with the plural genitive τῶν ἀποστόλων. In most of the cases we find the plural χρόνοι. This reference to an apostolic era is absent in our oldest Greek Christian texts; the first records can only be read in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Eusebius of Caesarea.²¹

What information does this scant material contain? Nothing shocking, one will note! Some texts discuss individuals like Clement of Alexandria and Apollinaris of Hierapolis who temporally do not stand far from ‘apostolic times’.²² Another source speaks about a Church custom, i.e. the genuflection (the γονυκλισία), which dates from the time of the apostles.²³ The roots of Christian religion are in apostolic times, as Epiphanius of Salamis explicitly indicates.²⁴ Eusebius

²¹ Ἀθηνῶν 8 1933 59–66; G. Hill, *History of Cyprus*, i, *To the Conquest by Richard Lion Heart* (Cambridge 1940) 273–9; I. P. Panagiotakos, ‘Τὸ ἀντοκέφαλον τῆς Ἀγιωτάτης Ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Κύπρου’, *Ἀρχεῖον Ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ καὶ Κανονικοῦ Δικαίου* 12 1957 65–73; E. Morini, ‘Apostolicità ed autocefalia in una Chiesa orientale: la leggenda di S. Barnaba e l’autonomia dell’arcivescovato di Cipro nelle fonti dei secoli V e VI’, *Studi e Ricerche sull’Oriente Cristiano* 2 1979 23–45; P. Van Deun, in *Hagiographica Cypria* (CCSG 26) 15–21.

²² *H.E.* 2.14.3; 3.31.6.

²³ See e.g. the *Chronicon Paschale* (CPG 7960): PG 80C10–12 (Ἀπολλινάριος δὲ ὁ ὀσιώτατος ἐπίσκοπος Ἱεραπόλεως τῆς Ἀσίας, ὁ ἐγγυὸς τῶν ἀποστολικῶν χρόνων γεγονώς) and 81A11–13 (Κλήμης ὁ ὀσιώτατος Ἀλεξανδρέων ἐκκλησίας γεγονώς ἱερεὺς, ἀνὴρ ἀρχαιότατος καὶ οὐ μακρὰν τῶν ἀποστολικῶν γεγόμενος χρόνων).

²⁴ See e.g. the *quaestio et responsio* CXXVI of Pseudo-Theodoretus (CPG 6285), in the edition of A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Θεοδώρητου ἐπισκόπου πόλεως Κύρρου πρὸς τὰς ἐπενεχθείσας αὐτῷ ἐπερωτήσεις παρά τινος τῶν ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐπισκόπων ἀποκρίσεις* (St. Petersburg 1895) 117–18.

²⁵ *Panarion* 73.2.11 (GCS 37.270–1): τὴν ἐκ τῶν ἀποστολικῶν χρόνων . . . παραδοθεῖσαν . . . πίστιν. From apostolic times, the Church has given the opportunity to have knowledge of the mysteries of faith: see the *Περὶ τῆς πρώτης τοῦ θεοῦ λατρείας* of Gennadius Scholarius, the first patriarch of Constantinople after the fall of the Byzantine Empire (ed. L. Petit, X. A. Sideridès, and M. Jugie, *Œuvres complètes de Gennade Scholarios*, iv [Paris 1935] 237.36–238.2: Ἐκκλησίας . . . τῆς ἐκ τῶν ἀποστολικῶν χρόνων ἄχρι καὶ νῦν καὶ ἕως τῆς συντελείας τῆ ἐκ θεοῦ κυβερνήσει περὶ τῶν τῆς πίστεως μυστηρίων τὴν δίσαν τῶν φιλομαθῶν ποτιζούσης).

tells us that many Jews joined the teachings of Christ in apostolic times.²⁵ In some other sources one can read that theological rows and schisms already started in apostolic times.²⁶

All these texts say little about the meaning and the boundaries of these ‘apostolic times’. Only in the *Generalis elementaria introductio* (CPG 3475), a work of Pseudo-Eusebius Caesariensis, does it become clear that with ‘apostolic times’ is meant a period of 70 years,²⁷ without doubt the period which runs until the destruction of the temple in the year 70 AD.²⁸

²⁵ *Commentarius in Isaiam* 41.9 (GCS, *Eusebius Werke*, IX.261.13–15): πολλοὶ γὰρ ἦσαν κατὰ τοὺς ἀποστολικούς χρόνους οἱ ἀπὸ Ἰουδαίων τὸν Χριστοῦ λόγον παραδε- δεγμένοι, οὐ μόνον ἐπὶ τῆς Ἰουδαίας γῆς ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν.

²⁶ See e.g. Severian in his commentary on the Letters of Paul, especially on *II Thess.* 2.6–8 (CPG 4219) (ed. K. Staab, *Pauluskommentare aus der griechischen Kirche: Aus Katenenhandschriften gesammelt und herausgegeben* [Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen 15; Münster i.W. 1933 = 1984] 334.25–7: ὅτι καὶ ἀρχὴν ἤδη εἴληφε τὸ μυστήριον τῆς ἀνομίας, ἐπειδὴ κατὰ τοὺς χρόνους τοὺς ἀποστολικούς καὶ σχίσματα καὶ αἰρέσεις γεγόνασιν. The same thought can be read in Socrates *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.22.65 (GCS N.F. 1): Ὅτι δὲ εὐθὺς ἐπὶ τῶν ἀποστολικῶν χρόνων πολλαὶ διαφωνίαι διὰ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἐγίνοντο.

²⁷ PG 22.1189D9–1192A1: ταύτην γὰρ εἰς τὴν ἐν δεκάσιν ἐβδομάδα μεταλαβὼν ὁ λόγος παρίστη τὸν σύμπαντα τῶν ἀποστόλων χρόνον εἰς ἐβδομηκονταετιαν συντείνειν, ἐν ἣ τὸ κήρυγμα τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης οὐκέτι ἐνί, ἀλλὰ πολλοῖς ἔθνεσι κηρυχθὲν εἰς πᾶσαν ἐνεδυναμώθη τὴν οἰκουμένην.

²⁸ I should like to express my thanks to my wife Patricia and to Peter Van Dessel who have helped with the translation of my paper.

MIRACLES RECALLING THE APOSTOLIC AGE

Jan den Boeft

Ambrose's hymn *Grates tibi, Iesu, nouas* reflects the discovery and the *translatio* of the mortal remains of the martyrs Protasius and Gervasius in June 386. His prose report on the course of events, including his two sermons, can be found in *Epistula 77* Zelzer, addressed to his sister Marcellina. The hymn summarizes these events in the typically succinct style of lyrical poetry. Its final stanza (29–32) is crucial for our theme, the significance of the *aetas apostolica*:

Vetusta saecula uidimus,
iactata semicinctia
tactuque et umbra corporum
aegris salutem redditam.

'We saw the olden times': there cannot be any doubt which times are meant here. In the final two stanzas of the hymn Ambrose describes what the people in the streets of Milan had witnessed. In this description he uses a few phrases and words which obviously refer to the passages in the book of Acts in which the healings wrought by the Apostles Peter and Paul are reported. These clear reminiscences imply that in the perception of the lyrical poet 'we saw the past': the *aetas apostolica* was visible for our eyes and we saw 'that the sick regained their well-being', a characteristic of those days.¹

Of course, Ambrose was fully right in this. Miracles are an integrating part of both Jesus' activities, as these are described in the

¹ See for a description and a stimulating interpretation of the episode Neil B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley 1994) 211–18. The following parallels deserve to be noted: 27 *emissa totis urbibus—concurbat et multitudo conjunctarum ciuitatum in Jerusalem* (Acts 5.16 Sabatier), 30 *semicinctia—σμικίνθια* (19.12), 31 *tactuque et umbra corporum*—5.15 and 19.11. See further the relevant notes in my 'Vetusta saecula uidimus: Ambrose's Hymn on Protasius and Gervasius', in G. J. M. Bartelink, A. Hilhorst, and C. H. Kneepkens (eds.), *Eulogia: Mélanges offerts à Antoon A. R. Bastiaensen* (Instrumenta Patristica 24; Steenbrugge 1991) 65–75.

Gospels, and the period following his Passion, Resurrection and Ascension. Two quotations from the Pauline corpus may suffice here. In Rom. 15.18–19 Paul mentions all that *κατειργάσατο Χριστὸς δι’ ἐμοῦ εἰς ὑπακοὴν ἔθνων, λόγῳ καὶ ἔργῳ, ἐν δυνάμει σημείων καὶ τεράτων, ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος*, ‘what Christ has done through me to bring the Gentiles into his allegiance, by word and deed, by the power of signs and portents, by the power of the Holy Spirit’, and in 1 Thess. 1.5 he emphasizes that *τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐγενήθη εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν λόγῳ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ*, ‘we did not bring you the gospel in mere words but in the power of the Holy Spirit and with strong conviction.’² The *δύναμις* of the apostle does not only manifest itself in his rhetorical power of persuasion, but also in his deeds or rather his *σημεῖα*.

Miracles as a missionary instrument

In the so-called ‘long ending’ of the Gospel of Mark (16.9–20) the fact that the verbal message, the faith of those who believe it and miracles are fully interlaced is explicitly formulated. The resurrected Lord assigns the apostles the task to preach the gospel. Then this will happen: *σημεῖα δὲ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ταῦτα παρακολουθήσει· ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου δαιμόνια ἐκβαλοῦσιν, γλώσσαις λαλήσουσιν καιναῖς, ὅφεις ἀροῦσιν κἄν θανάσιμόν τι πίωσιν οὐ μὴ αὐτοὺς βλάψῃ, ἐπὶ ἀρρώστους χεῖρας ἐπιθήσουσιν καὶ καλῶς ἔξουσιν*, ‘faith will bring with it these miracles: believers will drive out demons in my name and speak in strange tongues; if they handle snakes or drink any deadly poison, they will come to no harm; and the sick on whom they lay their hands will recover’ (Mark 16.17–18). The first, second and fifth items of the series are quite familiar: exorcism, glossolalia and healing respectively. Handling snakes, however, and drinking deadly poison

² I doubt whether this rendering of the last two words in the version of the Revised English Bible is correct. A translation in this vein is indeed current, cf. ‘in voller Gewissheit’ in the relevant lemma of the sixth edition of Bauer’s standard dictionary, ‘with full conviction’ in Danker’s third edition of its English translation. See, however, C. Spicq, *Notes de lecture néo-testamentaire*, ii (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 22/2; Fribourg and Göttingen 1978) 707: ‘abondance de toute sorte’, and S. Alkier, *Wunder und Wirklichkeit in den Briefen des Apostels Paulus: Ein Beitrag zu einem Wunderverständnis jenseits von Entmythologisierung und Rehistorisierung* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2.134; Tübingen 2001) 103: ‘die höchste Fülle’.

without fatal consequences pose some problems which even James Kelhoffer has not been able to solve entirely in his huge recent monograph on Mark 16.9–20.³ For our present purpose this is less important, in any case less interesting than the possible origin of the passage. In his thorough analysis of the entire passage Kelhoffer develops the hypothesis that it was composed by a single author between AD 120 and 150. If this is correct, we may conclude that at least one second century author who, as Kelhoffer shows, was intimately familiar with the canonical Gospels, saw an intrinsic relation between word and miracles. It is, however, remarkable that the author does not reserve these miracles for authoritative persons, as seems the case in the Pauline corpus; cf. 2 Cor. 12.12 τὰ μὲν σημεῖα τοῦ ἀποστόλου κατεργάσθη ἐν ὑμῖν ἐν πάσῃ ὑπομονῇ, σημείοις τε καὶ τέρασιν καὶ δυνάμεσιν, ‘the signs of an apostle were there in the work I did among you, marked by unfailing endurance, by signs, portents, and miracles.’⁴

In his *Christianizing the Roman Empire* Ramsay MacMullen regards miracles as a vital part of the various strategies of rival religious groups: ‘... the Apostles’ success in winning recruits arose from their deeds, above all, in healing.’ This was indispensable in view of the current worldview of the citizens of the Roman Empire: ‘They... took miracles quite for granted. That was the general starting point. *Not* to believe in them would have made you seem more than odd, simply irrational.’⁵ Indeed, as soon as we overlook that people were ready to believe events which were different from ordinary everyday experience, we deprive ourselves of all possibility to understand their mentality and reactions. Exorcism is only trustworthy in a society which is convinced of the existence and influence of demons. And looking through the abundant testimonies about the healings wrought

³ James A. Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission: The Authentication of Missionaries and Their Message in the Longer Ending of Mark* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2.112; Tübingen 2000). This admirable study contains a wealth of information on primary material and relevant scholarly literature. See 411–16 on ‘the modern phenomenon of snake-handling in certain contemporary Christian Churches of the American South’.

⁴ ‘Paulinisches Christentum ohne Gottes Wunder ist nicht mehr paulinisches Christentum’ (Alkier [n. 2]) 306.

⁵ Yale University Press 1984, 22. See for an entirely different study of the growth of early Christianity Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton 1996).

by Asklepios in the course of time, one cannot but conclude that a religious movement which was unable to offer such proofs of divine power would be in for a difficult time. In his famous *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*,⁶ Adolf von Harnack had noticed this too, for example in the chapter he devoted to the struggle against the demons: ‘... die Beschwörung war ein sehr wichtiges Mittel der Mission und Propaganda’, and he concludes: ‘Das war keine blasse Theorie, sondern lebendigste Anschauung’ (156). Indeed! However, the author’s own sympathy went into a different direction: ‘Wenn die alten Christen die Beweise des Geistes und der Kraft ins Auge fassten, so haben die höher stehenden unter ihnen das unter dem Gesichtspunkt der sittlichen und religiösen Wirkungen getan: um dieses Erfolges willen sind sie der Kirche geschenkt’ (226).

In religious controversies extraordinary feats tended to be judged in divergent ways: that which in the eyes of one party was a specimen of salutary divinely inspired power, was regarded as no more than an abject magic trick by the other. Philostratus wrote his extensive biography of Apollonius of Tyana to combat the false impression that this omnicompetent wise and divinely inspired man owed his astonishing capacities to such a discreditable thing as magical technique. This biography has nothing to do with any polemics against Christianity; in fact, it received such a status only, when Hierocles around 300 used it in his aggressive anti-Christian *Lover of Truth*.⁷ So Philostratus’ biography clearly shows that such apologetics were also needed outside the conflicts between pagans and

⁶ Leipzig 1924⁴.

⁷ In his famous monograph *Apollonius of Tyana und Christus* (Leipzig 1876 = Hildesheim 1966) F. C. Baur defends such a view about Philostratus’ objectives: ‘es darf von dem Plane seines Werkes die Absicht nicht ausgeschlossen werden, den weisen Apollonius von Tyana Christus zur Seite zu stellen’ (120). Baur admits that the biographer never mentions Christianity and does not refer to it in any clear manner either, but this had a reason: ‘Um seinen Gegenstand rein objektiv zu behandeln, vermied er jede Erwähnung des Christenthums’ (121). See for a recent assessment of Philostratus’ biography as an ‘apology for the Greek way of life’ S. Swain, ‘Defending Hellenism: Philostratus, *In Honour of Apollonius*’, in M. J. Edwards, M. Goodman, and S. R. F. Price (eds.), *Apologetics in the Roman Empire* (Oxford 1999) 157–96, and for a summary of recent discussions on Hierocles and the author of the so-called *Contra Hieroclem*, usually ascribed to Eusebius of Caesarea, T. Hägg, ‘Hierocles the Lover of Truth and Eusebius the Sophist’, *Symbolae Osloenses* 67 1992 138–50.

Christians. An example of their controversy can be found in Justin's *Second Apology*, 6.5–6: Καὶ νῦν ἐκ τῶν ὑπ' ὄψιν γινομένων μαθεῖν δύνασθε. Δαιμονιολήπτους γὰρ πολλοὺς κατὰ πάντα τὸν κόσμον καὶ ἐν τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ πόλει πολλοὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἀνθρώπων, τῶν Χριστιανῶν, ἐπορκίζοντες κατὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ σταυρωθέντος ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου, ὑπὸ τῶν ἄλλων πάντων ἐπορκιστῶν καὶ ἐπαστῶν καὶ φαρμακευτῶν μὴ ἰαθέντας, ἰάσαντο καὶ ἔτι νῦν ἰῶνται, καταργοῦντες καὶ ἐκδιώκοντες τοὺς κατέχοντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους δαίμονας, 'Even now you can perceive this in what is happening under your own eyes. Throughout the entire world and in your city many who were possessed by demons were healed by many of our men, Christians, who exorcize the demons in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilatus. They are still healing those who were not healed by all the other exorcists, enchanters and sorcerers, and they eliminated and banished the demons who possess human beings.'

Irenaeus, on the other hand, focusses on heretical Christian groups. In his judgment of the supporters of Simon Magus and Carpocrates, who are said to perform *uirtutes*, he argues that in their case one merely finds error and deceit, because they avail themselves of magic manipulation. *Neque enim caecis possunt donare uisum, neque surdis auditum, neque omnes daemones effugare, praeter eos qui ab ipsis immittuntur* (Irenaeus *Adversus haereses* 2.31.2), 'they are unable to give sight to the blind or the power of hearing to the deaf nor can they drive away the demons apart from those they send themselves.' On the other hand, Christ's followers are in a position to perform salutary actions: *alii autem laborantes aliqua infirmitate per manus impositionem curant et sanos restitunt; iam etiam, quemadmodum diximus, et mortui resurrexerunt et perseuerauerunt nobiscum annis multis* (ib. 2.32.4), 'others heal those who are suffering from some ailment by laying their hands on the patients and restore their health; even better, as I mentioned already: dead resurrected and went on to live many years among us.'

As could be expected, miracles are conspicuous in the attack on Christianity launched by Celsus and Origen's counter attack. The latter is convinced that miracles are indispensable: Οὐκ ἂν γὰρ χωρὶς δυνάμεων καὶ παραδόξων ἐκίνουν τοὺς καινῶν λόγων καὶ καινῶν μαθημάτων ἀκούοντας πρὸς τὸ καταλιπεῖν μὲν τὰ πάτρια, παραδέξασθαι δὲ μετὰ κινδύνων τῶν μέχρι θανάτου τὰ τούτων μαθήματα. Καὶ ἔτι ἴχνη τοῦ ἁγίου ἐκείνου πνεύματος, ὀφθέντος ἐν εἴδει περιστερᾶς, παρὰ Χριστιανοῖς σφίζεται ἐξεπάδουσι δαίμονας καὶ πολλὰς ἰάσεις ἐπιτελοῦσι καὶ ὀρωσὶ τινα κατὰ τὸ βούλημα τοῦ λόγου περὶ μελλόντων (Origen *Contra Celsum*

1.46), 'For without miracles and wonders they would not have persuaded those who heard new doctrines and new teachings to leave their traditional religion and to accept the apostles' teachings at the risk of their lives. Traces of that Holy Spirit who appeared in the form of a dove are still preserved among Christians. They charm demons away and perform many cures and perceive certain things about the future according to the will of the Logos' (translation Henry Chadwick). The general worldview, shared by pagans and Christians, is explicitly brought into the discussion by Origen in the following interesting passage: Παράδοξα δὲ πράγματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐπιφαίνεσθαι ποτε καὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἰστόρησαν οὐ μόνον οἱ ὑπονοηθέντες ἀν' ὧς μυθοποιῶντες ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ ἀνὰ πολὺ ἐπιδειξάμενοι γνησίως φιλοσοφεῖν καὶ φιλαλήθως ἐκτίθεσθαι τὰ εἰς αὐτοὺς φθάσαντα (ib. 5.57), 'Some Greeks have also related that miraculous events have been seen by men; and these tales are not told only by those who might be suspected of inventing legends, but even by those who have shown in many ways that they are genuine philosophers, and who give an honest account of the stories which have come to their ears' (tr. H. Chadwick). So according to Origen it would be unthinkable that those who have proved to be devoted to God and are ready to suffer martyrdom cannot be trusted when reporting such miracles.

The end of the era of miracles?

There is every reason to regard Justin and Origen as important witnesses of their own time. Precisely for this reason it is somewhat disturbing that the passages in their writings which deal with our subject seem to be few and far between and moreover put in general terms. Specific cases are hardly mentioned.⁸ Would this mean that in their experience such events rarely happened? There is an interesting passage in book 7 of *Contra Celsum*, in which Origen says that in Jesus' days signs of the Holy Spirit were manifest and that they even increased in number (πλείονα) after his Ascension, though they became ἐλάττονα afterwards. All the same: καὶ νῦν ἔτι ἴχνη ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ παρ'

⁸ I am fully aware of the role of miracles in the various apocryphal Acts. However, for my present purpose it seems prudent to concentrate on information which was regarded as reliable by authoritative writers with an ecclesiastical status.

ὀλίγοις, τὰς ψυχὰς τῷ λόγῳ καὶ ταῖς κατ' αὐτὸν πράξεσι κεκαθαρμένοις (ib. 7.8), 'even to this day there are traces of him in a few people whose souls have been purified by the Logos and by the actions which follow his teaching' (tr. H. Chadwick). In Eusebius' *Church History* one can find a similar observation: having quoted from Irenaeus 2.32, the chapter referred to above, he concludes with these words: Ταῦτα καὶ περὶ τοῦ διαφορὰς χαρισμάτων μέχρι καὶ τῶν δηλουμένων χρόνων παρὰ τοῖς ἀξίοις διαμεῖναι (5.7.6), 'So much on the point that a variety of gifts remained among the worthy up till the time spoken of' (translation Kirsopp Lake). Both Origen and Eusebius seem to imply that miraculous events which still took place in the second century were now something of the past. Their view is, however, not shared by Cyprian, who in his *Ad Donatum* stresses that the Spirit is still flowing forth in abundance, with clear results: *facultas datur . . . in medellam dolentium posse uenenorum uirus extinguere, animorum desipientium labes reddita sanitate purgare . . . immundos et erraticos spiritus, qui se expugnantibus hominibus immerserint, ad confessionem minis increpantibus cogere, ut recedant duris uerberibus urgere* (5), 'Power is given to annihilate the venom of poisons in order to heal the sick, to clean the dirty spots in irrational souls by restoring their health, to force the unclean and wandering spirits, who have intruded in men and plan to capture them, to confess their guilt, and to urge them by pitiless flogging to withdraw.' Nevertheless, the words of Origen and Eusebius are remarkable. Could it be that a gradual change of the spiritual climate had taken place and that moral values now took prime place in shaping Christian identity? In this respect it also deserves to be noticed that the authentic martyrs' documents do not refer to miracles.

Perhaps these facts are harbingers of the idea that the typical signs of the apostolic age were now no longer needed. This idea can be found in a number of late fourth century writings. In his explanation of 1 Cor. 12.31: 'But I can show you an even better way', the anonymous author who has been called 'Ambrosiaster' by the Maurini quotes some sections from the Gospels which according to him show very clearly that expelling demons and similar feats are no human merits. So the question arises why people nowadays do not have this divine gift. The author's answer is striking indeed: *Inter initia fieri oportuit ut fundamenta fidei acciperent firmitatem. Nunc autem non opus est quia populus populum adducit ad fidem, cum uidentur eorum bona opera et praedictio simplex* (Ambrosiaster *Ad Cor. prima* 12.31), 'In the beginning miracles were indispensable for giving faith a firm foundation. This

necessity does no longer exist, since men persuade one another to accept the faith, when their good works are seen as well as the straightforward message.’ Augustine defends a similar idea: divine authority moves us in two ways: *partim miraculis, partim sequentium multitudine*, ‘partly by miracles, partly by the large number of those who follow divine authority.’ In olden times this availed itself of miracles to reach people, but as soon as miracles become too common, they fail to make any impression. *Facta sunt igitur illa opportunissime, ut his multitudine credentium congregata atque propagata, in ipsos mores utilis conuerteretur auctoritas* (Augustine *De utilitate credendi* 16.34), ‘The miracles of those days were particularly opportune: they gathered and increased a mass of believers and the divine authority could turn itself to ethics, with a salutary result.’ Shortly before he had defended a similar view from a different angle: *Cum enim ecclesia catholica per totum orbem diffusa atque fundata sit, nec miracula illa in nostra tempora durare permessa sunt, ne anima semper uisibilia quaereret et eorum consuetudine frigeret genus humanum quorum nouitate flagrauit* (*De vera religione* 47), ‘As we all know (*enim*), the catholic church has been diffused and founded all over the world, and therefore those miracles are not allowed to continue. Otherwise the soul might keep seeking the visible and get used to that, losing the glow which it had shown when miracles were a novelty.’ John Chrysostom too plays down the importance of miracles: Καὶ ἐν τοῖς μακαρισμοῖς δὲ οὐδαμοῦ τὰ θαύματα ποιοῦντας τίθησι, ἀλλὰ τοὺς βίον ἔχοντας ὀρθόν (*De compunctione ad Demetrium* 8), ‘and in the Beatitudes he nowhere allots a place to those who perform miracles, he only mentions those who lead a correct life.’ In a passage of his treatise on priesthood he says:

Εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὰ θαύματα ἀφέντες, ἐπὶ τὸν βίον ἔλθοιμεν τοῦ μακαρίου καὶ τὴν πολιτείαν ἐξετάσαιμεν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀγγελικὴν, καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ μᾶλλον ἢ ἐν τοῖς σημείοις ὄψει νικῶντα τὸν ἀθλητὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ (*De sacerdotio* 4.6).

If we would only leave out miracles and concentrate on the life of the blessed man and examine his angelic conduct, you would be aware that Christ’s athlete was victorious by this way of life rather than by his signs.

Miracles in the ascetic movement and the cult of the saints

The similarity between these passages of three leading late antique ecclesiastical authorities is obvious. Of course, in their eyes the real-

ity and the value of the New Testament miracles is beyond doubt. In the apostles' time they were indispensable, but now they have concluded their salutary service. Christians have to demonstrate their faith by their irreproachable conduct. Yet the idea that miracles were something of the past is quite astonishing for anyone who has the two great movements of the fourth century in mind, asceticism and the cult of the saints. As to the former, the influential *Life of Anthony* contains several healings by the holy man, who stipulates: τοῦ Σωτῆρός ἐστὶν ἡ θεραπεία (Athanasius *Vita Antonii* 58.4), 'It is the Saviour who achieves the cure.' In a fascinating section of the biography (ch. 72–80) Anthony is engaged in a debate with two pagan philosophers. He explains that they operate with syllogisms and rhetoric, whereas the Christian finds support in a faith which is 'operational': ἐνεργής ἐστὶν ἡ πίστις ἡμῶν (ib. 78.2). In ch. 80 this is put to the test. A few men who are possessed by demons have arrived on the spot. Who will be able to make them clean? The philosophers with their accomplishments? Of course not! Only Anthony proves to be in a position to bring this about, to the amazement of his interlocutors: τί θαυμάζετε ἐπὶ τούτῳ; οὐκ ἐσμὲν ἡμεῖς οἱ ποιῶντες, ἀλλ' ὁ Χριστός ἐστὶν, ὁ διὰ τῶν εἰς αὐτὸν πιστευόντων τὰτα ποιῶν (ib. 80.6), 'why are you amazed at this? We are not doing this, it is Christ, who acts through those who believe in him.' That is precisely the view held by the author of the long ending of the Gospel of Mark! One can only wonder why Augustine in 390 proclaimed the end of the era of miracles. Had not he read the *Vita Antonii* himself and was he only aware of the existence of this much read biography from Ponticianus' report in 386?⁹

Some seven years after Augustine had given miracles his notice Sulpicius Severus wrote his brilliant biography of Martin of Tours, with ample attention to his struggle against the demons and his healings.¹⁰ *Curationum uero tam potens in eo gratia erat, ut nullus fere ad eum aegrotus accesserit, qui non continuo receperit sanitatem* (Sulpicius Severus

⁹ See Augustine *Confessiones* 8.14: *ortus est sermo ipso narrante de Antonio Aegyptio monacho, cuius nomen excellenter clarebat apud seruos tuos, nos autem usque in illam horam latebat*. In 8.15 Ponticianus reports that during a walk near the walls of Treves two 'agentes in rebus' *inuenisse ibi codicem, in quo scripta erat uita Antonii*.

¹⁰ The *Vita* and the three *Epistulae* are available in J. Fontaine's edition with an extensive introduction and commentary (SC 133–5). For the *Dialogi* one has to turn to C. Halm's edition of Sulpicius Severus' *Opera* (CSEL 1).

Vita Martini 16.1), 'the charisma of healing was so strong in him that hardly any sick person came to him without immediately regaining his health.' Fontaine ad loc. refers to 1 Cor. 12.28 *χαρίσματα* *ιαμάτων*, *gratias curationum*. In Sulpicius Severus' account of Martin's career many phrases are reminiscent of the miracles performed by Jesus and the apostles. In the introduction of his edition with commentary Fontaine summarizes Martin's salutary activities in this way: 'La lutte contre Satan y prend le tour beaucoup plus évangélique contre le mal physique et le mal spirituel.' In the *Vita Martini* miracles are not a phenomenon of the past, but a feature of the holy man's career in fourth century Gaul: *nullum uacuum ab opere Dei tempus* (*Vita Martini* 26.2).

The fourth century witnessed the opening of another source of holy energy beside the one which manifested itself in the great ascetics, such as Anthony and Martin. The veneration of the martyrs and the celebration of their *dies natalis* had been introduced before, but now the power which was present in their bones became more and more visible. Reporting the defeat of the devil, Hilary of Poitiers mentions this: *ueneranda ossa cottidie testimonio sunt, dum in his daemones mugiunt, dum aegritudines depelluntur* (*Hilarius Contra Constantium* 8), 'the venerable bones bear witness to this every day, when the demons are bellowing and ailments are driven away.' In 386 Augustine had witnessed it himself; during the *translatio* of the remains of Gervasius and Protasius those *quos inmundi uexabant spiritus confessis eisdem daemonibus sanabantur* (*Confessiones* 9.16), 'who were plagued by unclean spirits, were restored to health, a fact which was acknowledged by the very demons', and a Milanese man who had been blind for years got his eyesight back. Were miracles something of the past? Paulinus of Nola would have been astonished, and when Paula travelled through the Holy Land in 385 she heard the howling of demons who were tormented near the graves of Old Testament prophets.¹¹

In 415 the grave of the protomartyr Stephen was discovered and soon relics of this saint were transported to Africa. Healings followed. Judging by the fascinating chapter 8 of the 22nd book of *De civitate Dei*, this was the origin of Augustine's 'conversion'. He now concludes that miracles are still happening. They are, however, far less known than those in the Bible, which after all is read everywhere,

¹¹ Jerome *Ep.* 108.4.

whereas miracles tend to be known only in their local surroundings. He then continues with a series of twenty-two accounts, mainly of healings, thirteen of which have something to do with Stephen. One is reminded of the impressive stelai in Asklepios' sanctuary at Epidauros.¹² These contained a large number of inscriptions registering the healings wrought by the god. Augustine says that he had ordered to compose collections of healings in Hippo and Calama. At the time of writing he had some seventy reports (*libelli*) at his disposal. Why did he take such measures? *Id namque fieri uoluimus, cum uideremus antiquis similia diuinarum signa uirtutum etiam nostris temporibus frequentari et ea non debere multorum notitiae deperire* (*De civitate Dei* 22.8.21), 'I wanted this to be done, when I saw that miraculous signs which resembled those of olden days were also occurring frequently in our times and these ought not be lost to the knowledge of many.'

The apostolic age has returned

Antiquis similia diuinarum signa uirtutum: the mere words make the reader return to the apostolic time with its σημεῖα and δυνάμεις. Past and present are not wide apart: *Fiunt ergo etiam nunc multa miracula eodem Deo faciente per quos uult et quem ad modum uult, qui et illa quae legimus fecit* (ib. 22.8.22), 'At present, too, many miracles are taking place. They are being wrought by the same God who wrought those about which we read, using the men and the methods he wants.'¹³ *Similia, eodem*: these words express the identity of past and present. The cult

¹² See for a recent scholarly treatment of these invaluable testimonies Lynn R. LiDonnici, *The Epidaurian Miracle Inscriptions: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Atlanta 1995). The stelai were probably on view inside the abaton, the hall in which the patients slept awaiting Asklepios' arrival and cure in their dreams. 'It is likely that an important function of the display and preservation of the Iamata . . . was to heighten the suppliants' expectations and to "pre-condition" them for dreaming properly miraculous dreams' (18). Mutatis mutandis, this is not unlike Augustine's aims.

¹³ In *Retractationes* 1.13.7 Augustine deals explicitly with the words quoted above from *De vera religione* 47. He does not recant what he had said (*uerum est quidem*), but adds that this was true for *some* miracles, such as xenolalia and healing the sick *ad umbram transeuntium praedicatorum*, obviously referring to Acts 2.1–11 and 5.15 respectively. He next assures not to have overlooked the numerous miracles which occurred in his own time. It is not the most satisfactory page in the *Retractationes*. See Rowan A. Greer, *The Fear of Freedom: A Study of Miracles in the Roman Imperial Church* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989) 171 and Gerald O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God: A Reader's Guide* (Oxford 1999) 227–8.

of the saints had revived the past. There was no essential difference between the *aetas apostolica* and late antiquity. Ambrose had reached this conclusion some thirty-five years before. One can understand this. The Milanese bishop may have been Augustine's inferior intellectually, but he combined the organizational talent of an experienced manager with the perception of a lyrical poet: *uetusta saecla uidimus*.

LITURGY ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE APOSTLES

Gerard Rouwhorst

Rituals are closely connected with tradition. People who take part in rituals tend to believe that their origins reach back to a remote past and have remained more or less unchanged over the centuries. Whether this belief can stand the test of critical historical research or not—very often it cannot—, there is no doubt that ritual traditions owe their authority for a considerable part to their aura of antiquity. Their prestige will increase further when these rituals are believed to originate in a period which not only belongs to a distant past, but is also regarded as foundational and therefore particularly authoritative. The belief in the power of rituals will be strengthened even further when it is coupled with the conviction that authoritative persons have instituted these rituals.

No doubt these phenomena have also played an important role in the history of Christian liturgy. Throughout the centuries we encounter Christian groups and Christian leaders defending and legitimising liturgical customs by appealing both to authoritative persons and to authoritative and foundational periods. As for the appeal to authoritative persons living in the period of the origins, two types of argumentation may be distinguished here. Firstly, ritual traditions have been traced back to Christ himself. In case this proved not to be possible—for example because such an idea could not be made plausible on the basis of the Gospels—, often an alternative strategy was adopted. It consisted of attributing the origins of certain ritual practices to the apostles or otherwise to persons who had lived in a close relationship with them or had been their successors. The notion of apostolic authority misses the cogent persuasiveness of the idea of the institution by Christ Himself. On the other hand, it has the advantage of being more open-ended and, therefore, leaving more possibilities to one's own imagination. In fact, there were twelve apostles and the information the canonical New Testament provides about most of them, is extremely scarce. Moreover, precisely the fact that the authority of the apostles was less absolute than that of Christ Himself, may have made its appeal easier and, in addition, ecclesiastical

authorities may have been less concerned about combating claims of apostolic authority which were dubious or even dangerous in their eyes. In this regard, one may point to the fact that in early Christianity, apocryphal 'Acts of the Apostles' were tolerated for a longer period than non-canonical Gospels.

There is no doubt that this process has already started in early Christianity. This is, for instance, testified by the numerous church orders which, at least from a certain period onward, were ascribed to the apostles and deal for a considerable part with issues closely related to liturgy.¹ However, many other early Christian sources might be adduced here as examples as well.²

The question may then be raised how the process of underpinning liturgical traditions by apostolic authority has developed in the early church. When did it start? Which were the rituals that were preferably attributed to the apostles? What theological and political factors played a role in this process? What strategies did it reflect? How was it related to the development of Christian communities, which sought to establish their identity by several means but in particular also by their rituals?

The best way to discuss these kinds of questions is not to deal with them in a generalising way—by talking about early Christian liturgy as a whole—, but rather to start from concrete examples. Among the rituals that might be selected for that aim, probably the most intriguing one is the celebration of Christian Passover. It is interesting for several reasons. Firstly, it played a central part in the life of early Christian communities and it is highly illustrative of their religious beliefs. Furthermore, celebrating it in the right way was considered by many early Christians as vital to their identity. Second, during the first three or four centuries it underwent a remarkable development.³ It started as a celebration held on the date of the

¹ See for instance B. Steimer, *Vertex traditionis* (Berlin and New York 1992), especially 336–63; G. Schöllgen, 'Pseudapostolizität und Schriftgebrauch in den ersten Kirchenordnungen: Anmerkungen zur Begründung des frühen Kirchenrechts', in G. Schöllgen and C. Scholten (eds.), *Stimuli: Exegese und ihre Hermeneutik in Antike und Christentum: Festschrift für Ernst Dassmann (Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum, Ergänzungsband 23; Münster 1996)* 96–121.

² I will limit myself here to pointing to a number of anaphoras attributed to the apostles, such as the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari*, the Syriac *Anaphora of the Twelve Apostles*. See A. Hänggi and I. Pahl, *Præx eucharistica* (Spicilegium Friburgense 12; Fribourg 1968).

³ See, for instance T. Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year* (New York 1986) 1–78.

Jewish Pesach, i.e., in the night from the 14th to the 15th Nisan. Quite soon, however, the Quartodeciman Passover was supplanted by one based on the chronology of the Passion as encountered in the Gospel, which meant that the Christian Passover was celebrated on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday. In the fourth century, the celebration has almost everywhere expanded to a week, namely the week of the Passion. This development went hand in hand with a shift in the theological content of the feast. Gradually, the commemoration of the Resurrection became more clearly distinguished from that of the death and the Passion, and the motif of the liberation from Egypt, once very prominent, was relegated to a more secondary position. Finally, it has to be observed that all of these developments were accompanied by continuing debates and conflicts. One of the most remarkable facets of those conflicts is that the relation between minority and majority positions changed and, at the end of the day, was even inverted. It is quite generally agreed now that the oldest form of Christian Passover was the one celebrated by the Quartodecimans. This group, however, would end up becoming a marginal minority. On the other hand, the celebration on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday which came into existence in the second century as the result of a liturgical innovation, was eventually adopted by the majority of the Christians and regarded by them as normative. Lastly, another interesting thing about the development of Christian Passover is that hardly any other early Christian ritual or festival has asked for so frequent appeals to the authority of apostles.

The question we will try to answer in this paper, will have become clear by now. Our aim is to explore how different groups of Christians, both minorities and majorities, have appealed to the authority of apostles. What use did they make of it to legitimise their own ways of celebrating Passover? What arguments did groups of Christians draw from it to criticise different and, in their eyes, deviating practices? While elucidating these questions, we will begin with those Christians whose paschal celebration represents the oldest stage attainable of its development, the Quartodecimans.

1. *Quartodecimans invoking the authority of apostles*

It is generally agreed that one of the most important and undisputed sources for the history of Quartodecimanism is the *Church History* of Eusebius of Caesarea. The fifth book of this work contains a number of passages which deal with the controversy the celebration of 14/15 Nisan aroused in the second half of the second century (5.23–5).⁴ Since this controversy is described in most publications addressing questions related to the history of early Christian Easter,⁵ there is no need to mention here all the details. It will suffice to recall that the debate was between the Christians of Asia who ardently defended the Quartodeciman practice against the custom of ‘concluding the paschal fast on the day of the Resurrection’ which, at least according to Eusebius, was followed by the then Christian world and which in particular was favoured by Victor, the bishop of Rome, who even wanted to go so far as to break off the community with the Christians of Asia for that reason.

In the description of the controversy produced by Eusebius, we encounter more than once attempts to draw argument from the authority of one or more apostles. It should be observed immediately that the historical reliability of some of the information provided by Eusebius with respect to this point is open to discussion. As has already been pointed out by Norbert Brox, generally speaking, those passages in which Eusebius does not quote sources but uses his own words, should be dealt with very carefully.⁶ This holds in particular true for 5.23.1 where Eusebius claims that the practice of concluding the paschal fast on Sunday was based on apostolic tradition. It is very questionable whether Eusebius here does not voice his own, fourth century, view rather than that of the second-century adherents of Sunday Easter. We will return to that point shortly to substantiate it further. There is, however, no reason to doubt the reliability of the sources quoted by Eusebius. This being established, it has to be noted that in one of these sources argument

⁴ Ed. G. Bardy (SC 41.66–72).

⁵ See for instance Talley (n. 3) 18–27; R. Cantalamessa, *Easter in the Early Church* (Collegeville 1993) 1–23.

⁶ N. Brox, ‘Tendenzen und Parteilichkeiten im Osterfeststreit des zweiten Jahrhunderts’, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 83 1972 291–324, for instance 291–2 (= id., *Das Frühchristentum: Schriften zur historischen Theologie* [Freiburg 2000] 107–41 at 107).

is explicitly drawn from apostolic authority. This is the letter which the Asian Quartodeciman Polycrates wrote to Victor of Rome in order to defend the Asian custom. The source has been translated many times, but, for the sake of convenience, we will give here once again an English translation of the part which is most crucial for our purpose:

For our part we keep the day scrupulously, without addition or subtraction. For Asia too holds the resting place of great luminaries, such as will rise again on the day of the Lord's parousia, when he comes with glory from heaven and will search out all the holy ones: Philip of the twelve apostles, who rests in Hierapolis, and his two daughters who had grown old in virginity, and the other daughter who lived her life in the Holy Spirit and rests in Ephesus. There is also John, the one who leaned on the Lord's breast and who became a priest wearing the insignia of holiness, both martyr and a teacher; he rests in Ephesus. . . . All of them observed the fourteenth as the day of the Pascha according to the gospel, not deviating in the least, but following the rule of faith.⁷

The passage may be qualified as remarkable for several reasons. First, its Quartodeciman provenance is beyond dispute. Next, it is more than just an isolated testimony to Quartodeciman tradition. Eusebius asserts that Polycrates wrote the letter in his capacity as leader of the Asian bishops. We can, therefore, be sure that Polycrates voices a view which is highly representative of Asian Quartodecimanism. Lastly, one is struck by the self-confidence of Polycrates and by the strength of his arguments. He does not refer to a vague and general notion such as 'apostolic tradition', but adduces concrete names of authorities, adding even precise indications regarding the places where they had lived or were buried. All this attests the wide acceptance of the Quartodeciman practice in Asia as well as its antiquity. As for his conviction that this practice had apostolic origins, there can be no doubt that it was shared by most, if not all Asian Christians. Incidentally, there can be no doubt that it was well founded. Everything indicates that the Quartodeciman Passover dates back to the beginning of Christianity in Asia, that is, to apostolic times.⁸

⁷ *H.E.* 5.24.2–6 (SC 41.67–8). English translation: Cantalamessa (n. 5) 34–5.

⁸ See for the Quartodeciman Passover also G. Rouwhorst, 'The Quartodeciman Passover and the Jewish Pesach', *Questions liturgiques* 77 (1996) 152–73; A. Stewart-Sykes, *The Lamb's High Feast: Melito, Peri Pascha and the Quartodeciman Paschal Liturgy at Sardis* (Leiden 1998).

Apart from the letter of Polycrates, some additional sources may be mentioned which possibly point to the fact that the Quartodecimans, or some of them, based their Passover celebration on the authority of apostles. Admittedly, their testimony is not as clear, unambiguous and informative as the letter of Polycrates. Nonetheless, these sources are intriguing enough for us to look at them more closely.

The first document we would like to mention here is a source which has originally been written in Greek, but has only been preserved in a Coptic and an Ethiopic translation. It is commonly known as the *Epistula Apostolorum*.⁹ Both the provenance and the date of this source have been disputed since its discovery at the beginning of the twentieth century and still continue to give rise to contradictory theories.¹⁰ It is, however, quite generally accepted that the document originated in the second century and its provenance is located by the majority of the scholars either in Asia Minor or in Syria.¹¹ Especially the last-mentioned fact is of particular interest for our purpose, since Asia and most probably Syria as well were centres of Quartodeciman practices and traditions for a certain period and they certainly were so during the second century.¹²

The *Epistula Apostolorum* contains a passage which clearly alludes to the celebration of Passover and is quoted and discussed in numerous publications dealing with the history of that feast.¹³ Its setting is that of a speech addressed by Christ to his apostles after the Resurrection. The Lord commands his apostles to remember his death after He will have gone to the Father. Then, a scene is described which is obviously based on Acts, ch. 12 where we read that Peter was put

⁹ Edition of the Coptic text: C. Schmidt, *Gespräche Jesu mit seinen Jüngern nach der Auferstehung* (Leipzig 1919 = Hildesheim 1967) 1*–26*. Edition of the Ethiopic text: L. Guerrier, *Le Testament en Galilée de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ* (Patrologia Orientalis 9.3; Paris 1912). Variants drawn from a manuscript that was not taken into consideration by Guerrier are given by I. Wajenberg in his German translation of the Ethiopic text (see C. Schmidt, *Gespräche Jesu*, 25–155).

¹⁰ See for an overview of the different theories proposed C. Hill, 'The *Epistula Apostolorum*: An Asian Tract from the Time of Polycarp', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 7 1999 1–53, especially 5–21. See also J. Hills, *Tradition and Composition in the Epistula Apostolorum* (Minneapolis 1990).

¹¹ See Hill (n. 10) 16–21.

¹² See for Syria (and Mesopotamia) G. Rouwhorst, *Les hymnes pascales d'Ephrem de Nisibe*, i (Supplements to VC 7.1; Leiden 1989), especially 195–203.

¹³ Ch. VII and VIII of the Coptic version (C. Schmidt [n. 9] 5*–6*) = ch. 15 (or 26) of the Ethiopic version (Guerrier [n. 9] 198–9; Schmidt and Wajenberg [n. 9] 52–6). English translation: Cantalamessa (n. 5) 38–9.

into prison in the days of Unleavened Bread and is liberated during the night by an angel. In the version of this story presented by the *Epistula Apostolorum* the scene is explicitly located in the night of Passover. One of the apostles—he remains anonymous—has been thrown into prison for the sake of the name of the Lord. While being imprisoned, he grieves because he cannot celebrate Passover with the other apostles. However, after being liberated by the power of the Lord who appears in the form of the angel Gabriel, he has the possibility to watch with them until the cock crows and, next, to take part in the Eucharist and the Agape which form the conclusion of the Passover vigil. The celebration having come to an end, the apostle is thrown into prison again for a certain time.

There can be hardly any doubt that the description of the Passover night as found here has been strongly inspired by the liturgical practice of the milieu in which the *Epistula Apostolorum* was composed. Most probably it mirrors a Quartodeciman celebration which consisted of a one-night vigil which was concluded by a paschal Eucharist.¹⁴ The Eucharist included an agape and ended by the time of cock-crow, in the last part of the night. This fact is of particular interest for two reasons. First, it means that valuable information may be drawn from it with regard to the Quartodeciman Passover with which the author of the passage was familiar. This has been done in a good number of publications dealing with the history of the Christian Passover. What, however, makes the text relevant for the more specific issue we are dealing with in this article, is that it presupposes that the apostles had been Quartodecimans and, consequently, that in the view of the author of the *Epistula Apostolorum*, the Quartodeciman practice of his church had apostolic roots.¹⁵

¹⁴ See also Talley (n. 3) 5–7; Rouwhorst (n. 12) i.193–5. Admittedly, there is no absolutely incontrovertible evidence to the Quartodeciman character of the celebration concerned. On the other hand, no indications exist which might point to a paschal Sunday. More in particular, the attempt which recently K. Gerlach has made to prove the contrary, is not convincing. It is based on the assumption that the description of the *Epistula Apostolorum* may be supplemented by data derived from Acts 12.6 which situates the imprisonment of Peter in the days of the Unleavened Bread. According to Gerlach this means that the vigil described was that of a Sunday celebration within the week of Unleavened Bread (K. Gerlach, *The Antemice Pascha: A Rhetorical History* [Liturgia condenda 7; Louvain 1998] 97–8). It has to be noted that harmonizing Acts and the *Epistula Apostolorum* in this way is very problematic from a methodological point of view.

¹⁵ It may be remarked that T. Talley has gone a little bit further and has argued

Perhaps, a second source may be adduced as evidence for the fact that Quartodeciman Christians were convinced of the apostolic origins of their practice and, possibly, also appealed to it in order to bolster or to defend it. The source concerned has in common with the *Epistula Apostolorum* that it is usually assumed to have been written in the second century and to have originated either in Asia or in Syria, i.e., in regions where the Quartodeciman were predominant for a certain time. The source in question is the *Gospel of Peter*.¹⁶

The *Gospel of Peter* provides a description of the Passion, the death and the Resurrection of Christ. This description contains a number of elements we do not come across in any of the canonical Gospels. One of its most remarkable peculiarities is that mention is made explicitly of the fact that Peter and the apostles had fasted and grieved from the moment when Christ died. This fact is noteworthy enough in itself. However, what makes it still more remarkable and, at first glance, even may cause confusion, is that some very surprising details are given with regard to the duration of the fasting and grieving. According to §27 the disciples were fasting, grieving and crying 'day and night, until the Sabbath'. The question naturally arises as to what period of time is precisely meant. Were the disciples fasting and grieving until the beginning of the Sabbath following the death of Christ? This possibility has to be simply discarded since it would mean that the fasting and grieving would have lasted three hours only. Another way of solving the problem would be to understand 'until' in the sense of 'up to and including'. The fasting of the disciples would then have lasted until the end of the Sabbath and the beginning of Sunday, the day of the resurrection. Such an interpretation, however, has to be dismissed as well, because

that the *Epistula Apostolorum* contains an explicit defense of the Quartodeciman Passover which, by the way, would not have been addressed to adherents of Paschal Sunday, but to Christians who were not convinced of the necessity to celebrate Passover at all. Talley grounds his view on the passage that comes just after the description of the paschal celebration. The disciples then ask the Lord—in the Ethiopic version—if He did not complete the drinking of the Pascha and if they are obliged to do it again. The Lord responds that it is necessary indeed until the day when He shall come (Talley [n. 3] 6–7). In my view, this suggestion, interesting though it is, remains rather speculative. The problem is that the notion of 'Passover' in this context may have several connotations which it is impossible to disentangle. Instead of denoting the Passover festival it might as well refer to the Eucharist or to martyrdom.

¹⁶ Ed. M. Mara, *Évangile de Pierre* (SC 201).

it hardly finds support in the Greek word ἕως which is used. As a matter of fact, to discover the right interpretation of the passage, we will have to continue reading the *Gospel* until the last chapters where we find ourselves after the resurrection of the Lord. The tomb has been opened and the good news has already been announced to the women, but these have fled in bewilderment (§57). Thereupon another scene follows which unfortunately breaks off quite soon because the last part of the *Gospel* is missing. Still, it is sure that the disciples, here identified as the 'Twelve' (apostles), are still fasting and grieving (§59). Then, mention is made of three disciples, namely Peter, Andrew and Levi (Matthew), taking their nets and going in the direction of the sea (§60). Here the text breaks off, but it is apparent that the missing text contained a version of the account of the apparition of the Risen Lord at the 'sea' of Tiberias (John 21.1-14) in which Peter has a prominent role. In point of fact, this apparition must have put an end to the fasting and grieving of the disciples. The most interesting thing of this last preserved part of the *Gospel* is that it contains an indication of time. In §58 the scene of the still fasting and grieving disciples is situated on the 'last day of the Unleavened Bread when the festival was over and many people returned home'. This means that the apparition at the sea of Tiberias took place in the night after that day. Now everything clicks into place. Starting from the fact that the week of Unleavened Bread had begun on the Friday on which Christ died, the last day of the Unleavened Bread cannot have been but the Friday after the Resurrection and the disciples finished their fasting and grieving on that day, more precisely, in the night from Friday on Saturday which was the beginning of the Sabbath.¹⁷

This being established, the course of events as depicted by the *Gospel of Peter* has been clarified satisfactorily. Immediately, however, a new question emerges. How to explain the astonishing fact that, according to the *Gospel of Peter*, the disciples or apostles, fasted and grieved one week after the death of Christ and that the good news of the Resurrection took six days to reach them? How can this reconstruction of the events be reconciled with passages of the canonical Gospels, definitely known to the author of the *Gospel of Peter*, which

¹⁷ This solution is also proposed by D. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke* (San Francisco 1988) 25 and Gerlach (n. 14) 192-3.

refer to apparitions of Christ on the same day when the women visited the empty tomb? It may be added that the Gospel of John situates the scene at the Sea of Tiberias after the apparition to Thomas which, for its part, is said to have occurred eight days after the women found the tomb empty and Christ appeared in the evening to the other disciples. While following this chronology, it is impossible to place the scene at Tiberias just after the last day of Unleavened Bread as calculated by the *Gospel of Peter*.

It will be impossible to find a solution to this problem which is based on entirely cogent arguments. However, I would like to suggest that the key may be found in a number of data related to the celebration of Passover by some Syrian churches. In fact, it is remarkable that various Syriac sources designate Holy Week, the week preceding Easter, which essentially was a week of fasting and grieving for the Christians, as the 'Week of the Unleavened Bread'¹⁸ or, at the very least, regard it as its Christian counterpart. This being the case, it is very well conceivable that Christians projected their Week of the Unleavened Bread back to apostolic times.

Subsequently the question naturally arises as to what sort of Christian week of the Unleavened Bread might underlie the indications of time provided by the *Gospel of Peter*. One possibility which seems to present itself, was that the week of Unleavened Bread observed by the disciples was inspired by the traditional Holy Week preceding Easter Sunday. This, however, appears extremely unlikely for a twofold reason. First, we do not have any indication that this form of Holy Week had already come into development in the second century. Second, the idea that the disciples would have continued fasting some days after the Resurrection, can hardly be reconciled with a celebration of Passover which reaches its climax in the commemoration of the Resurrection in the night from Saturday on Sunday. In that case, the behaviour of the disciples would have been in sharp contrast to that of the Christians celebrating the joyful day of the Resurrection and the doubtless joyful days which followed. The only possibility, then, which remains is that we hear an echo here of a Christian week of the Unleavened Bread which coincided with the Jewish one and began on the Quartodeciman Passover, that is, on the 15th of Nisan. Once they had celebrated their Passover

¹⁸ Cf. Rouwhorst (n. 12) i.30 n. 16.

which primarily centred around the theme of the Passion and death of Christ rather than that of His Resurrection, they went on fasting and grieving until the end of the Jewish (and the Christian) week of Unleavened Bread. In a later period, when Easter Sunday was introduced, the week of the Unleavened Bread was placed before that day, but the Christians of the regions concerned continued calling it the Week of Unleavened Bread.

Assuming that this interpretation is correct, it may be concluded that the Quartodeciman community from which the *Gospel of Peter* would have originated, was convinced of the apostolic roots of its Passover celebration. One may even make a step further and wonder why the author of this gospel found it necessary to take so much pains and to use such a lot of exegetical artifice to demonstrate that the apostles had observed the liturgical practice with which he was familiar. Admittedly, the answer to this question remains in part a matter of conjecture. Nonetheless, one cannot help presuming that this practice was urgently in need of apostolic support and that it was far from being generally accepted. It is very well conceivable that the author of the *Gospel* found himself in a situation very similar to that of Polycrates.

To conclude the foregoing, we have to concede that we remain in the dark concerning many aspects of the Quartodeciman Passover. Neither do we know a lot about the arguments they used to sustain their liturgical practice. So much is clear, however, that at least many of them were convinced of its apostolic origins and it may be added that they had good reason for that.

The question which arises next, is how the proponents of Easter Sunday who from the third century onward were in the majority in most places, reacted to the Quartodeciman claims of apostolic authority.

2. *Reactions of the non-Quartodeciman majority*

Based on the available sources, it appears that, when being confronted with Quartodeciman claims of apostolic authority, proponents of Sunday Easter reacted in different ways. The three following reactions may be distinguished: (a) Avoiding discussion. (b) Sustaining the celebration of Easter Sunday and the preceding fast by an appeal to apostolic authority. (c) Playing down the importance of apostolic authority.

2.1 *Avoiding discussion*

While dealing with Eusebius' account of the second-century Paschal controversy, we saw that the Quartodeciman Polycrates showed a sharp awareness of following a tradition which reached back to apostolic tradition and, moreover, that he did not hesitate to fully exploit that argument. Several scholars, and in particular N. Brox,¹⁹ have pointed to the fact that this passionate appeal to apostolic authority strikingly contrasts with the complete silence about this issue in another source which is quoted extensively by Eusebius and defends the Easter Sunday tradition, namely the famous letter of Irenaeus (*H.E.* 5.24.12–17).

Two questions arise here. First, it may be asked whether the lack of any allusion to apostolic authority is due to coincidence. For instance, can it be accounted for by the fragmentary character of the quotation? Did the letter mention apostolic authority but did Eusebius not consider it to be necessary or useful to quote that part? This seems highly unlikely since Eusebius himself proves to be very concerned to stress the apostolic roots of Easter Sunday. It is very difficult to imagine that he would have missed the opportunity to validate his position on that issue by a quotation of Irenaeus' letter if it referred to it. Therefore, it seems most probable that Irenaeus did not touch upon the issue of apostolic authority. But then the question arises how we should explain the absence of any allusion to this point in Irenaeus' letter. One possible solution has been proposed by N. Brox.²⁰ In his view, Irenaeus' silence about apostolic authority is occasioned by his specific position; as a bishop of Lyons he was familiar with Easter Sunday and he also defended that tradition, but, at the same time, he was an Asian by birth and therefore well acquainted with Quartodeciman tradition and, moreover, aware of its ancient roots. Finding himself in that rather awkward position, he took a diplomatic and irenic stand in the debate. He defended the Easter Sunday practice, but he tried to prevent that the conflict escalated and, moreover, he realised that it would be wise to keep silent about the issue of apostolic authority. On the contrary, Victor and the Romans would have appealed to the authority of Peter and Paul.

¹⁹ Brox (n. 6) 295–302.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

This explanation proposed by Brox gives rise to a number of serious objections. First, the suggestion that Irenaeus consciously kept silent about the apostolic claims put forward by Victor and the Romans is based on an argument from silence. It cannot be validated by any indication derived from the text quoted by Eusebius. Secondly, it may be advanced that since Brox wrote his article, it has become more and more obvious that the oldest form of Christian Passover was the Quartodeciman Passover and that, on the contrary, Easter Sunday came into existence at a more recent date, most probably as the result of a transfer of the Quartodeciman celebration to the Friday, Saturday and Sunday after 14/15 Nisan.²¹ What this precisely meant for the celebration of Passover in Rome prior to the introduction of Easter Sunday is not completely clear and remains a matter of debate. It cannot be excluded that in Rome as well Passover was celebrated in the night from 14 to 15 Nisan. It is also conceivable that the Christians of Rome did not celebrate Passover at all (this view appears to have won ground during the last few decades).²² In either case, however, it is obvious that the Roman paschal practice cannot be traced back to the time of the apostles or, more specifically, Peter and Paul. One might raise the objection that liturgical innovations are often legitimised by an appeal to an authoritative past and that, therefore, it is conceivable that also Victor and the Romans would have done so. This, in itself, is true and several examples might be adduced to strengthen the argument. On the other hand, it should be emphasised that the success of the invention of a tradition presupposes a minimum of plausibility and that it also depends on *not* seeing it too easily as a transparent ruse. If, then, the celebration of Easter Sunday was a rather recent invention in Rome and everybody was still aware of this fact, it may be asked if the strategy of inventing an apostolic tradition would work. Taking into account all these facts, the most probable explanation of the absence of any allusion to apostolic authority in Irenaeus' letter seems to me to be that Victor and the Romans simply had

²¹ Cf. Rouwhorst (n. 8), especially 157–9. Cf. also Talley (n. 3) 26: 'Most writers today would accord some measure of historical priority to the Quartodeciman observance of Pascha, and thus allow that Easter Sunday represents an adjustment of that custom to the independently established weekly Sunday.'

²² Cf. Talley (n. 3) 23–6.

no reply to the self-conscious and well-founded claims of apostolic authority advanced by the Quartodecimans.²³

2.2 *Appealing to the authority of the apostles*

Avoiding the issue of apostolic authority was only one of the ways in which the proponents of Easter Sunday (and Holy Week) reacted to the claims of apostolic authority. Very soon, a good number of them started resorting to the same strategy that also was used by the Quartodecimans. To counter the arguments of the latter and to support their own liturgical practice, they began themselves appealing to the example or the authority of the apostles.

This is exactly what Eusebius does in the passages of his *Ecclesiastical History* where he does not quote Polycrates or Irenaeus, but speaks in his own words. Thus, in 5.23.1 he explicitly asserts that the churches outside of Asia who terminated the paschal fast on the day of the Resurrection, were following an apostolic tradition. A little bit further (5.25.1), he once more states that the tradition about the Pascha defended by him directly derives from the apostles.

In this connection, mention can also be made of the *Church Histories* written by Socrates and Sozomen. In those sources which are in part based on the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius, we can read that the Quartodecimans of Asia appealed to the authority of John and the Christians of Rome to that of Peter and Paul.²⁴ The explicit reference to those specific apostles is lacking in the work of Eusebius and, therefore, cannot have been borrowed from this source. It may be added that especially Socrates tries to play down the force of the argument from apostolic tradition (as we will see further on). Therefore, it can be excluded that it was he—or Sozomen—who had invented this tradition. This means that only one possibility is left: the idea must have become current among Christians after the second century and it appears very likely that some of them have used it to

²³ It may be remarked that the idea that Victor would have appealed to the apostles Peter and Paul, has already been disputed by H. Koch, 'Petrus und Paulus im zweiten Osterfeststreit?', *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 19 1919–20 174–9. See also Brox (n. 6) n. 7 where he replies—but, in my view, not convincingly—to the objections raised by Koch and mentions other authors who share his own position.

²⁴ Socrates *Ecclesiastical History* 5.22 (PG 67.632); Sozomen *Ecclesiastical History* 7.19.1 (PG 67.1473–6).

defend the celebration of Easter Sunday over against Quartodecimans (we will return to this question later on).

There is, however, one source which, to defend the celebration of Easter Sunday—and Holy Week—, draws on the authority and the example of the apostles much more explicitly and extensively than the church historians just mentioned do. This is the twenty-first chapter of the *Didascalia Apostolorum*.²⁵

Notoriously, the interpretation of this text arouses the greatest possible difficulties. The train of thought is, according to some scholars, extremely complicated and according to others even confused. In any case, it is very hard to follow the thread of the argumentation. Most scholars assume that the text as transmitted by the Syriac manuscripts is the result of a complicated process in which various layers representing different stages in the development of Christian Passover have been superimposed onto one another and have been interwoven. Starting from the same assumption, I have tried to demonstrate in another publication that through various more recent layers of the text which date to the fourth century and deal with the celebration of Holy Week, an old third century stratum can be reconstructed which presupposes a Quartodeciman type of Passover celebration.²⁶ Recently, this hypothesis has been called into question and it has been argued that, apart from some minor later updates, the complicated text as we have it now, might be read as a more or less coherent whole which would reach back to the third century.²⁷ One of the implications of this theory is that that it does not make sense to look for an older Quartodeciman stratum since there never was such a thing. I will return to that question further on,²⁸ but I will begin by indicating the basic ideas which emerge from the chapter as it is transmitted by the manuscripts.

Difficult though the interpretation of the text may be, at least two things are clear. First, the author (or redactor) tries to defend a

²⁵ Ed. A. Vööbus, *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac*, ii (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 407; Louvain 1979) 203–18 (translation vol. 408.184–202).

²⁶ Rouwhorst (n. 12) i.157–90.

²⁷ Gerlach (n. 14) 203–30.

²⁸ I hope it will be evident that discussing in detail the interpretation of the chapter as proposed by Gerlach would lead us too far afield here. I will be forced to limit myself to giving further on in this article some essential arguments in favour of my position.

certain type of fast which is held during the 'days of Passover', that is Holy Week. This fast lasts the whole week, but on Saturday and Sunday it is stricter than on the first four days of the week. On Saturday night at nine o'clock, the fast is broken and concluded by a celebration of the Eucharist and an agape meal. Next, it is noteworthy that the author/redactor attempts to explicitly ground this practice on the example of the apostles. Thus, the apostles in their quality as (fictional) authors of the *Didascalia* expressly and repeatedly emphasise that they had mourned and fasted from the moment on which the Lord, the Bridegroom, had no more been among them. Great pains are taken by them to count this period in a very precise way. By their reckoning, it includes the three days and nights in which the Lord had been among the dead and which correspond to the especially strict fast of Friday and Saturday. Further, to make plausible that the apostles had also fasted on the first four days of the Week, the author/redactor develops an idiosyncratic and surprising chronology of the Passion which has already perplexed many a scholar. The key to this chronology is provided by the idea that the 'taking away of the Bridegroom' should be understood as His imprisonment. A common-sense reading of the Gospels might suggest that this event took place on Thursday evening. The author/redactor of the *Didascalia*, however, sees it differently. He situates the Last Supper and therefore also the imprisonment on Tuesday. As a matter of fact, this does not yet suffice for the apostles to have started their mourning and fasting on Monday. The author/redactor of the *Didascalia* finds a way out of this difficulty by taking as his starting point the moment at which the priests and the elders assembled and decided to put Christ to death and this would have occurred on Monday!

The chronology of the Passion developed by the author/redactor is astonishing enough in itself. However, what makes it even more surprising is that the author/redactor takes such a great pains to legitimise the practice of fasting during Holy Week by appealing to the example of the apostles. In a sense, this might seem not so surprising since the apostles are claimed to be the authors of the *Didascalia* and, more precisely, to have composed it just after the first council held in Jerusalem. It might therefore be accounted for by the pseudographical setting of the *Didascalia*. Yet this explanation loses its persuasiveness entirely if we take a closer look at the role played by the apostles throughout the different chapters of the work. In fact,

the apostles do not appear by far as frequently as we might expect on the basis of the pseudepigraphical setting of the work.²⁹ In the first ten chapters they are almost never mentioned and in the chapters 10 to 20 only occasionally. It is only in the chapters 24 and 25 that the apostles come to the fore. It is not difficult to find out the reason why they play such a prominent role in this final part of the *Didascalia*. These chapters are dealing with all sorts of heresies and schisms and the intention of the author/redactor is to show that these had already been condemned by the apostles during the first council! The conclusion presents itself that the apostles appear on the scene when the author/redactor of the *Didascalia* is concerned to combat heresies or, more in general, deviating views and practices. It is, then, highly probable that this also holds true for the passages of the twenty-first chapter dealing with the fast of Passover. To become more precise, one cannot get away from the impression that the author/redactor finds himself in discussion with opponents who do not agree with the liturgical practice defended by him and, for instance, call it into question as being an unjustified innovation. The question then arises who these opponents were and what type of Passover fast and celebration they advocated. It is obvious that they were not familiar with the phenomenon of Holy Week and, in fact, it is generally agreed that this was the result of an innovation which cannot have been introduced before the end of the third century. Yet there must have been more at stake than just the extension of a paschal triduum to a Holy Week. The fact that the *Didascalia* stresses so strongly that the apostles had fasted during the three days and nights in which the Lord was among the dead, suggests that the opponents—or some of them—were against the triduum sacrum itself. This means they were Quartodecimans.

Whether one will agree with this conclusion or not, it becomes obvious from the *Didascalia*—as well as from Eusebius—that, in the third and fourth century, there were Christians in Syria who resorted to the authority of the apostles to defend the celebration of the paschal triduum and Holy Week.

²⁹ See also Schöllgen (n. 1) 114–15 and, in particular, Steimer (n. 1) 55–9.

3. *Relativizing the authority of the apostles*

In the foregoing, we have seen that both Quartodecimans and proponents of Easter Sunday and Holy Week tried to avail themselves of apostolic authority. At the same time, it has emerged that the claims of the former group were questionable from a purely historical point of view. There is no doubt that many Quartodecimans were aware of that fact, but one can easily imagine that some of their opponents realised this as well. The question then arises to what other arguments or strategies the proponents of Easter Sunday and Holy Week resorted when their claims of apostolic authority did not prove successful. Did they simply stick to these claims? Probably some of them will have followed this strategy. Nonetheless, it is interesting to see that a number of sources dating to the fourth and fifth century indicate that at least some proponents of Easter Sunday and Holy Week dealt with this problem in a different way. They frankly granted that the liturgical practice followed by the Quartodecimans—and possibly by other opponents—was of apostolic origin, but, at the same time, tried to play down the relevance of this fact. In their view, there was something which mattered more than the following of the example of the apostles on this point, namely the unity of the Christians. This became endangered by differences with regard to the celebration of Passover and the best remedy to this problem would be that the minorities followed the majority, even if the claim of the apostolic origin of their tradition was well-founded in itself.

One of the most interesting representatives of this strategy is the church historian Socrates.³⁰ As already remarked before, this author makes mention of the fact that both Quartodecimans and their opponents lay claim on apostolic authority. Socrates, then, tries to find a way out of this predicament by relativizing the claims advanced by both parties and he does so on the basis of what N. Brox has called a 'liberal-historical analysis'.³¹ The point he attempts to make is that the appeal to the behaviour of either Christ or the apostles—even if the historical facts adduced are correct in themselves—is problematic. Incidentally, so he adds, this does not *only* hold true for the celebration of Easter, but for many other customs that were

³⁰ *H.E.* 5.22.

³¹ Brox (n. 6) 321.

observed by the first Christians. In his view, these customs are not normative for the Christians of his time. If they would be really consistent in this matter, so he remarks penetratingly, these Christians should have to observe many more Jewish customs which are mentioned in the Gospels!³² In addition, from the very first beginning of the church different customs and practices had existed side by side and, moreover, occasioned disputes and conflicts. From all this Socrates draws a sensible, pragmatic conclusion. He gives the advice not to worry oneself about these sorts of things, but to maintain peace.³³ He still adds that the apostles had adopted the same attitude with regard to this kind of issues (In so far, Socrates does not entirely get away from appealing to apostolic authority himself!). As for the Quartodecimans, this means in practice that they have to follow the customs of the majority.

Another interesting example of the same, or at least a very similar, strategy we have is provided by the seventieth chapter of Epiphanius' *Panarion* which is entirely devoted to a discussion with the Audians, a group of Christians who lived in Mesopotamia and appear to have come into existence in the aftermath of the Council of Nicea.³⁴ The members of this movement upheld a number of theological views which in the eyes of Epiphanius and of others were not orthodox. What matters to us more in particular with regard to our subject, is that they did not celebrate Easter on the same date as the majority of the Christians and appealed for that to a source which is called by them the 'diataxis of the apostles' and turns out to be nothing but a version of the *Didascalía*.³⁵

The question here arises in which way the Audians celebrated Passover. From the description provided by Epiphanius at least the following conclusions can be deduced. First, Epiphanius blames the Audians for 'celebrating with the Jews' (9.2; 10.3), i.e. 'at the time when the Jews hold their Feast of Unleavened Bread' (9.2) or 'in the middle of the Feast of Unleavened Bread' (10.6). Second, Epiphanius quotes or paraphrases (?) a passage from the 'diataxis' from which it emerges that one should mourn and fast when the

³² PG 67.643–6.

³³ PG 67.641–4.

³⁴ GCS 37.232–49. English translation of the most important passages: P. Amidon, *The Panarion of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis* (New York and Oxford 1990) 271–81.

³⁵ See Epiphanius *Pan.* 70.9–14.

Jews eat their paschal meal and that one should keep a meal and make merry when the Jews eat unleavened bread and bitter herbs (11.3). It may be assumed—although Epiphanius does not say so explicitly—that the Audians wanted to put this instruction into practice literally.

The opinions of scholars diverge as to how these data should be interpreted. Two solutions have been advanced which, both of them, continue to find adepts. The first possibility is that the Audians were Quartodecimans.³⁶ In that case, a precise simultaneity existed between, on the one hand, the fast of the Christians and the Pesach meal of the Jews and, on the other hand, the Eucharist and agape of the Christians and (the beginning of) the Week of Unleavened Bread. The other solution is that the Audians were 'protopaschites', i.e. they were familiar with Easter Sunday and Holy Week, but for their computation of the paschal moon they simply followed the Jews, which meant that they sometimes celebrated Easter and Holy Week on another date than the majority of the Christians who calculated their paschal moon independently of the Jews.³⁷ In that case, the synchronism between the Christian and the Jewish rituals was much less precise. The most striking thing would have been that Christian Easter was celebrated during the Week of Unleavened Bread and that the Pesach meal of the Jews contrasted with Christian Holy Week. As a matter of fact, the question is closely bound up with the interpretation of the twenty-first chapter of the *Didascalia*. In case this text would contain a Quartodeciman core, it would be well conceivable that the Audians were Quartodecimans and appealed to an older version of the *Didascalia* to buttress their liturgical practice.³⁸ If the *Didascalia* would have presupposed a Paschal Sunday from the outset, it would have been much more likely that the Audians were Quartodecimans, but even then it cannot be entirely excluded that they tried to base their paschal observance on a non-Quartodeciman *Diataxis/Didascalia* since some passages are ambivalent enough to lend themselves for a Quartodeciman interpretation. Further, apart from

³⁶ Thus, B. Lohse, *Das Passafest der Quartadecimaner* (Gütersloh 1953) 16–18; A. Strobel, *Ursprung und Geschichte des frühchristlichen Osterkalenders* (Texte und Untersuchungen 121; Berlin 1977) 344; Rouwhorst (n. 12) i.181.

³⁷ Thus E. Schwartz, *Christliche und jüdische Ostertafeln* (Berlin 1905) 115; Schmidt (n. 9) 672–7; Cantalamessa (n. 5) 169–70.

³⁸ Cf. Rouwhorst (n. 12) i.181–2.

the question raised by the interpretation of the *Didascalía* used by the Audians, the text of the *Panarion* itself suggests a precise contrasting synchronism between the Jewish and Christian rites, in the sense that the Christians were fasting during the hours when the Jews ate their Passover meal and that they started eating and making merry as soon as the Jewish festal meal was over and the period of the Unleavened Bread had begun. In fact, it may be asked what happened when 14 Nisan fell at the beginning of the week, for instance on a Monday. In that event, for a Quartodeciman there would not be any problem. He would fast on Monday evening until the end of the Jewish Pesach meal which will have occurred around midnight and, next, he would have celebrated a paschal Eucharist. Someone celebrating Paschal Sunday would have found himself in a rather awkward position. He would have been forced to postpone his Passover celebration until Saturday night with the undesirable effect that his fasting and mourning during Holy Week practically coincided with the week of Unleavened Bread. For the rest, a minor detail of Epiphanius' argumentation corroborates still further the presumption that the Audians strove for a precise contrasting simultaneity between the Jewish and Christian rituals. Epiphanius argues that the regulation as prescribed by the *Diataxis* entails a contradiction. In fact, so he reasons (11.4), it may happen that 14 Nisan falls on a Saturday. In that case, so the argumentation goes on, the Jews are obliged to postpone the slaughtering of the paschal lambs—which, incidentally, is not practised any more after the destruction of the temple—until Saturday evening after sunset, that is, after the end of Shabbath. This, however, has the effect that the Passover meal is delayed as well and is actually eaten at a time of the night when Sunday already has begun. However, the order to fast in that part of Sunday night which would follow from the principle defended by the Audians, is in contradiction with the prohibition, equally found in the *Diataxis*, that is the *Didascalía*, to fast on the Day of the Lord. It appears that Epiphanius' objections hit the mark only when his opponents are Quartodecimans.³⁹

³⁹ If the Audians would have been 'protopaschites' we may assume that their Holy Week either preceded or followed the 14/15 Nisan. Easter Sunday would then coincide either with 15 or with 22 Nisan. In either case, the objection might be raised against them that their Passover Eucharist did not fall in the Week of

Be that as it may, whether the Audians were Quartodecimans or otherwise, the most important thing for our purpose is to see how Epiphanius attempts to refute the arguments of his opponents. In fact, he does so in a very subtle way, namely by relativizing the views of the apostles as allegedly transmitted by the *Diataxis*. His argumentation is based on two assumptions. First, the apostles were of Jewish origin. Second, they were not interested in the observance of a particular paschal date or in the fact of celebrating on the same date as the Jews. Their sole concern was with maintaining the unity of Christian communities and preventing schisms and conflicts. Starting from these two basic convictions, Epiphanius reconstructs the earliest history of Christian Passover as follows. The apostles wished that everybody should celebrate Passover on the same day. This ideal could be best realised when all Christians would observe the Jewish date and, therefore, this date became generally prescribed by the apostles. The first generations of Christians continued celebrating together with the Jews. However, the situation changed when there were no more bishops from the circumcision who were ordained in Jerusalem and had the task of determining when the feast should be celebrated. From that time onward, there had been a lot of confusion and quarrelling about the paschal date. Eventually, the emperor Constantine had set the matter right and restored unity by fixing a uniform rule for the calculation of the paschal date. Epiphanius stresses that this rule has to be followed in the whole world 'for the sake of unity'. Finally, to further strengthen his case, he points to some contradictions in the regulations established by the apostles and transmitted by the *Diataxis*. Above, we have dealt with one of those contradictions (namely the one raised by the fact that time and again the *Diataxis* makes it necessary to fast on Sunday).

Conclusion

What conclusions can be drawn from the foregoing? No doubt, the most striking result is that it has emerged that in the various dis-

Unleavened Bread. If they celebrated on 15 Nisan, the Passover Eucharist practically coincided with the delayed Pesach meal. On 22 Nisan the Week of Unleavened Bread was over. Furthermore, the Jewish Pesach meal would not have been celebrated during Christian Holy Week, because it was held on a Sunday. Epiphanius, however, does not mention this problem.

cussions about the Passover celebration which have taken place in early Christianity, Christians have often appealed to the authority of *the* apostles to defend their own practices and customs and, more in particular so, when these became a matter of discussion or were under attack. It hardly comes as a surprise that the Quartodecimans were the first Christians to make use of this argument. First, their appeal to apostolic authority was rather well-founded but, more importantly, it was the Quartodecimans who, from the second century onward, were challenged and even forced to defend their position which more and more became that of a minority. As for their opponents who from the end of the second century became the majority in most places, it seems that a gradual development of their argumentation can be perceived. At first, they appear to have had no clear reply to the apostolic claims of the Quartodecimans. Quite soon, however, they tried to claim the apostolic authority for their own Paschal Sunday and Holy Week traditions and occasionally they did not hesitate to pull out all the stops if that might prove useful to achieve their goal. The *Didascalia* testifies to this most clearly. Finally, once the battle was won and the Quartodecimans did not constitute but a small minority, their opponents availed themselves of another strategy. They tried to play down the argument drawn from apostolic authority and to make it subordinate to a principle they considered as being of much greater importance, namely maintaining unity, i.e., following the majority. Resorting to apostolic tradition was, as far as the celebration of Easter was concerned, depicted as characteristic of sectarian movements which kept old-fashioned traditions.

LA TRADITION APOSTOLIQUE ET LE CANON DU NOUVEAU TESTAMENT

Riemer Roukema

Dans sa trente-neuvième *Lettre Pascale*, de 367, Athanase d'Alexandrie présenta une liste de livres de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament auxquels, à son avis, l'Église devait se limiter pour en recevoir l'instruction en vue du salut.¹ En ce qui concerne le Nouveau Testament, cette liste de livres 'canonisés' (κανονιζόμενα) correspond exactement au canon connu de nos Bibles, ce qui suggère qu'à partir de ce moment-là la formation du canon du Nouveau Testament était achevée. Dans l'Église occidentale, quelques synodes de la fin du quatrième et du cinquième siècle (Hippone, 393; Carthage, 397 et 419) ont effectivement confirmé, sous l'influence d'Augustin, la liste de livres 'canoniques' d'Athanase; Augustin la donne aussi dans le deuxième livre de son œuvre *De doctrina christiana*, écrit en 397.²

De nombreux témoins montrent, néanmoins, qu'à cette époque on pouvait encore prendre la liberté de se réclamer d'autres livres que ceux canonisés par Athanase et Augustin. Pour n'en citer qu'un seul exemple: à la fin du quatrième siècle Didyme d'Alexandrie ne se référait pas seulement, à peu près, aux mêmes livres reconnus par Athanase (sauf l'épître à Philémon et la deuxième et la troisième épître de Jean), mais aussi au *Pasteur* d'Herma, à l'épître attribuée à Barnabé, à l'épître d'Ignace d'Antioche aux Romains, à la *Didaché* et à l'épître de Clément de Rome aux Corinthiens. Bien qu'il ne soit pas absolument clair si Didyme a reconnu tous ces cinq écrits comme ayant la même autorité que ceux de notre Nouveau Testament, ceci s'est avéré être le cas au moins pour le *Pasteur* d'Herma et l'épître de Barnabé.³ Puisque la liste promulguée par Athanase comme

¹ Éditée, par exemple, par E. Preuschen, *Analecta. Kürzere Texte zur Geschichte der alten Kirche und des Kanons* (Freiburg im Breisgau et Leipzig 1893) 144–146.

² *De doctrina christiana* II, 8, 13 (CCSL 32). Voir B. M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament. Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford 1994⁴) 237–238.

³ Voir B. D. Ehrman, 'The New Testament Canon of Didymus the Blind', *VC* 37 1983 1–21.

un décret pour son diocèse n'était, pourtant, pas reconnu par un docteur aussi important que Didyme, il est manifeste qu'à cette période la question du canon du Nouveau Testament n'était pas encore définitivement réglée. D'ailleurs, bien qu'Athanase n'ait pas voulu canoniser la *Didaché* et le *Pasteur* d'Herma, il a dû reconnaître que les Pères en avaient recommandé la lecture aux catéchumènes. En 318 environ, Athanase aussi avait encore cité le *Pasteur* comme étant égal à la Genèse pour prouver la *creatio ex nihilo*.⁴

Dans cette contribution, nous ne poursuivrons pas l'histoire du canon du Nouveau Testament au quatrième siècle, mais nous exposerons brièvement à quel stade était la formation de ce canon à la fin du deuxième et au début du troisième siècle, chez quelques auteurs de l'Église de langue grecque et latine.⁵ Il nous faut admettre, tout de même, que la formulation de notre sujet est anachronique pour deux raisons. Premièrement, à cette époque le terme 'canon' n'était pas encore utilisé dans le sens que l'on y attachera plus tard, c'est-à-dire une liste de livres 'canonisés' dont l'Église reconnaît l'autorité. En fait, cette formulation fait déjà référence au langage du quatrième siècle. La conséquence presque inévitable de cette formulation est que le stade plus primitif n'est plus considéré en soi, mais dans la lumière de l'évolution ultérieure. Deuxièmement, la formulation de la question est anachronique parce qu'à la période plus primitive l'Église utilisait le terme 'canon' dans un autre sens; il figure dans des constructions comme *κανὼν τῆς ἀληθείας* et *κανὼν ἐκκλησιαστικός*, se référant au contenu de la foi catholique et à la pratique ecclésiale correspondant à celle-ci. Malgré cet anachronisme terminologique, pour des raisons pratiques, nous nous servirons régulièrement, quand même, dans cette contribution sur le deuxième et le troisième siècle, du terme 'canon' dans le sens de la période ultérieure. Par cette expression nous entendrons la liste d'écrits qui, dans l'Église ancienne, répondaient aux critères suivants: ils étaient considérés comme inspirés par l'Esprit Saint, ils pouvaient être lus dans les liturgies, et ils étaient cités dans les discussions théologiques comme ayant la même autorité que celle que l'on attribuait aux livres de

⁴ *De incarnatione* 3 (SC 199).

⁵ Nous traiterons seulement de quelques étapes de l'histoire du canon néo-testamentaire; en outre, nous passerons sur les développements dans l'Église de langue syriaque.

l'Ancien Testament. En principe, ce canon est délimité, ou du moins on aspire à sa délimitation.

Nous serons particulièrement attentif au rapport que l'on voyait, à cette période de la fin du deuxième et du début du troisième siècle, avec le temps des apôtres; ce qui implique qu'il nous intéresse de savoir dans quelle mesure, ou de quelle manière, fonctionnait le critère de l'apostolicité pour les écrits étant dignes d'être reçus dans cette collection que l'on appellera, plus tard, le 'canon'.

1. *Le rôle de Marcion*

En ce qui concerne le développement du canon du Nouveau Testament, des savants comme von Harnack, Knox et von Campenhausen ont attaché une grande importance au rôle de Marcion.⁶ Autour de 140, ce 'pilote du Pont'⁷ avait composé sa propre liste de livres autorisés, consistant en une version, dépourvue de la plupart de leurs éléments vétéro-testamentaires, de l'évangile de Luc et de dix épîtres de Paul. Les épîtres Pastorales manquaient à sa collection. La sélection de Marcion semble avoir toutes les caractéristiques d'un canon délimité, mais, à juste titre, il existe des doutes si Marcion lui-même considérait sa collection comme close.⁸ On peut, effectivement, alléguer que les marcionites ultérieurs ont cité aussi d'autres évangiles et, semble-t-il, d'autres épîtres, parmi lesquelles figuraient, peut-être, même les épîtres Pastorales.⁹ Quoi qu'il en soit, selon les savants mentionnés ci-dessus, les chrétiens 'catholiques' de la deuxième partie du deuxième siècle, notamment Irénée, auraient été provo-

⁶ A. von Harnack, *Die Entstehung des Neuen Testaments* (Leipzig 1914) 40–41; *Marcion. Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott* (Leipzig 1924) 210–215, 442*–444*; J. Knox, *Marcion and the New Testament* (Chicago 1942) 19–38; H. von Campenhausen, *Die Entstehung der christlichen Bibel* (Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 39; Tübingen 1968) 174–244.

⁷ *Ponticus nauclerus*, selon Tertullien *De Praescriptione* 30,1 (SC 46); *nauclerus* peut aussi désigner: armateur ou propriétaire d'un navire; voir A. Bailly e.a., *Grand dictionnaire Grec Français* (Paris 2000), s.v. ναύκληρος.

⁸ Voir G. M. Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon* (Oxford 1992) 90–93; L. M. McDonald, *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon* (Peabody 1995) 160; A. Sand, *Kanon. Von den Anfängen bis zum Fragmentum Muratorianum* (Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte I, 3a, 1; Freiburg, Basel et Wien 1974) 59. Knox (n. 6) 163–165, suppose que Marcion ne connaissait que l'évangile de Luc, ce qui nous paraît invraisemblable; ayant beaucoup voyagé, Marcion était en contact avec de nombreuses églises, de sorte qu'il devait connaître plusieurs évangiles.

⁹ Hahneman (n. 8) 91–93.

qués par cette collection limitée de Marcion à composer un canon plus complet. Les dix épîtres de Paul furent complétées par les épîtres Pastorales et éventuellement par l'épître aux Hébreux; au lieu du seul évangile de Luc l'Église en acceptait quatre, et elle fit place à des épîtres sous le nom d'autres apôtres comme Pierre et Jean.

Bien que ce schéma soit séduisant par sa simplicité, il a, tout de même, été réfuté par ceux qui invoquent le fait qu'avant Marcion déjà l'on avait commencé à collectionner des écrits reconnus comme dignes de foi, comme les épîtres de Paul.¹⁰ Cette objection doit être nuancée, cependant, par le fait qu'une collection d'écrits importants n'implique pas automatiquement la formation d'un canon délimité. Quoi qu'il en soit, une raison majeure pourquoi, à notre avis, il n'est pas nécessaire d'attribuer un rôle principal à Marcion pour la formation du canon néo-testamentaire, c'est qu'après lui, l'Église a tardé encore longtemps à fixer un canon délimité. Bien que de nombreux chercheurs aient constaté que, en principe, Irénée avait déjà en main le canon ultérieur du Nouveau Testament, il faut signaler que cette constatation est fondée sur l'approche anachronique relevée dans notre introduction. Si l'on essaie de comprendre Irénée en soi, détaché du développement ultérieur, on verra qu'il n'aspire pas vraiment à la formation d'un canon délimité de livres autorisés pour y fonder la foi et la pratique de l'Église.

2. Irénée

Il est vrai qu'Irénée défendait l'avis que seulement les évangiles apostoliques selon Matthieu, Luc, Marc et Jean étaient dignes de foi.¹¹ Par ce choix, d'après ce qu'il en dit lui-même, il s'opposait:¹²

¹⁰ Par exemple Sand (n. 8) 59–60; U. Swarat, 'Das Werden des neutestamentlichen Kanons', in G. Maier (éd.), *Der Kanon der Bibel* (Giessen et Basel 1990) 25–51 (p. 39); Metzger (n. 2) 97–99; Y.-M. Blanchard, *Aux sources du canon, le témoignage d'Irénée* (Cogitatio Fidei 175; Paris 1993) 282–283. U. Schmid, *Marcion und sein Apostolos. Rekonstruktion und historische Einordnung der marcionitischen Paulusbriefausgabe* (Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung 25; Berlin et New York 1995) 284–303, a confirmé qu'avant Marcion il existait déjà une édition d'épîtres de Paul.

¹¹ Matthieu est appelé 'apôtre' (*Adversus Haereses* III,9,1; SC 211), Luc 'compagnon et disciple des apôtres' (*Adversus Haereses* III,10,1), Marc 'interprète et compagnon de Pierre', qui était apôtre (*Adversus Haereses* III,10,6; 12,1); il est remarquable, cependant, que Jean est seulement appelé 'disciple du Seigneur' (*Adversus Haereses* III,11,1).

¹² *Adversus Haereses* III,9–11 (SC 211).

1. aux ébionites qui se servaient du seul évangile selon Matthieu (voir aussi *Adversus Haereses* 1,26,2);
2. à Marcion qui se limitait à l'évangile amputé selon Luc;
3. à un groupe apparemment gnostique qui, d'après Irénée, se limitait à l'évangile selon Marc (mais il est également possible qu'Irénée ait inventé cet élément pour être en mesure de dire quelque chose sur l'évangile de Marc);
4. aux valentiniens qui auraient surtout utilisé l'évangile selon Jean, mais qui auraient aussi composé un 'Évangile de Vérité' (il est possible que cet 'évangile' soit identique au troisième écrit du premier codex de Nag Hammadi, commençant par les mots 'L'évangile de la vérité . . .');
5. à ceux qui, probablement par crainte de la 'Nouvelle Prophétie' du Montanisme, rejetaient l'évangile selon Jean parce que cet évangile contient la promesse de l'envoi du Paraclet, duquel Montan se réclamait.

Irénée fondait son choix des quatre évangiles sur le fait qu'il existe quatre régions du monde et quatre vents principaux, et sur les quatre animaux célestes figurant dans l'Apocalypse de Jean 4,7. Si, dans les œuvres d'Irénée, il est question d'un canon délimité, il consiste dans les quatre évangiles. Suite à ce choix, il ne rejetait pas seulement l'Évangile de Vérité, mais aussi tous les écrits valentiniens.¹³ Face au valentinien Marc, il fit la différence entre la 'multitude infinie d'écrits apocryphes et bâtards (νόθος) confectionnés par eux' et les 'écrits de la vérité'.¹⁴

Pourtant, Irénée n'appliquait pas de façon conséquente sa limitation aux quatre évangiles, car à la fin de ses livres *Contre les Hérésies*, il cita des paroles de Jésus, concernant l'avenir bienheureux sur la terre, qui ne figurent dans aucun des quatre évangiles.¹⁵ D'abord, il se réclama de la tradition orale des presbytres qui auraient entendu ces paroles de Jean, le disciple du Seigneur. Ensuite, il se référa à Papias qui, en tant qu'auditeur de Jean et familier de Polycarpe, avait attesté cette tradition par écrit (*per scripturam, ἐγγράφως*). De plus, Papias a ajouté aux paroles de Jésus, la réaction incrédule de

¹³ *Adversus Haereses* I, praefatio 1-2 (SC 264); III,11,9 (SC 211).

¹⁴ *Adversus Haereses* I,20,1 (SC 264).

¹⁵ *Adversus Haereses* V,33,3-4 (SC 153).

Judas. Il apparaît donc que, malgré sa limitation au nombre de quatre évangiles, Irénée n'excluait pas d'autres traditions sur Jésus.¹⁶

Les autres écrits provenant du christianisme primitif et cités par Irénée sont les suivants:¹⁷ douze épîtres de Paul (celles de notre Nouveau Testament sauf l'épître à Philémon), les Actes des Apôtres, la première épître de Pierre, deux épîtres de Jean, l'Apocalypse de Jean, et le *Pasteur* d'Hermas, cité comme *scriptura*, ce qui pourrait être traduit par 'Écriture' ou par 'écrit'.¹⁸ Pour Irénée, en outre, des témoins très importants de la tradition apostolique étaient l'épître envoyée par l'église de Rome à celle de Corinthe (connue comme *1 Clément*), désignée comme *ipsa scriptura*, et l'épître de Polycarpe aux Philippiens.¹⁹ Sans qualification apostolique, il cita l'épître d'Ignace aux Romains et l'ouvrage de Justin contre Marcion.²⁰

Selon Eusèbe, Irénée aurait cité l'épître aux Hébreux dans un livre contenant des 'entretiens divers',²¹ mais dans son ouvrage *Contre les Hérésies*, Irénée n'a pas cité cette épître; les allusions prétendues à l'épître aux Hébreux sont équivoques.²² Puisque le livre auquel Eusèbe se réfère est totalement inconnu, il n'est pas évident qu'Irénée ait connu cette épître. Dans sa collection, il manque apparemment, vu de la perspective ultérieure, les épîtres de Jacques, de Jude et la deuxième de Pierre. Peut-être, l'épître de Paul à Philémon faisait-elle partie de la collection d'Irénée sans qu'il l'ait citée.

En effet, les œuvres conservées d'Irénée ne contiennent pas une liste intégrale de livres néo-testamentaires; la seule liste qu'il ait rédigée ne contient que les quatre évangiles. Le fait qu'Irénée n'ait pas rédigé une liste complète, est confirmé par Eusèbe qui, faute d'une

¹⁶ Cf. aussi *Adversus Haereses* I,20,1 (SC 264), où Irénée semble reconnaître une parole de Jésus citée par les disciples de Marc le gnostique: 'Souvent ils ont désiré entendre une seule de ces paroles, mais ils n'ont eu personne qui la leur dise' (voir SC 263, pp. 264–265 pour ce texte conjectural; cf. l'évangile de Thomas 38 et Mt 13,17); et *Adversus Haereses* II,34,3 (SC 294), où il cite comme parole du Seigneur: 'Si vous n'êtes pas fidèles dans les petites choses, qui vous donnera les grandes?' (cf. Luc 16,11).

¹⁷ Voir Blanchard (n. 10) 238–274.

¹⁸ *Adversus Haereses* IV,20,2 (SC 100); Eusèbe *Historia Ecclesiastica* V,8,7 (SC 41); cf. aussi Irénée *Adversus Haereses* II,30,9 (SC 294).

¹⁹ *Adversus Haereses* III,3,3–4 (SC 211).

²⁰ *Adversus Haereses* V,28,4 (SC 153); IV,6,2 (SC 100).

²¹ *Historia Ecclesiastica* V,26 (SC 41).

²² Blanchard (n. 10) 254–256.

telle liste, a lui-même composé un canon rudimentaire à partir des œuvres d'Irénée.²³ Il est significatif que, dans la mesure où Irénée parle des deux 'testaments' (διαθήκαι), il se réfère à l'ancienne et à la nouvelle alliance et non pas à l'Ancien et au Nouveau Testament.²⁴

Plusieurs chercheurs ont déduit de l'ouvrage *Contre les Hérésies* que pour Irénée, en fait, il existait déjà un canon néo-testamentaire. Il est curieux, cependant, qu'ils n'aient pas conclu, aussi, que l'épître de Clément, le *Pasteur* d'Herma, l'épître de Polycarpe et les traditions de Papias faisaient partie de ce canon naissant.²⁵ Ainsi apparaît-il clairement qu'Irénée a été étudié dans la perspective du développement ultérieur.

La question a été abordée d'une manière plus équilibrée par Lawson. Il reconnaît que chez Irénée les quatre évangiles étaient dans un stade plus avancé de canonisation que les épîtres, bien que cela n'ôtât rien à l'autorité qu'il attribuait à celles-ci. A juste titre, Lawson signale, cependant, qu'il est anachronique de se demander si Irénée considérait l'un ou l'autre écrit apostolique comme Écriture canonique.²⁶ Cela veut dire que, pour Irénée, la question ne se posait pas de savoir si l'épître de Clément, le *Pasteur* d'Herma, l'épître de Polycarpe ou les paroles de Jésus transmises par Papias étaient canoniques, dans le sens qu'ils figuraient sur une liste d'écrits reçus. Par contre, pour lui, la grande question était de savoir si ces écrits correspondaient à la vivante tradition apostolique. Cette tradition apostolique était exprimée dans le 'canon de la vérité' mentionné ci-dessus; elle portait sur la foi orthodoxe en un seul Dieu, le Père

²³ *Historia Ecclesiastica* V,8,1-9 (SC 41); cette liste contient les quatre évangiles, l'Apocalypse de Jean, 1 Jean, 1 Pierre, le *Pasteur* d'Herma et la Sagesse de Salomon; ensuite il se réfère à un presbytre apostolique anonyme, à Justin le Martyr et à Ignace. Ici, Eusèbe passe sur les épîtres de Paul.

²⁴ Blanchard (n. 10) 146-150.

²⁵ M.-J. Lagrange, *Histoire ancienne du canon du Nouveau Testament* (Introduction à l'étude du Nouveau Testament I; Paris 1933) 46-49; A. Benoît, *Saint Irénée. Introduction à l'étude de sa théologie* (Études d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuse 52; Paris 1960) 146-147; von Campenhausen (n. 6) 213-244; I. Frank, *Der Sinn der Kanonbildung. Eine historisch-theologische Untersuchung der Zeit vom 1. Clemensbrief bis Irenäus von Lyon* (Freiburg, Basel et Wien 1971) 195; A. Ziegenaus, *Kanon. Von der Väterzeit bis zur Gegenwart* (Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte I, 3a, 2; Freiburg, Basel et Wien 1990) 15-23; Blanchard (n. 10) 127-131. Metzger (n. 2) 155; le *Pasteur* d'Herma 'somewhat doubtfully'. Cf. aussi P. Nautin, 'Irénée et la canonicité des Épîtres pauliniennes', *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 182 1972 113-130.

²⁶ J. Lawson, *The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus* (London 1948) 36, 52; cf. McDonald (n. 8) 164-169.

tout-puissant, le Créateur du ciel et de la terre, et en Jésus-Christ, le Fils de Dieu, qui s'est incarné pour le salut des hommes, et en l'Esprit Saint.²⁷ Grâce à cette tradition, l'Église savait discerner, selon Irénée, entre ce qui est vrai et ce qui est hérétique, et elle savait aussi comment interpréter les Écritures. Contre la tradition orale des valentiniens, Irénée défendait cette autre tradition orale qui était toujours, à son avis, en rapport direct avec les apôtres.²⁸ L'importance qu'il attachait à la tradition orale est appuyée par son hypothèse que les apôtres n'auraient pas laissé d'écrits. Même dans ce cas, les chrétiens devraient suivre la tradition transmise par l'Église. Aussi était-il possible d'être chrétien orthodoxe tout en étant illettré.²⁹

L'acceptation, par Irénée, d'écrits comme le *Pasteur* d'Herma et l'épître de Clément pourrait nous mener à la conclusion qu'ils étaient lus dans les cultes de sa communauté. Il faut avouer, toutefois, qu'Irénée ne donne pas d'indication concrète à ce sujet. Néanmoins, cette pratique est connue, quant à l'épître de Clément, grâce à une remarque de Denys de Corinthe, mais il s'agit là de l'église à laquelle cette épître, à l'époque, avait été destinée.³⁰ Quant à la lecture publique du *Pasteur* d'Herma on peut se référer à Henne, qui déduit cette possibilité d'une remarque de Tertullien.³¹

3. Tertullien

Comme Irénée, Tertullien aussi attachait une grande importance à la tradition apostolique, qu'il appelait *regula fidei* ou *regula*.³² Comme

²⁷ *Adversus Haereses* I,10,1–2 (SC 264). Voir H. Ohme, *Kanon ekklesiastikos. Die Bedeutung des altkirchlichen Kanonbegriffs* (Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 67; Berlin et New York 1998) 61–77.

²⁸ Cf. *Adversus Haereses* II,22,5 (SC 294); IV,27,1 (SC 100); Eusèbe *Historia Ecclesiastica* V,20,4–8 (SC 41).

²⁹ *Adversus Haereses* III,1,1–4,2 (SC 211). Voir Lawson (n. 26) 32–36, 87–93; von Campenhausen (n. 6) 214; Blanchard (n. 10) 284–285.

³⁰ Eusèbe *Historia Ecclesiastica* IV,23,11 (SC 31); Denys indique qu'aussi la lettre de Soter, alors évêque de Rome, était lue dans son église. A la fin du quatrième siècle, Jérôme, *De viris illustribus* 15, 2 (Biblioteca Patristica 12), confirme au sujet de l'épître de Clément: 'à certains lieux elle est lue aussi en public'.

³¹ Ph. Henne, 'Canonicité du «Pasteur» d'Herma', *Revue Thomiste* 90 1990 81–100 (88). Jérôme, *De viris illustribus* 10 (Biblioteca Patristica 12), confirme au sujet du *Pasteur*: 'dans quelques églises de la Grèce il est lu aussi en public'. Voir aussi le § 5 de notre chapitre.

³² Voir Ohme (n. 27) 78–121.

Irénée, il était d'avis que, grâce à l'adhésion à cette tradition, l'Église était en rapport direct avec les apôtres appelés par Jésus-Christ.³³ Si on le compare à Irénée, tout de même, Tertullien faisait une sélection plus claire des livres acceptés dans l'Église. Bien que, pas plus qu'Irénée, il n'ait proposé une liste complète d'écrits canoniques, il reconnaissait, face aux marcionites, non seulement les quatre évangiles, mais aussi, explicitement, les treize épîtres de Paul. Il reconnaissait également l'épître aux Hébreux, qu'il attribuait à Barnabé; il précisait qu'en tant que compagnon de Paul et des autres apôtres, Barnabé était en accord avec leur instruction.³⁴ Ensuite, il reconnaissait la première épître de Jean, la première épître de Pierre, l'épître de Jude, appelé apôtre,³⁵ les Actes des Apôtres et l'Apocalypse de Jean. Tertullien ne citait pas la deuxième et la troisième épître de Jean ni la deuxième épître de Pierre. Il signalait qu'il n'était pas nécessaire que les écrits reçus soient composés par un apôtre; il suffit qu'ils concordent avec la règle apostolique de la foi.³⁶

Une fois, il se référa, dans son écrit primitif *Sur la Prière*, au *Pasteur* d'Herma, parce que d'autres chrétiens se réclamaient de celui-ci.³⁷ Bien que Tertullien parle d'une *scriptura*, le contexte ne montre pas qu'il se réfère à l'Écriture. Plus tard, devenu montaniste, Tertullien rejeta le *Pasteur* d'Herma parce que ce livre était trop indulgent pour les chrétiens adultères.³⁸ Contrairement à la vérité, il suggéra que ce livre 'avait été jugé par toutes les assemblées des églises, y compris les vôtres (c.-à-d.: catholiques), comme une pièce apocryphe et falsifiée'.³⁹ Également, Tertullien rejetait les Actes de Paul, à partir desquels d'autres chrétiens défendaient le droit des femmes à

³³ *De Praescriptione Haereticorum* 13–21 (SC 46); 32; *Adversus Praxean* 2,1–2 (CCSL 2); *De Virginibus Velandis* 1,3 (SC 424).

³⁴ *De Pudicitia* 20,2–5 (SC 394).

³⁵ *De Cultu Feminarum* 3,3 (SC 173).

³⁶ *Adversus Marcionem* IV,2 (SC 456); *De Pudicitia* 12,1; 20,1 (SC 394); voir von Campenhausen (n. 6) 327–328.

³⁷ *De Oratione* 16,1–4 (CCSL 1). C'est à partir de ce texte que Henne suggère qu'on lisait le *Pasteur* d'Herma dans les cultes; cf. n. 31.

³⁸ *De Pudicitia* 10,12; 20,2 (SC 394).

³⁹ *De Pudicitia* 10,12 (SC 394). Selon von Campenhausen (n. 6) 382, *ab omni concilio ecclesiarum* ne se réfère pas à des 'conciles', mais aux réunions des églises locales; cf. Harnack, *Die Entstehung* (n. 6) 16; Henne (n. 31) 88. Sans le vouloir, Tertullien admet qu'il exagère en *De Pudicitia* 10,12, en disant, en *De Pudicitia* 20,2, que l'épître de Barnabé (c.-à-d. aux Hébreux) 'est mieux accueillie (*receptior*) dans les églises que ce *Pasteur* apocryphe des adultères'; il s'ensuit que le *Pasteur* d'Herma était toujours reconnu, du moins à un certain niveau.

enseigner et à baptiser; mais Tertullien refusait ces Actes parce qu'ils avaient été composés par un prêtre d'Asie.⁴⁰ Toujours en les dénigrant, il parlait des hérétiques qui tentaient d'introduire leurs écrits chez les catholiques.⁴¹ Cependant, Tertullien citait quelques paroles connues seulement de la tradition orale, sans pour autant les attribuer explicitement à Jésus.⁴²

Il semble donc moins anachronique que chez Irénée, d'affirmer que Tertullien était conscient du concept d'une collection néo-testamentaire qui était, peu à peu, close, sans qu'il se servît d'un terme comme 'canon'. Par contre, il parlait de *l'evangelicum instrumentum* et du *novum testamentum* comme d'une collection d'écrits.⁴³ Pour lui, le critère était, pour les livres reçus, qu'ils correspondent à la tradition apostolique, sans qu'il ne soit nécessaire qu'ils aient été écrits par un apôtre. Il est remarquable que son 'canon' néo-testamentaire concorde pour la plus grande partie avec la collection ultérieure.

4. Hippolyte

Nous nous contenterons de quelques remarques seulement sur le personnage d'Hippolyte de Rome. Dans les œuvres qui lui sont attribuées,⁴⁴ on peut repérer les livres de notre Nouveau Testament sauf l'épître à Philémon, l'épître de Jude et la deuxième et la troisième épître de Jean. Ces œuvres contiennent, peut-être, quelques réminiscences du *Pasteur* d'Herma, de l'épître de Barnabé et d'un récit des Actes de Paul. La supposition mise à part que le *Fragment de Muratori* fut écrit par Hippolyte, aucune liste de livres reçus ne fut transmise sous son nom.⁴⁵ Si la *Tradition Apostolique* fut composée par lui, nous voyons, d'une part, jusqu'à quel point l'auteur tenait à cette tradition, et d'autre part, qu'il ne donnait aucune précision, dans les

⁴⁰ *De Baptismo* 17,4–5 (SC 35).

⁴¹ *De Praescriptione Haereticorum* 14,9 (SC 46); cf. *De Resurrectione Mortuorum* 63,7 (CCSL 2).

⁴² *De Oratione* 26,1 (CCSL 1): 'As-tu vu un frère, alors tu as vu ton Seigneur'; *De Baptismo* 20,2 (SC 35): 'Personne n'obtiendra le royaume des cieux sans avoir été tenté'.

⁴³ *Adversus Marcionem* IV,1,1 (SC 456); 2,1; *Adversus Praxean* 15,1 (CCSL 2).

⁴⁴ Nous n'entrerons pas dans le débat, ici, sur l'authenticité des œuvres portant son nom ou qu'on lui a attribuées. Voir J. A. Cerrato, *Hippolytus between East and West. The Commentaries and the Provenance of the Corpus* (Oxford 2002).

⁴⁵ Voir Lagrange (n. 25) 59–66, 78–84.

paragrapes sur le 'lecteur' et le 'livre', sur les livres qu'il fallait lire dans les cultes.⁴⁶

5. *Le Fragment de Muratori*

Le développement que nous venons d'observer chez Tertullien, peut aussi être repéré dans le texte appelé le *Fragment de Muratori*.⁴⁷ Normalement ce fragment ou 'canon' est localisé dans l'Église occidentale et daté autour de 200, ce qui correspond aux œuvres primitives de Tertullien. Cependant, Sundberg et Hahneman ont tenté de dater ce fragment non pas autour de 200 mais au quatrième siècle;⁴⁸ de plus, selon ces auteurs, ce texte ne proviendrait pas de l'occident mais de l'orient. Cette datation tardive et cette localisation ont été acceptées par Dahl, Koester, McDonald et Trobisch.⁴⁹ L'un des arguments en faveur de ce point de vue est qu'autour de 200, l'Église n'aurait pas encore été prête à un canon clos. Par contre, d'autres, comme Ferguson, Henne, Metzger, Kaestli et Verheyden,⁵⁰ ont tenté de démontrer que la datation primitive mérite d'être soutenue. Dans cette contribution, nous préférons nous aussi la datation primitive, entre autres parce qu'il est dit, dans ce fragment, que le *Pasteur* d'Herma fut écrit 'récemment, de nos jours'; les tentatives d'infirmer ce propos ne nous paraissent pas convaincantes.

Ce fragment contient une énumération de la plupart des livres de

⁴⁶ B. Botte, A. Gerhards, S. Felbecker, *La Tradition Apostolique de Saint Hippolyte* (Münster 1989³) 31, 89 (§ 11; 41). Voir aussi Ohme (n. 27) 156–177.

⁴⁷ Édité, par exemple, par H. Lietzmann, *Das Muratorische Fragment und die monar-chianischen Prologe zu den Evangelien* (Bonn 1908², 1921) 3–11.

⁴⁸ A. C. Sundberg, 'Towards a Revised History of the New Testament Canon', *Studia Evangelica* 4,1 1968 452–461; 'Canon Muratori: A Fourth-Century List', *Harvard Theological Review* 66 1973 1–41; Hahneman (n. 8).

⁴⁹ N. A. Dahl, 'The Origin of the Earliest Prologues to the Pauline Letters', *Semeia* 12 1978 233–277 (p. 237); H. Koester, *History and Literature of Early Christianity* (Introduction to the New Testament 2; New York et Berlin 2000²) 12; McDonald (n. 8) 209–220; D. Trobisch, *Die Endredaktion des Neuen Testaments. Eine Untersuchung zur Entstehung der christlichen Bibel* (Fribourg [Suisse] et Göttingen 1996) 57.

⁵⁰ E. Ferguson, 'Canon Muratori. Date and Provenance', *Studia Patristica* 17,2 1982 677–683; Ph. Henne, 'La datation du Canon de Muratori', *Revue Biblique* 100–1 1993 54–75; Metzger (n. 2) 193; J.-D. Kaestli, 'La place du *Fragment de Muratori* dans l'histoire du canon. À propos de la thèse de Sundberg et Hahneman', *Cristianesimo nelle Storia* 15 1994 609–634; J. Verheyden, 'The Canon Muratori. A Matter of Dispute', in J.-M. Auwers et H. J. de Jonge (éds), *The Biblical Canons* (Louvain 2003) 488–556.

notre Nouveau Testament, tandis que d'autres livres sont rejetés. Quoique le début manque, il est évident qu'il parlait des évangiles selon Matthieu et Marc. Le texte présente le médecin Luc comme l'auteur du troisième évangile, et il traite, d'une manière relativement détaillée, de l'origine de l'évangile selon Jean. Il relate que, pendant un jeûne des disciples, il fut révélé à André que Jean devait tout noter, tandis que les autres devaient contrôler ce que ce dernier avait écrit. Ensuite, le fragment parle des 'Actes de tous les Apôtres', écrits par Luc, et des épîtres de Paul à sept églises (aux Corinthiens, aux Éphésiens, aux Philippiens, aux Colossiens, aux Galates, aux Thessaloniens et aux Romains). Ces églises sont comparées aux sept églises auxquelles Jean écrit dans son Apocalypse, ce qui voulait dire qu'il écrivait à toutes les églises. Après cela, les épîtres à Philémon, à Tite et à Timothée sont énumérées. Les épîtres, attribuées à Paul, aux Laodiciens et aux Alexandrins sont rejetées comme des falsifications marcionites 'qui ne peuvent être reçues dans l'Église catholique' (*quae in catholicam ecclesiam recipi non potest*). Par ailleurs, l'épître de Jude, deux épîtres de Jean, l'Apocalypse de Jean et l'Apocalypse de Pierre sont reçues (*recipimus*), bien que l'auteur précise que quelques-uns ne veulent pas que ces deux apocalypses soient lues dans l'Église.

Hermas est introduit comme l'auteur du *Pasteur* et, étonnamment, comme le frère de Pie qui était l'évêque de l'église de Rome. Au sujet du livre d'Hermas il est noté: *et ideo legi eum quidem oportet, se publicare vero in ecclesia populo neque inter prophetas completo numero neque inter apostolos in fine temporum potest*. Suivant une suggestion de Harnack,⁵¹ nous aimerions traduire cette phrase ainsi: 'c'est pourquoi il faut le lire, mais dans l'église, au peuple, il ne peut être rendu public ni comme faisant partie des prophètes, dont le nombre est complet, ni comme faisant partie des apôtres dans la fin des temps'. Contrairement à l'interprétation habituelle, selon laquelle le *Pasteur* ne devait pas être lu du tout dans l'église,⁵² nous proposons que, d'après ce texte, le *Pasteur* d'Hermas pourrait alors être lu dans l'église, si on avait précisé qu'il n'était pas considéré comme l'un des prophètes de l'Ancien Testament ou comme l'un des apôtres.

⁵¹ O. de Gebhardt, A. Harnack, *Hermae Pastor Graece* (Patrum Apostolicorum Opera III; Lipsiae 1877) XLVI-XLVIII.

⁵² Par exemple: Th. Zahn, *Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons* II (Erlangen et Leipzig 1890) 111-112; Henne (n. 31) 85; Hahneman (n. 8) 37.

Selon le *Fragment*, les œuvres d'Arsinoüs (qui est inconnu), de Valentin et de Miltiade⁵³ ne sont pas reçues (*nihil in totum recipimus*); il est ajouté qu'ils composèrent un nouveau livre de psaumes pour Marcion, avec Basilide d'Asie, le fondateur des cataphrygiens. Bien que cette remarque soit embrouillée, les noms indiquent une origine autour de 200, quand les disciples de Marcion et de Basilide comme aussi les cataphrygiens montanistes provoquaient l'Église catholique à marquer ses limites. Aucune mention n'est faite de l'épître aux Hébreux, de l'épître de Jacques, des deux épîtres de Pierre et d'une troisième épître de Jean.

On a dit que la forme littéraire du fragment n'est pas celle d'un 'canon', dans le sens d'une liste close des livres du Nouveau Testament, mais qu'il est plus proche du genre des prologues figurant comme des introductions aux livres bibliques. Il est vrai que quelques parties de ce fragment ont été reprises dans deux prologues ultérieurs.⁵⁴ Néanmoins, il nous paraît incontournable que ce fragment ait les caractéristiques d'un 'canon', puisqu'il est question des livres reçus dans l'Église catholique et du rejet d'autres écrits. Pourtant, le texte ne présente pas la promulgation d'un décret, mais la constatation d'une pratique. Le critère principal pour la réception n'est pas précisément l'apostolicité, mais celui de la catholicité.⁵⁵ Cela veut dire que l'Église catholique *savait* quel livre était digne de foi et lequel ne l'était pas. Cette conscience est proche de la notion de la tradition apostolique présentée par Irénée. Dans son introduction de l'évangile selon Jean notamment, il est manifeste que l'auteur recourut aussi à la tradition orale. Son acceptation de l'Apocalypse de Pierre, sans pour autant mentionner l'épître de Jacques et les deux épîtres de Pierre, plaide en faveur d'une datation primitive. Le fait que l'épître aux Hébreux manque, correspond à Irénée.

Par conséquent, cette énumération de livres reçus dans l'Église

⁵³ Cf. Eusèbe *Historia Ecclesiastica* V,16,3 (SC 41), qui mentionne un Miltiade relatif au Montanisme.

⁵⁴ Kaestli (n. 50) 616–617; cf. Hahneman (n. 8) 9–10.

⁵⁵ H. Burckhard, 'Motive und Maßstäbe der Kanonbildung nach dem Kanon Muratori', *Theologische Zeitschrift* 30 1974 207–211. Voir aussi K. Stendahl, 'The Apocalypse of John and the Epistles of Paul in the Muratorian Fragment', in W. Klasen, G. F. Snyder (éds), *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation*. Essays in honor of O. A. Piper (London 1962) 239–302, et N. A. Dahl, 'The Particularity of the Pauline Epistles as a Problem in the Ancient Church', in *Festschrift* O. Cullmann, *Neotestamentica et Patristica* (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 6; Leiden 1962) 261–271.

catholique confirme la tendance d'une délimitation, visible également chez Tertullien. Puisque la sélection même du fragment diffère de celle de Tertullien, il apparaît, cependant, que le processus de formation du canon néo-testamentaire n'était pas encore terminé.

6. Clément d'Alexandrie

Malgré toutes les différences de fond entre Clément d'Alexandrie et Irénée, il y a une remarquable correspondance formelle entre ces deux Pères en ce qui concerne leur usage des écrits du christianisme primitif. Clément parlait des 'quatre évangiles qui nous étaient transmis',⁵⁶ ce qui indique une collection spéciale. Pourtant, il citait aussi, en étant en accord, les *Traditions* de Matthias,⁵⁷ l'Évangile selon les Hébreux,⁵⁸ la Prédication de Pierre,⁵⁹ un évangile anonyme,⁶⁰ de nombreux *agrapha* de Jésus,⁶¹ une tradition sur le baptême des apôtres, et des traditions connues du Protévangile de Jacques.⁶² Il utilisait douze épîtres de Paul (il manque celle à Philémon); il attribuait également l'épître aux Hébreux à cet apôtre.⁶³ Puis, il se référait aux Actes des Apôtres, à la première épître de Pierre, aux deux épîtres de Jean, à l'épître de Jude, à l'Apocalypse de Jean et à l'Apocalypse de Pierre.⁶⁴ L'épître de Jacques manque dans ses œuvres. Il reconnaissait, par ailleurs, l'épître de Barnabé, qu'il appelait apôtre,⁶⁵ la Didaché,⁶⁶ le *Pasteur* d'Hermas,⁶⁷ l'épître de Clément de Rome, appelé apôtre,⁶⁸ une tradition de Jean sur Jésus connue des Actes de Jean,⁶⁹

⁵⁶ *Stromateis* 3,93,1. Voir J. Ruwet, 'Clément d'Alexandrie, Canon des Écritures et Apocryphes', *Biblica* 29 1948 77-99 391-408; J. A. Brooks, 'Clement of Alexandria as a Witness to the Development of the New Testament Canon', *The Second Century* 9 1992 41-55.

⁵⁷ *Stromateis* 2,45,4 (SC 38); VII,82,1 (SC 428).

⁵⁸ *Stromateis* 2,45,5 (SC 38); V,96,3 (SC 278).

⁵⁹ *Stromateis* 6,39,2-4; 6,41,2-6; 6,43,3; 6,48,2; 6,48,6; 6,128,1-3 (SC 446).

⁶⁰ *Stromateis* 5,73,7 (SC 278).

⁶¹ Voir J. Ruwet, 'Les «Agrapha» dans les œuvres de Clément d'Alexandrie', *Biblica* 30 1949 133-160.

⁶² *Stromateis* 7,93,7 (SC 428); *In Epistulam Judae* 1 (GCS 17²).

⁶³ *Stromateis* 6,62,1-2 (SC 446).

⁶⁴ *Eclogae propheticae* 41; 48-49 (GCS 17²; Bibliotheca Patristica 4).

⁶⁵ *Stromateis* 2,31,2; 2,35,5 (SC 38); cf. Actes 14,4,14.

⁶⁶ *Stromateis* 1,100,4 (SC 30).

⁶⁷ *Stromateis* 1,85,4 (SC 30); 2,3,5; 2,43,5-44,3 (SC 38); 4,74,4 (SC 463).

⁶⁸ *Stromateis* 1,38,8 (SC 30); 4,105-112 (SC 463).

⁶⁹ *In Epistulam primam Iohannis* 1,1,1 (GCS 17²).

une tradition orale sur Jean,⁷⁰ et un propos inconnu de Paul.⁷¹ De plus, Clément citait, sous quelques réserves, l'évangile selon les Égyptiens.⁷² Quant au fragment de l'Évangile secret de Marc cité dans une lettre prétendue de Clément, éditée par M. Smith, il faut, à notre avis, attendre le moment que le manuscrit soit mis à la disposition des chercheurs avant que l'on puisse en tirer des conséquences définitives concernant son authenticité.⁷³

Une différence importante par rapport à Irénée est que Clément se réclamait beaucoup plus largement des écrits dits 'apocryphes'. La correspondance formelle entre ces deux auteurs repose sur le critère qui établit ce qui pouvait être reçu par l'Église: c'est le κανών de la vérité, appelé aussi, par Clément, κανὼν ἐκκλησιαστικός, κανὼν τῆς ἐκκλησίας et κανὼν γνωστικός.⁷⁴ D'après Ohme, ce 'canon' n'est pas, chez Clément, une brève confession de foi, comme chez Irénée et Tertullien, mais il représente la tradition normative de l'Église catholique⁷⁵ concernant l'interprétation des Écritures, la pratique de la vie chrétienne et la liturgie. Quoique, pour Clément, le 'canon ecclésiastique' soit en rapport étroit avec les Écritures, la notion d'un canon clos de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament lui est étrangère.⁷⁶ A son avis, l'Église était, grâce à sa tradition normative appelée 'canon', en contact direct avec les apôtres à qui Jésus avait confié la gnose.⁷⁷

⁷⁰ *Quis Dives Salvetur* 42 (GCS 17²); Eusèbe *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3,23,5–19 (SC 31).

⁷¹ *Stromateis* 6,43,1 (SC 446).

⁷² *Stromateis* 3,45,3; 3,63–66; 3,92,2–93,1 (GCS 52 [35]).

⁷³ M. Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge, MA, 1973); cf. A. Le Boulluec, 'L'«école» d'Alexandrie', in L. Pietri (éd.), *Histoire du Christianisme I* ([Paris] 2000) 531–578 (pp. 547–548); 'La lettre sur l'«Évangile Secret» de Marc et le *Quis Dives Salvetur?* de Clément d'Alexandrie', *Apocrypha* 7 1996 27–41.

⁷⁴ *Stromateis* 1,15,2; 1,96,1 (SC 30); 3,66,1; 3,71,1; 3,105,1 (GCS 52 [35]); 4,3,2; 4,15,4; 4,98,3; 4,101,1 (SC 463); 5,1,4 (SC 278); 6,125,3; 6,131,1; 6,165,1 (SC 446); 7,41,3; 7,90,2; 7,94,5; 7,105,5 (SC 428). Voir Ohme (n. 27) 122–155 et W. C. van Unnik, 'Notes on the Nature of Clemens Alexandrinus' *Canon Ecclesiasticus*', in idem, *Sparsa Collecta III* (Leiden 1983) 40–51.

⁷⁵ *Stromateis* 7,105–107 (SC 428).

⁷⁶ Cf. Eusèbe *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6,13,4–14,7 (SC 41), qui, faute d'une liste de livres reconnus par Clément, a lui-même rassemblé quelques données sur les Écritures utilisées par celui-ci.

⁷⁷ *Stromateis* 1,11,3 (SC 30); Eusèbe *H.E.* 2,1,4 (SC 31).

7. *Origène*⁷⁸

Au début de la septième homélie sur Josué par Origène, figure une liste de livres néo-testamentaires correspondant au canon actuel sauf l'Apocalypse de Jean. Mais comme ce sermon n'est connu que dans la traduction de Rufin, datant de 400 environ, cette liste risque d'être adaptée au canon du temps du traducteur, de sorte qu'elle ne peut être citée comme un témoignage d'Origène. Il est d'autant plus douteux qu'Origène composa lui-même une liste de livres reconnus, qu'Eusèbe, toujours intéressé à donner des renseignements sur le canon,⁷⁹ dut lui-même reconstruire un canon néo-testamentaire à partir des œuvres d'Origène, comme il l'avait déjà fait pour Irénée et Clément. La liste d'Eusèbe comprend les quatre évangiles, les épîtres de Paul, l'épître aux Hébreux, dont l'Alexandrin rapporte les traditions qui disent qu'elle fut écrite par Clément de Rome ou par Luc; de plus, il ajoute une épître de Pierre, une épître de Jean et l'Apocalypse de Jean. Selon Eusèbe, Origène exprimait ses doutes sur la deuxième épître de Pierre et sur les deux autres épîtres de Jean.⁸⁰ Eusèbe n'énumère pas les épîtres de Jacques et de Jude, mais cela n'empêche pas qu'elles figurent dans les œuvres d'Origène.⁸¹ Origène relate que le *Pasteur* d'Herma était en usage dans les églises, sans qu'il ne fût reconnu par tous comme un écrit divin; lui, cependant, le tint pour inspiré.⁸² Par ailleurs, il cite avec consentement l'épître de Barnabé,⁸³ l'épître de Clément,⁸⁴ les Actes de Paul,⁸⁵ et avec réticence l'Évangile selon les Hébreux.⁸⁶ Il se réfère, sans

⁷⁸ Cf. J. Ruwet, 'Les «Antilegomena» dans les œuvres d'Origène', *Biblica* 23 1942 18-42; 'Les Apocryphes dans les œuvres d'Origène', *Biblica* 25 1944 143-166, 211-334.

⁷⁹ *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3,3,3 (SC 31).

⁸⁰ *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6,25,3-14 (SC 41), avec citations de quelques fragments d'Origène provenant de ses Commentaires sur Matthieu et sur Jean et de ses Homélie sur Hébreux.

⁸¹ Par exemple, *De Principiis* 3,2,1 (SC 268); *Comm. in Ioannem* 19,152; 20,66 (SC 290); *Comm. in Matthaeum* 10,17 (SC 162); 17,30 (GCS 40).

⁸² *Comm. in Matthaeum* 14,21 (GCS 40); *Comm. in Epistulam ad Romanos* 10,31 (Aus der Geschichte der Lateinischen Bibel 34); cf. *De Principiis* 1,3,3; 2,1,5 (SC 252); 3,2,4; 4,2,4 (SC 268); *Hom. in Ezechiel* 13,3 (SC 352); *Hom. in Lucam* 35,3 (SC 87).

⁸³ *De Principiis* 3,2,4 (SC 268); *Contra Celsum* 1,63 (SC 132).

⁸⁴ *De Principiis* 2,3,6 (SC 252); *Comm. in Ioannem* 6,279 (SC 157).

⁸⁵ *De Principiis* 1,2,3 (SC 252); *Comm. in Ioannem* 20,91 (SC 290).

⁸⁶ *Comm. in Ioannem* 2,87 (SC 132); *Hom. in Ieremiam* 15,4 (SC 238); *Comm. in Matthaeum* 15,14 (GCS 40).

jugement négatif, à une tradition attestée par l'Évangile selon Pierre et par le Livre de Jacques (le 'Protévangile').⁸⁷ De plus, il cite plusieurs *agrapha* de Jésus.⁸⁸ Par rapport à la Prédication de Pierre il fait, dans son *Commentaire sur l'évangile selon Jean*, la distinction importante entre des livres 'authentiques, bâtards et mêlés' (γνήσιος, νόθος, μικτός), mais sans classifier cette Prédication portant le nom de Pierre.⁸⁹ Il est possible que cet écrit soit identique à la *Petri Doctrina* citée dans son ouvrage *Sur les Principes*, où il rejette celle-ci.⁹⁰ Dans sa première *Homélie sur l'évangile selon Luc*, il rejette également les Évangiles selon les Égyptiens, selon les douze Apôtres, de Basilide, selon Thomas et selon Matthias.⁹¹

Notons qu'Origène cherchait plus nettement que Clément à délimiter le nombre de livres dignes de foi. Cependant, tout en tenant compte du choix de l'Église, il se permettait une position indépendante par rapport à l'usage de livres qui n'étaient pas généralement acceptés. En fin de compte, il se savait tenu par la 'tradition ecclésiastique et apostolique', autrement dit à la 'prédication apostolique', résumée dans le préface de son ouvrage *Sur les Principes*.⁹² Pour Origène, cette tradition apostolique était la norme pour l'interprétation des Écritures. Il n'était pas question, tout de même, d'un canon clos.

8. Conclusions

Cette brève exploration nous permet de constater qu'à la fin du deuxième et au début du troisième siècle, il y avait, dans l'Église, une confiance ferme dans la crédibilité de la tradition apostolique portant sur la foi et sur la pratique ecclésiastique. Cette tradition était transmise oralement, bien qu'elle se trouvât également dans les écrits qui ont plus tard formé, plus ou moins dans cette composition, le Nouveau Testament. Pourtant, l'idée que l'Église avait besoin d'une collection close de livres provenant de la période apostolique, par

⁸⁷ *Comm. in Matthaeum* 10,17 (SC 162).

⁸⁸ *De Oratione* 2,2; 14,1 (GCS 3); *Comm. in Ioannem* 19,44 (SC 290).

⁸⁹ *Comm. in Ioannem* 13,104 (SC 222).

⁹⁰ *De Principiis* 1 praefatio 8 (SC 252).

⁹¹ *Hom. in Lucam* 1,2 (SC 87).

⁹² *De Principiis* 1 praefatio 2; 1,4 (SC 252); cf. 4,2,2 (SC 268); *Hom. in Ieremiam* 5,14 (SC 232); *Fragmenta in Epistolam primam ad Corinthios* 4; 74,40–43 (*Journal of Theological Studies* 9 1908 234; 10 1909 42); Ohme (n. 27) 193–218.

laquelle elle pouvait se défendre contre les hérésies, était peu répandue. Cela n'empêche pas que certains livres fussent rejetés, comme l'Évangile de Vérité par Irénée, le *Pasteur* d'Hermas et les Actes de Paul par Tertullien, ou la Doctrine de Pierre et cinq évangiles par Origène, ou qu'un livre fût cité avec réserve, comme l'Évangile selon les Égyptiens, par Clément. Toujours, la question principale était de savoir si un écrit correspondait à la tradition apostolique. Ce qui est caractéristique de l'Église de cette époque, c'est qu'elle prétendait connaître le fond de la tradition apostolique—bien qu'il paraisse que Tertullien, dans sa période montaniste, s'écartait de la pratique plus large par rapport au *Pasteur* d'Hermas. Grâce à cette confiance dans la tradition orale, il y avait, en général, une attitude assez généreuse envers les écrits acceptés comme étant dans le droit fil de la prédication des apôtres.

Il est moins clair dans quelle mesure les écrits censés être apostoliques pouvaient être lus dans les cultes. A notre avis, en ce qui concerne la lecture publique d'écrits chrétiens dans la période étudiée, l'Église ne marquait pas la limite avec rigueur. Enfin, notons un exemple, de cette attitude, que nous n'avons pas encore relevé ci-dessus: Eusèbe relate comment, en 190 environ, l'église de Rhossos, près d'Antioche, avait commencé à lire, en toute innocence, l'Évangile selon Pierre.⁹³ On pourra présumer que cette ouverture d'esprit était, à cette époque, encore très répandue. Pour une grande partie de l'Église, la question n'était pas de savoir si tel évangile, ou le *Pasteur* d'Hermas, faisait partie d'un canon clos, mais s'il était inscrit dans la tradition censée être apostolique.

⁹³ *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6,12,2-6 (SC 41).

WITNESSES AND MEDIATORS OF CHRIST'S GNOSTIC TEACHINGS

Gerard P. Luttikhuizen

1. *Introduction: The Letter of Peter to Philip*

The *Letter of Peter to Philip* (NHC VIII.2)¹ relates how at Peter's request, Philip returned from his missionary travels, and thereupon how all the apostles gathered together on the Mount of Olives.² When they were praying to the Father and to the Son, suddenly a great light appeared to them. The apostles heard the voice of Jesus Christ asking them why they were seeking him. They reacted by putting several questions to Christ: they wanted to understand the deficiency of the aeons and their fullness, and they asked him why they were detained in this world, how they came here, how they would be able to leave, and why the cosmic powers fought against them. Christ answered their questions with a summarized version of the Gnostic myth of origins and with other typically Gnostic teachings. But before giving these answers the voice of Christ uttered the following comment:

You yourselves bear witness that I said all these things to you. But because of your unbelief I shall say it again.³

In this statement, Christ makes it clear to the assembled apostles that the Gnostic doctrines which he is about to reveal conform with his prepaschal teachings. This includes Christ already being a Gnostic teacher before Easter. But at that time the apostles allegedly did not believe or understand his words. For this reason a repetition was necessary. The apostles are called as witnesses to the unity and the

¹ M. W. Meyer, *The Letter of Peter to Philip* (Chico, Calif., 1991); H.-G. Bethge, *Der Brief des Petrus an Philippus* (Texte und Untersuchungen 141; Berlin 1997).

² As in other early Christian sources, Philip the evangelist (Acts 6.5; 8.4–40; 21.8) is identified with Philip the apostle (Acts 1.13 and elsewhere).

³ 135.5–8.

immutability of Christ's teachings. At the same time, they are criticized for their initial unbelief.

The *Letter of Peter to Philip* refers more than once to the prepaschal existence of Christ in a human body. For instance, the Mount of Olives is designated as the mountain where the apostles used to come together with Christ, 'when he was in the body'.⁴ This distinction, however, does not serve to stress the differences. On the contrary, the continuity of Christ's teachings before and after Easter is underlined.⁵

This view of the relation of Christ's Gnostic revelations to his prepaschal teachings has polemical overtones: if Peter and the other disciples could attest that the Gnostic doctrines were identical with the teachings Jesus Christ had given when he was still in their midst, it follows that the Gnostics were his true followers and, moreover, the legitimate representatives of the early apostolic tradition.

While the author of the *Letter of Peter to Philip* connects his Gnostic ideas with the teachings of Jesus Christ as they were understood by the apostles after their final enlightenment, he must have associated non-Gnostic accounts of Christ's teachings—notably the Lucan writings which he is likely to have read and used for his reports of several appearances of the exalted Christ in and near Jerusalem⁶—with the unbelief and the incomprehension of the disciples before their enlightenment.

To summarize, the *Letter of Peter to Philip* claims that its Gnostic contents are consistent with the prepaschal message of Christ; secondly, it appeals to the assembled apostles as witnesses to this interpretation of Christ's teachings. In addition, and more implicitly, non-Gnostic accounts of the teachings of Christ are disparaged as documents of the supposed initial unbelief of the disciples. Below we shall compare the claims of this document with the pertinent views of other Gnostic texts.

⁴ 133.17; cf. 138.3 and 139.11.

⁵ Cf. 139.11f., where Peter states: 'Our Lord Jesus, when he was in the body, indicated everything to us.'

⁶ Cf. Luttikhuisen, 'The Letter of Peter to Philip and the New Testament', in R. McL. Wilson, *Nag Hammadi and Gnosis* (Leiden 1976) 76–102.

2. *How were the Gnostic revelations of the exalted Christ related to his prepaschal teachings?*

It is possible that the *Wisdom of Jesus Christ* (NHC III.4 and BG 3)⁷ contains a similar view on the relation between the Gnostic revelations of Christ and his earlier teachings. The opening frame story tells how after the resurrection of Christ, the twelve disciples and seven women followers came together on the Mount of Olives⁸ and how they were in great confusion about the nature of the Universe, about the power of the cosmic authorities, the plan of the Saviour, etc. Then the Saviour appeared to them in the likeness of a great angel of light asking them what they were perplexed about and what they were searching for. When they submitted their questions to Christ, he revealed to them the Gnostic truth. At the conclusion of the text we learn that these revelations dispelled the disciples' uncertainties and that their perplexities gave way to ineffable joy. They were now prepared to preach the gospel of God.⁹

Just like the *Letter of Peter to Philip*, this text reports that after Easter the disciples were still in the dark about fundamental issues of Gnostic knowledge. But the *Wisdom of Jesus Christ* does not explain their uncertainties. Was the earthly Jesus a Gnostic teacher and did his own followers not believe or understand this, as the *Letter of Peter to Philip* wishes its readers to believe? Or were the disciples still ignorant because it was not until after Easter that the Saviour revealed the full truth?

The latter idea is suggested in the *Secret Book of John*, one of the better known Gnostic documents.¹⁰ This text tells how after a dispute with a Pharisee, John the son of Zebedee went to a desert place on 'the mountain', apparently the Mount of Olives. There he pondered the following questions:

⁷ D. M. Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices III,3-4 and V,1 with Papyrus Berolinensis 8502,3 and Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 1081* (Leiden 1991).

⁸ The text situates this mountain in Galilee, NHC III.4, 90.18-91.1; BG 3. 77.15-78.1.

⁹ NHC III.4, 119.10-16; BG 3.127.1-10.

¹⁰ The *Secret Book* survives in four Coptic manuscripts: NHC II.1; III.1; IV.1 and BG 2. In addition, Bishop Irenaeus summarized a Greek version of the first part of the text in his *Adversus Haereses* 1.29. Synoptic text edition: M. Waldstein and F. Wisse, *The Apocryphon of John: Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II,1; III,1; and IV,1 with BG 8502* (Leiden 1995).

How was the Saviour appointed and why was he sent into the world by his Father, and who is his Father, and of what sort is that aeon to which we shall go? He said to us, 'This aeon has been stamped after the model of that imperishable aeon', but he did not teach us what that one is like.

The last sentence seems to reveal how the Gnostics behind this text related Christ's postpaschal revelations to his earlier teachings. If it was characteristic of Christ's earlier teachings that he mentioned the imperishable aeon but that he did not reveal of what kind it is, his prepaschal teachings must have had an incomplete and provisional character, while the full and definitive truth was only revealed after Easter.

In the *Secret Book of John*, Christ does not deliver his revelatory teachings to the assembled apostles or to the apostles plus several women followers but to one of them, John. The limitation of the audience is connected with another difference from the above-mentioned two writings. In the *Letter of Peter to Philip* and the *Wisdom of Jesus Christ*, the Saviour reveals the Gnostic truth to his disciples and thereupon commissions them to preach the Gospel (the Gospel of Gnostic salvation) in the world, whereas in the *Secret Book* the true knowledge is reserved for John and his 'fellow spirits', the people of the 'Immovable Race'. In the concluding section of the text, Christ does not send his followers out into the world, as he does in the above two texts. Rather he emphasizes the secret character of his teachings.¹¹

This means that the chronological distinction between a period of incomplete teachings and a period in which the full and definitive truth is revealed runs parallel with a distinction between public and secret teachings:¹² while Christ addressed his prepaschal message to all and sundry, he reserved his postpaschal revelations for the select group of Johannine Gnostics.

In the opening frame story quoted above, John wishes to be

¹¹ BG 2.75.15–17 and parallel passages.

¹² In his *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.1.4, Eusebius ascribes a similar distinction to Clement of Alexandria (*Hypotyposes* 7). This idea is reminiscent of the distinction made in the Gospel of John between parabolic or veiled teachings in the period before Easter and clear language after Easter. Cf. esp. 16.25: 'Till now I have spoken in figures (ἰαρομιᾶ); the hour is coming when I shall no longer speak to you in figures, but tell you plainly of the Father'.

informed about the meaning of an earlier saying of Christ. But nowhere in his actual revelations does the Gnostic Saviour explain or consider words spoken by him before. It was perhaps precisely because the Gnostics of the *Secret Book* were convinced of the fundamental dissimilarity of the words spoken by Christ before and after Easter that they were no longer interested in the earlier teachings.

For the sake of completeness I should add that we encounter a very different interpretation of Christ's prepaschal teachings in the surviving fragments of the exegetical works of Valentinian authors such as Heracleon, Theodotus, and Ptolemy. These Gnostic theologians claimed that the things done, said, and experienced by Christ during his temporary dwelling in a human body had a hidden symbolic meaning. Their intention was to uncover this spiritual meaning in the familiar Gospel accounts of Christ's public ministry. In their view, Christ's prepaschal teachings contained the whole truth, but a special hermeneutical key to the sources was needed to find it.¹³

3. *Apostolic witnesses and mediators*

a. *Peter*

The *Letter of Peter to Philip* supports its Gnostic interpretation of the teachings of Christ with a reference to Peter and to the testimony of the assembled apostles. We find a comparable reference to Peter in the Gnostic *Apocalypse of Peter* (NHC VII.3).¹⁴ This text speaks of visions and auditions received by Peter during the events of Good Friday.¹⁵ On one of the first pages, the Saviour says to Peter:

From you I have made a beginning for the others whom I have called to knowledge (i.e. *gnosis*).¹⁶

¹³ E. H. Pagels, *The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis: Heracleon's Commentary on John* (Nashville 1973) 14. The author discusses the hermeneutics of various Gnostic schools, notably the Naassenes and the Peratae (reported and refuted by Irenaeus and Hippolytus). It should be noticed that this hermeneutical principle was also used by other Christian teachers, notably by the Alexandrian theologians Clement and Origen.

¹⁴ H. W. Havelaar, *The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter* (Texte und Untersuchungen 144; Berlin 1999).

¹⁵ Luttikhuisen, 'The Suffering Jesus and the Invulnerable Christ in the Gnostic Apocalypse of Peter', in J. N. Bremmer, *Apocalypses of Peter and Paul*, forthcoming.

¹⁶ 71.19–21.

The *Apocalypse of Peter* tells how Peter was gradually given full insight into the nature and the mission of the Saviour. In addition, Christ revealed that in the course of time, some of his followers would turn away from the truth and that they would cause several schisms. In particular, the future leaders of orthodox Christianity are blamed, 'those who call themselves "bishop", and also "deacons", as if they have received their authority from God'.¹⁷ They are designated by the Gnostic Christ as 'the messengers of error (. . .) who merchandise in my word'.¹⁸ The *Apocalypse of Peter* insists that these Christian leaders wrongly claim the authority of Peter for their traditions.¹⁹

With their appeal to Peter, the *Letter of Peter to Philip* and the *Apocalypse of Peter* attempt to show that the Gnostics were the true heirs of the apostolic tradition. This can be seen as a frontal attack against emerging orthodox Christianity. The more usual way to defend the own position vis-à-vis other Christian groups was the appeal to another disciple, someone, that is, who, because of his or her close contacts with Jesus, was supposed to have been more familiar with the person and the teaching of the Saviour than Peter and other disciples.

b. *The Beloved Disciple*

The *Secret Book of John* appeals to John, one of the sons of Zebedee. It was commonly assumed in early Christianity that John was 'the disciple whom Jesus loved', the authority behind the special eyewitness tradition of the Fourth Gospel. Indeed, 'Beloved Disciple' is a fitting designation of a confidant of the teacher. In the Fourth Gospel, the position of this disciple is contrasted with that of Peter (cf. John 20.2–9 and 21.4–24). The *Secret Book's* preference for John as a recipient of Christ's secret teachings, at the expense of Peter and 'the Twelve', respectively, is in line with this tradition.²⁰

¹⁷ 79.24–8.

¹⁸ 77.24–5 and 27.33–28.1.

¹⁹ Cf. K. Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker gegen das kirchliche Christentum* (Leiden 1978), esp. 11–90; T. V. Smith, *Petrine Controversies in Early Christianity* (Tübingen 1985) 126–37.

²⁰ Cf. also the Gnostic section of the *Acts of John* (94–102), discussed in Luttkhuizen, 'A Gnostic Reading of the Acts of John', in J. N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of John* (Kampen 1995) 119–52, and P. J. Lalleman, *The Acts of John: A Two-Stage Initiation into Johannine Gnosticism* (Louvain 1998).

c. *James*

Followers of Jesus who continued to live in conformity with the Mosaic Law used to refer to James, Jesus' brother (Gal. 1.19; Mark 6.3), as their main authority. No doubt, the historical James derived his leadership role from his family relationship with Jesus. There is no evidence that he belonged to the inner circle of disciples before the death of Jesus. But soon after Easter he began to play a prominent role in the community of followers of Jesus in Jerusalem (cf. esp. Gal. 2.9). The apostle Paul rated him among those to whom the risen Christ had appeared (1 Cor. 15.7). According to one of the surviving fragments of the Jewish-Christian 'Gospel of the Hebrews', James was the very first person to see Jesus after his resurrection.²¹

The authority of James is strongly emphasized in some Gnostic writings, notably in the *Gospel of Thomas* (NHC II.2), logion 12:

The disciples said to Jesus: 'We know that you are going to leave us. Who will be our leader?' Jesus said to them: 'Wherever you are, you are to go to James the Just, for whose sake heaven and earth came into being.'²²

These words of Jesus are likely to represent an early tradition. It is remarkable that they are preserved in the *Gospel of Thomas* for, as appears from the next logion (13, quoted below), in this document it is Thomas, Jesus' supposed twin brother, who is regarded as the ideal follower of Jesus.

A similar tradition about James can be found in the so-called second *Apocalypse of James* (NHC V.4). In a direct speech to James, Jesus characterizes him as the one who shall take over his (Jesus') work of redemption:

You are not the redeemer nor a helper of strangers. You are an illuminator and a redeemer of those who are mine, and now of those

²¹ W. Schneemelcher, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, i (Tübingen 1987⁵), 147; J. Painter, *Just James: The Brother of Jesus in History and Tradition* (Columbia, South Carolina, 1997) 184–6.

²² 34.25–30. This logion is easier to understand in the light of ancient Jewish and Christian texts according to which the world was created, or continues to exist, for the sake of the righteous, Abraham, Moses, the Messiah, the Church, etc. See L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, v (Philadelphia 1925) 67–8. The tradition that Jesus appointed James as the leader of the community can also be found in pseudo-Clementine texts: *Clem. contest.* 5.4; *Clem. ep.* 1.1 ('to James, the brother of the Lord and the bishop of bishops'); *Recogn.* 1.43.3; Painter (n. 21) 187–97.

who are yours. You shall be a revealer; you shall bring (what is) good among them all. [They shall] admire you, because of (your) powerful (deeds). You are blessed by the heavens.²³

My beloved! Behold, I shall reveal to you those (things) that (neither) [the] heavens nor their archons have known. (. . .) Behold, I shall reveal to you everything, my beloved. [Understand] and know them [that] you may come forth just as I did. Behold, I [shall] reveal to you him who [is hidden].²⁴

As these passages show, we can distinguish several aspects in the figure of the favourite disciple: this follower receives special revelations ('I shall reveal to you everything'), he or she is a mediator of secret knowledge ('you are a revealer') and also a prototype of the future believer.

In the *Secret Book of James* (NHC I.2), James speaks of a revelation granted to him and to Peter. But the two disciples are not on the same level. It is James and not Peter who is appointed as the guardian of the higher knowledge of the Saviour. At the conclusion of the text, James sends each of the disciples out on their missions, while he himself goes up to Jerusalem.

d. *Jude-Thomas*

In the eastern part of Syria, early Christians referred to Thomas, a disciple of Jesus who was identified with Jude, a brother of Jesus and James (Mark 6.3; Matt. 13.55; Jude 1). The Aramaic (Syriac) name Thomas means 'twin (brother)', just as the Greek name Didymos does. In the Thomas tradition it was assumed that the disciple Jude-Thomas was not just a brother but a twin brother of Jesus. The close relationship between Jesus and his twin brother served as a model for the relationship between the individual believers and their heavenly 'twin'. Through union with their other 'self' they could reach self-knowledge and at the same time knowledge of God.²⁵

Logion 13 of the *Gospel of Thomas* (which comes after logion 12

²³ 55.15–25, text and translation C. Hedrick, in J. M. Robinson (ed.), *The Coptic Gnostic Library*, iii (Leiden 2000) 131.

²⁴ 56.16–20; 57.4–10.

²⁵ The so-called Hymn of the Pearl (*Acts of Thomas* 108–13) can be read as a poetic expression of this idea. Cf. Luttikhuisen, 'The Hymn of Jude Thomas, the Apostle, in the Country of the Indians', in J. N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas* (Louvain 2001) 101–14.

in which priority is assigned to James) tells how Jesus took Thomas aside and revealed three things to him. When Thomas returned to the group of the disciples, the others were eager to know what Jesus had said to him, but Thomas did not disclose Jesus' words, for their own benefit:

If I tell you one of the things which he told me, you will pick up stones and throw them at me; a fire will come out of the stones and burn you up.²⁶

Whereas in logion 12 James is presented as the spiritual leader after Jesus' departure, this passage points to Thomas as Jesus' favourite and as the prototypical Gnostic believer. The two logions might reflect a shift in the tradition: in earlier stages, James was regarded as the leader of the community of followers of Jesus; when the sayings tradition was transmitted in Syria, Jude-Thomas is likely to have replaced him.²⁷

e. *Mary Magdalene*

According to the Fourth Gospel, Mary Magdalene was the first person to meet Jesus after his resurrection.²⁸ This report is remarkable since other traditions claim that it was Peter (1 Cor. 15.5; Luke 24.34) or James (cf. above) who first saw Jesus after his resurrection. To early Christians, Mary's first encounter with the risen Jesus must have been a token of her special bond with the Saviour.

In the *Gospel of Mary* (BG 1), Peter invites Mary to disclose to him and to the other disciples the words of the Saviour which she remembered, and which the other disciples did not know. But after Mary's speech Peter appears to have taken offence at her privileged position:

Did he really speak with a woman without our knowledge (and) not openly? Are we to turn about and all listen to her? Did he prefer her to us?²⁹

²⁶ 35.11–14.

²⁷ Cf. H. Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament*, ii (Philadelphia 1982) 152–3, and R. Valantasis, *The Gospel of Thomas* (London 1997) 78.

²⁸ John 20. Cf. also Matt. 28.9–10.

²⁹ 17.18–22. The conclusion of the *Gospel of Thomas* (logion 114) also points to a controversy between Mary and Peter. Peter said to his fellow apostles: 'Mary should leave us, for women are not worthy of Life.' But Jesus sides with Mary: 'Every woman who will make herself male (i.e. who becomes a complete human being, a *monachos*, cf. esp. logia 22 and 49) will enter the kingdom of heaven.' Cf. also *Pistis*

Peter was rebuked by Levi. Among other things, Levi said:

Peter, you have always been hot-tempered. Now I see you contending against the woman like the adversaries. But if the Saviour made her worthy, who are you indeed to reject her? Surely the Saviour knows her very well. That is why he loved her more than us.³⁰

The *Gospel of Philip* (NHC II.3) also points to a special spiritual bond between Jesus and Mary The [Saviour loved] Mary Magdalene more than [all] the disciples [and used] to kiss her on her [mouth].³¹ The rest of [the disciples. . . .] They said to him, 'Why do you love her more than all of us?' The Saviour answered and said to them, 'Why do I not love you like her?'³²

It should be observed that in all the above cases we are dealing with personal rather than with apostolic authority: it was believed that the Beloved Disciple (John), James, Jude-Thomas, and Mary Magdalene, respectively, were more intimately related to the Saviour than any of the other early followers was, and that for this reason they possessed knowledge that the other disciples did not have.³³

The view of the twelve apostles as a more or less closed group of eyewitnesses to Jesus' ministry and at the same time as joint leaders of the Jerusalem church can be found in the canonical book of Acts.³⁴ This notion is likely to have developed in the community of the author.³⁵ The critical attitude towards Peter and towards the disciples of Jesus in general in such early texts as Paul's Letter to the Galatians and the Gospel of Mark suggests that in the first decades their authority was not unchallenged. In the texts quoted above, the

Sophia 17 (Jesus said to Mary: 'You are she whose heart is more openly directed to the Kingdom of Heaven than all your brothers'); 19; 36; 72 (Mary said to Jesus; 'I am afraid of Peter, for he threatens me and hates our race [*genos*]'). C. Schmidt and V. Macdermot, *Pistis Sophia* (Leiden 1978). Cf. A. Marjanen, *The Woman Jesus Loved: Mary Magdalene in the Nag Hammadi Library and Related Documents* (Leiden 1996); S. Petersen, 'Zerstört die Werke der Weiblichkeit!' *Maria Magdalena, Salome und andere Jüngerinnen Jesu in christlich-gnostischen Schriften* (Leiden 1999).

³⁰ 18.7–15.

³¹ The kiss was an expression of the spiritual union between Gnostics. It was supposed to convey spiritual powers to the receiver. H.-G. Gaffron, *Studien zum koptischen Philippusevangelium unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Sakramente* (diss. Bonn 1969). Cf. H.-M. Schenke, *Das Philippusevangelium* (Texte und Untersuchungen 143; Berlin 1997) 336 n. 792.

³² 63.34–64.5.

³³ St. J. Patterson, *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus* (Sonoma 1993) 116.

³⁴ Cf esp. 1.21–6 and 8.1.

³⁵ E. Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Göttingen 1968⁶) 129.

criticism is not levelled against the historical apostles but against emerging orthodox Christianity and its claim to represent the teaching of Jesus and his first followers.

3. *Conclusions*

Gnostics regarded Jesus Christ above all as a bringer of divine *gnosis*. Their texts pretend to convey the teachings he revealed to his worthy followers. In various ways, these revelations are related to his (other)³⁶ prepaschal teachings. Gnostics were aware that for their knowledge of the teachings of Jesus Christ—also and particularly for their knowledge of his private instructions—they were dependent on the evidence of witnesses. They refuted the early orthodox appeal to the twelve apostles and their leader Peter either by claiming the authority of the apostles—first of all Peter—for their own traditions or by referring to witnesses who were allegedly more qualified than Peter and the Twelve.

³⁶ In the *Apocalypse of Peter*, the Saviour reveals his teachings to Peter before Easter (on Good Friday). The *Gospel of Thomas* does not distinguish between prepaschal and postpaschal teachings. The sayings of this Gospel are spoken by 'the living Jesus'. By hearing and contemplating his words, the believer becomes one with him. Cf. logion 108 (NHC II.2, 50.28–31): 'Jesus says, "Whoever drinks from my mouth will become like me. I myself shall become he, and the hidden things will be revealed to him".'

DIE APOSTOLIZITÄT DER KIRCHLICHEN VERKÜNDIGUNG BEI IRENÄUS VON LYON

H. S. Benjamins

Irenäus gehört zu den ersten Theologen, die die apostolische Überlieferung in Anspruch nahmen, damit die kirchliche Lehre gegen häretische Auffassungen abgegrenzt und legitimiert werden konnte.¹ Der Appell an die apostolische Autorität implizierte zugleich eine Definition des katholischen, christlichen Glaubens. Katholisch ist nämlich das, was mit der überlieferten Lehre der Apostel, die durch die Aufeinanderfolge der Bischöfe schriftgemäß bewahrt wird, übereinstimmt.² Die Apostel sollten die Wahrheit der Kirche somit garantieren. Sie haben den Heiligen Geist vom Herrn empfangen, den Gläubigen erteilt, und so die Kirchen in aller Ordnung gegründet (*Epid.* 41). Der besondere Status der Apostel wird auch mit Schriftstellen belegt. Nicht nur das Kommen Christi, sondern auch die Verkündigung von den Aposteln wurde im Alten Testament bereits vorhergesagt,³ z.B. an den folgenden Stellen (*Epid.* 86): ‚Wie lieblich sind die Füße der Freudenboten des Friedens und der Freudenboten des Guten‘ (Jes. 52,7), und ‚von Zion wird das Gesetz ausgehen und das Wort des Herrn von Jerusalem‘ (Jes. 2,3), und ‚in alle Lande geht ihr Laut aus, und ihre Worte bis ans Ende des Erdkreises‘ (Ps. 18[19],5). Die Verkündigung der Wahrheit wurde von den Propheten vorhergesagt, von Christus ausgeführt, und von den Aposteln überliefert (*Epid.* 98). Die Erkenntnis der Apostel und ihre Darstellung des

¹ Ausgaben der Werke des Irenäus, *Epideixis* und *Adversus Haereses* (SC 406, 263/4, 293/4, 210/1, 100, 152/3), von A. Rousseau, L. Doutreleau, B. Hemmerdinger, C. Mercier. Dieselbe Ausgabe in: Irenäus von Lyon, Gegen die Häresien, Fontes Christiani, Band 8/1–4, Übersetzung und Einführung von N. Brox.

² ‚Die wahre Gnosis ist die Lehre der Apostel und der Glaube der Kirche in seiner Gesamtheit seit alters her auf dem ganzen Erdkreis; das unterscheidende Kennzeichen des Leibes Christi liegt in der Aufeinanderfolge der Bischöfe, denen die Apostel die jeweilige Ortskirche übertragen haben. Dieses Bewahren gibt es bei uns bis heute, ohne daß dabei Schriften gefälscht werden‘ (*Haer.* 4,33,8).

³ Justin, dessen Werk Irenäus bekannt war, vgl. *Haer.* 4,6,2 und 5,26,2, behauptet ebenfalls, daß die Weissagung in Jes. 2,3 von der Predigt der Apostel erfüllt wurde (*1 Apol.* 39). Irenäus erweitert das Thema.

christlichen Glaubens lassen sich nicht überbieten, obwohl Markion (*Haer.* 1,27,2), Karpokrates (1,25,2) und die Häretiker im allgemeinen (3,2,2) anscheinend tiefere Verständnisse als die Apostel für sich in Anspruch nehmen.⁴

Die ‚apostolische Lehre‘ ist für Irenäus von größter Bedeutung. Man könnte von unserer modernen Sicht aus aber vermuten, daß Irenäus ziemlich naiv gewesen sei bei der Darstellung einer apostolischen Lehre, denn die Apostelgeschichte zeigt, daß es innerhalb des Apostelkreises Gegensätze gab. Nach der Apg. 6 war ein Konflikt von Griechischsprachigen und Hebräern latent vorhanden. Die Beschneidung der Heidenchristen wurde zum Streitpunkt, und sie veranlaßte das sogenannte Apostelkonzil (Apg. 15,1–21).⁵ Die gemeinsame Mahlzeit von Juden und Heiden war umstritten (Gal. 2,11–14). Daraus ergibt sich für uns die Frage, ob es überhaupt eine apostolische Lehre gab, wie Irenäus sie, anscheinend naiv, behauptet. Die Apostelgeschichte bezeugt vor allem einen Übergang der christlichen Gemeinschaft von Judenchristen zu überwiegend Heidenchristen, und da läßt sich bezweifeln, daß die Apostel tatsächlich eine unverbesserliche Lehre formulierten und die Wahrheit der Kirche in der Vergangenheit festlegten. Ihre Auffassungen können auch als Äußerungen einer kontextuellen Theologie, mit der sie sich unterschiedlich auf den Prozeß der Veränderung einließen, verstanden werden.

War Irenäus naiv, als er eine apostolische Lehre verteidigte, oder aus den Schriften herausarbeitete, und hat er tatsächlich Gegensätze unter den Aposteln übersehen? Und vor allem: was ist eigentlich der genaue Gehalt der apostolischen Lehre bei Irenäus? Formell ist die apostolische Lehre für ihn von größter Bedeutung als Maßstab für den kirchlichen Glauben, inhaltlich ist aber nicht immer einleuchtend, was diese Lehre bei Irenäus besagt.

In *Adversus Haereses* 1,10 beschreibt Irenäus den Glauben, den die Kirche von den Aposteln und ihren Schülern angenommen hat. Er umfaßt mehrere Glaubensartikel, aber es bleibt unsicher, ob er nach

⁴ Vgl. *Haer.* 3 (Praefatio): „Der Herr über alles hat nämlich seinen Aposteln die Vollmacht verliehen, das Evangelium zu verkünden. Durch sie haben wir auch die Wahrheit erkannt, das heißt die Lehre des Sohnes Gottes. Zu ihnen hat der Herr auch gesagt: „Wer euch hört, hört mich, und wer euch verachtet, der verachtet mich und den, der mich gesandt hat“.“

⁵ In Jerusalem wurde angeblich eine Übereinstimmung erreicht, die nachher von Paulus wohl als überholt betrachtet wurde, vgl. C. J. den Heyer, *Paulus. Man van twee werelden*, Zoetermeer 1998, 118, 247.

Irenäus im strengsten Sinne wohl als ‚apostolisch‘ aufgefaßt werden darf, weil er von den Aposteln ‚und ihren Schülern‘ herrührt.⁶ In *Haer.* 2,22,1 behauptet Irenäus, daß es nach der *regula veritatis* nur einen Gott gibt, den Schöpfer. Nach *Haer.* 2,28,1 besagt die *regula veritatis* aber, daß es nur einen Gott gibt, der Vater ist und die Welt schuf, den Menschen formte, und in seiner Kreatur das Wachstum gewährte. Aus diesen und anderen Formulierungen⁷ geht keine eindeutige Beschreibung der apostolischen Lehre bei Irenäus hervor. Eine ausführliche Umschreibung der apostolischen Lehre bei Irenäus wurde von Holstein dargestellt.⁸ Sie sei ‚la prédication de l'oikonomia, l'exposé du plan salvifique de Dieu réalisé dans une histoire qui aboutit au Christ et n'a de sens que par lui et pour lui... Les Apôtres n'ont pas exposé une doctrine abstraite et intemporelle, mais, dès le jour de la Pentecôte, ont raconté une histoire, celle même du peuple élu, héritier de la promesse faite à Abraham, et chargé de réaliser le plan divin de la préparation du Christ'.⁹ Gegen diese Umschreibung soll aber der Einspruch erhoben werden, daß die apostolische Lehre dadurch nicht begrenzt, sondern mit der gesamten biblischen Botschaft aus der Perspektive des Irenäus identifiziert wird.¹⁰

Im Folgenden möchte ich an Hand der Texte aus *Haer.* 3,1–5 und 3,12 den Gehalt der apostolischen Lehre bei Irenäus nochmals darstellen. Die Darstellung beschränkt sich auf das dritte Buch, weil es ordentlich strukturiert ist,¹¹ und die Apostolizität der Verkündigung

⁶ In *Epid.* 3 behauptet Irenäus sogar, die Ältesten, die Schüler der Apostel, haben uns den Glauben überliefert.

⁷ Siehe z.B. *Epid.* 3 und 6; *Haer.* 3,16,6; 4,33,7.

⁸ H. Holstein, *La tradition des apôtres chez Saint Irénée, Recherches de science religieuse* 36 1949 229–270.

⁹ *Ib.* 269.

¹⁰ Vgl. A. Bengsch, *Heilsgeschichte und Heilswissen. Eine Untersuchung zur Struktur und Entfaltung des theologischen Denkens im Werk 'Adversus Haereses' des Hl. Irenäus von Lyon*, Leipzig 1957, insbesondere 62–74: ‚Die apostolische Tradition als einziger Zugang zur Heilsordnung Gottes‘. Bengsch behauptet: ‚Apostolisches Kerygma und Verkündigung der Kirche sind für Irenäus dasselbe‘ (62).

¹¹ Der Zusammenhang in den Schriften des Irenäus steht zur Debatte. Die Struktur des dritten Buches ist einsichtig, vgl. A. Benoît, *Saint Irénée. Introduction à l'étude de sa théologie*, Paris 1960, 169–182. Der Zusammenhang der Gedanken im vierten Buch ist strittig, vgl. *ib.* 182–192; Ph. Bacq, *De l'ancienne à la nouvelle alliance selon S. Irénée: unité du livre IV de l'Adversus Haereses*, Paris 1978; R. Noormann, *Irenäus als Paulusinterpret. Zur Rezeption und Wirkung der paulinischen und deuteropaulinischen Briefe im Werk des Irenäus von Lyon*, Tübingen 1994, 169 ff.; N. Brox, ‚Einleitung zu Buch 4‘ in: *Irenäus von Lyon, Gegen die Häresien (Fontes Christiani 8/4)*, Freiburg im Br. usw. 1995.

darin explizit thematisiert wird. In *Haer.* 3,1–5 verteidigt Irenäus die Apostolizität der kirchlichen Verkündigung gegen Häretiker,¹² die ihre eigenen Auffassungen auf eine geheime apostolische Überlieferung begründen wollen.¹³ In *Haer.* 3,12 erörtert er das apostolische Zeugnis Juden, Griechen und Heidenchristen gegenüber.

Adversus Haereses 3,1–5

Irenäus behauptet in 3,1,1, daß wir die Heilsökonomie durch die Apostel, die uns das Evangelium erteilten, erkannt haben: ‚Wir haben nämlich durch niemand anderen die Ordnung unseres Heils erkannt als durch diejenigen, durch die das Evangelium zu uns kam.‘ Sie haben zunächst mündlich verkündigt und ihre Verkündigung nachher aufgeschrieben. Zwar meinen die Häretiker, daß die Apostel bereits predigten, als sie die vollkommene Gnosis noch nicht besaßen, sie verkündigten aber erst, als der Heilige Geist nach Christi Auferstehung über sie gekommen war und sie mit vollkommener Gnosis erfüllte. Die Apostel haben das Evangelium Gottes ‚alle gemeinsam und jeder für sich‘, und sie haben es sowohl mündlich als auch schriftlich verkündigt. Matthäus predigte bei den Hebräern, und hat ein schriftliches Evangelium herausgegeben. Petrus und Paulus verkündigten das Evangelium in Rom; Markus hat die Verkündigung des Petrus aufgeschrieben, Lukas hat als Begleiter des Paulus das von ihm gepredigte Evangelium zu Papier gebracht. Johannes, ein Jünger des Herrn, gab in Ephesus ein Evangelium heraus. ‚Sie alle haben‘, so Irenäus in 3,1,2, ‚uns überliefert, daß es einen einzigen Gott, den Schöpfer des Himmels und der Erde, gibt, vom Gesetz und von den Propheten verkündigt, und einen einzigen Christus, Gottes Sohn.‘ Wer dem widerspricht, verachtet den Herrn und den Vater, und hat sich selbst gerichtet.

Das erste Kapitel des dritten Buches besagt also, daß die Apostel das Evangelium mündlich und schriftlich überlieferten, durch das wir die Heilsökonomie erkennen können. Der Sinngehalt des Evangeliums,

¹² Mit ‚Häretikern‘ sind hier vor allem die Gnostiker, aber gelegentlich auch judenchristliche Gruppierungen, wie die Ebioniten, gemeint.

¹³ Die streitenden Parteien sind sich also in diesem Punkt einig, daß die Richtigkeit des Glaubens nach dem Maßstab der Apostolizität beurteilt werden soll. Fraglich ist nur, ob ‚apostolisch‘ auf die apostolischen Schriften oder die apostolische Geheimlehre verweist.

das sie ‚alle gemeinsam und jeder für sich‘ hatten, d.h., der Konsens der Apostel, wird aber auf den Satz reduziert, daß es einen Schöpfergott und einen Christus gibt.

Im zweiten Kapitel polemisiert Irenäus gegen Häretiker. Wer ihnen aus den Schriften beweist, daß sie im Irrtum sind, erhält die Erwiderung, daß die Schriften weder fehlerfrei, noch eindeutig sind. Zur Interpretation der Schrift bedarf man einer mündlichen Überlieferung, die Paulus z.B. in 1 Kor. 2,6 andeutet: ‚Wir reden Weisheit unter den Vollkommenen, aber nicht Weisheit dieser Welt.‘ Valentin, Markion, Kerinth, Basilides, oder andere Häretiker behaupten nun, daß ihre Lehre mit der Weisheit des Paulus, die er unter den Vollkommenen geredet habe, übereinstimme (3,2,1). Schriftliche und mündliche Überlieferung seien demnach nicht identisch. Folgt aber die (kirchliche) Entgegnung, daß die mündliche Überlieferung doch wohl durch die Aufeinanderfolge der Presbyter in der Kirche bewahrt sei, erwidern sie, sie seien weiser als die Apostel und haben die reine Weisheit gefunden, weil die Apostel die Herrenworte mit Elementen des Gesetzes gemischt haben. Sogar der Herr habe Aussprüche getan, die vom Demiurgen, oder aus der Mitte, aber nicht alle vom Allerhöchsten stammten. Selbst aber bewahrten die Häretiker das verborgene Mysterium rein und fehlerfrei (3,2,2).¹⁴ Irenäus skizziert also die folgende Lage. Werden die Häretiker aus den Schriften widerlegt, so ziehen sie sich auf eine mündliche Überlieferung zurück. Wird ihnen aber die—kirchliche—mündliche Überlieferung entgegengehalten, so verneinen sie deren Zuverlässigkeit, und ziehen sich auf das verborgene Mysterium zurück. Sie sind so glatt wie die Schlangen, schließt Irenäus (3,2,3).

Im dritten und vierten Kapitel stellt er dem verborgenen Mysterium der Häretiker die öffentliche, kirchliche Überlieferung gegenüber, damit sie glaubhaft, das häretische Mysterium aber disqualifiziert werde. Die apostolische Tradition ist auf der ganzen Welt offenkundig, und kann in jeder Kirche gefunden werden (3,3,1). Die lückenlose Aufeinanderfolge der Bischöfe, die die apostolische Tradition überlieferten, läßt sich am Beispiel der Kirche in Rom vorführen (3,3,2–3).¹⁵

¹⁴ Anderswo bringt Irenäus dagegen die These vor, eine mehrdeutige Schriftstelle sollte vom Eindeutigen und Klaren her interpretiert werden, das Eindeutige könnte aber nicht aufgrund von verschwiegenen Einblicken erklärt werden, siehe *Haer.* 2,10 und 2,27,1.

¹⁵ Literatur zu *Haer.* 3,3,2 angeführt von Mary Ann Donovan, *Irenaeus in Recent Scholarship*, *The Second Century* 4 1984 219–241, dort 238–240.

Polykarp war Schüler der Apostel, er lehrte in Asien und war glaubwürdiger Zeuge. Er habe erzählt, daß Johannes, der Schüler des Herrn, das Badehaus entflohen sei, als Kerinth darin war. Polykarp selbst habe Markion einmal den ‚Erstgeborenen Satans‘ genannt (3,3,4). Irenäus will mit alledem betonen, daß die Bischöfe auf die Apostel zurückgehen, die Apostel und ihre Schüler die Häretiker aber immer mieden, so daß es wohl reichlich fabulös klingen werde, gerade die Häretiker verfügten über ein verborgenes apostolisches Mysterium. Dem fügt Irenäus weitere Argumente hinzu, die die Zuverlässigkeit der schriftlichen und mündlichen kirchlichen Überlieferung unterstreichen sollen. Die Wahrheit sei mühelos von der Kirche zu bekommen, ‚denn die Apostel haben in ihr wie in einem reichen Vorratsraum alles in größter Vollständigkeit zusammengetragen, was zur Wahrheit gehört‘ (3,4,1). Gesetzt den Fall, daß die Apostel keine Schriften hinterlassen hätten, müßte man die Ordnung der Kirche folgen, die die Apostel denen übergaben, denen sie die Kirche anvertrauten (3,4,1). Diese Ordnung wird von Barbaren ohne Schriften tatsächlich unverändert festgehalten (3,4,2). Die Ansichten jedes einzelnen Häretikers rühren dagegen von ihm selbst her, werden vor ihm nicht gefunden, und sind also später als die apostolischen Auffassungen aufgetreten (3,4,3).

Den Argumenten des dritten und vierten Kapitels, und insbesondere dem Beispiel der Kirche in Rom, wurde in der Literatur viel Aufmerksamkeit gewidmet. Das folgende, fünfte Kapitel ist m.E. aber von größter Bedeutung für Irenäus' Verteidigung der Apostolizität der kirchlichen Überlieferung. In 3,2,2 erwies sich, daß die Häretiker die Überlieferung der Kirche ablehnten, weil die Ansichten der Apostel und die Worte des Herrn teilweise irrig wären. Im fünften Kapitel stellt sich heraus, wie sie diese Auffassung begründen. Der Herr und die Apostel hätten sich ihren Zuhörern angepaßt. Den Katholiken haben sie z.B. katholisch zugeredet, wem aber ein tieferer Einblick in die Wahrheit anvertraut werden konnte, hätten sie mit Parabeln und Rätseln das Mysterium zugesprochen, ähnlich wie Paulus ‚Weisheit unter den Vollkommenen‘ geredet habe. Nach den Häretikern habe der Herr den Demiurgen manchmal ‚Gott‘ genannt, weil er, ähnlich wie die Apostel, sich der Fassungskraft und den Erwartungen seiner Zuhörer anpaßte. Sie haben den Blinden ihrer Blindheit entsprechend zugeredet, den Schwachen ihrer Schwäche gemäß, den Irrenden nach ihrem Irrtum. ‚Und denen, die meinen, allein der Demiurg sei Gott, sollen sie diesen gepredigt haben.‘ Wer

den Vater dagegen als unnennbar begriffen hat, an den seien sie mit anderen Worten herangetreten. Der Herr und die Apostel hätten demnach nicht immer wahrheitsgemäß, sondern verstellt und nach der Fassungskraft ihrer Zuhörer verkündigt (3,5,1).

Irenäus erwidert, daß keiner so unterrichten würde. Keiner hilft einem Blinden, indem er ihn anregt auf dem falschen Weg weiterzugehen; kein Arzt richtet sich nach den Wünschen der Kranken, falls sie gegen die Heilkunde verstoßen. So haben auch der Herr und die Apostel gemäß der Lehre vom Heil, und ohne Anpassung und Verstellung geredet (3,5,2). Das läßt sich mit den Reden des Herrn auch belegen. Als der Herr sich den Juden als Sohn Gottes zeigte, und die Apostel die Heiden lehrten, ihre Bilder aus Holz und Stein zu verlassen, und den wahren Gott zu verehren, seien sie gerade gegen ihre Zuhörer vorgegangen (3,5,3). Irenäus verneint demnach, daß die kirchliche Überlieferung, da der Herr und die Apostel sich ihren Zuhörern angepaßt hätten, irrig oder aus Unverständnis korrumpiert tradiert worden sei. Die Apostel haben den Glauben wahrheitsgemäß verkündigt.

Adversus Haereses 3,12

In *Haer.* 3,12 erörtert Irenäus die Verkündigung der Apostel den Juden, Griechen und Heidenchristen gegenüber, und in diesem Kapitel¹⁶ steht das häretische Argument, die Apostel hätten sich ihren Zuhörern angepaßt, ebenfalls im Mittelpunkt. Petrus, Johannes und die anderen Apostel verkündigten, wie die Apostelgeschichte (2–5) zeigt, immer den einen Gott, den Vater von Jesus Christus, der von

¹⁶ Das Kapitel nimmt in der gesamten Darlegung des Irenäus folgende Stelle ein. *Haer.* 3,6–23 zerfällt in zwei Teile: 3,6–15 ist der Verteidigung der Einheit Gottes, des Schöpfers, Gesetzgebers, und Vaters Jesu Christi gewidmet. 3,16–23 berührt die Einheit Christi, die nicht in ein irdisches Teil menschlicher Herkunft und ein göttliches Element aus der oberen Welt zerteilt werden kann. Im ersten Teil über die Einheit Gottes verteidigt Irenäus erstens, weder der Herr noch die Apostel haben je eine unbekannte Gottheit ‚Gott‘ genannt (3,6,1–9,1); zweitens, die Evangelien des Matthäus, Markus, Lukas und Johannes sind zwar unterschiedlicher Art, verkündigen aber alle nur einen Gott, den Schöpfer der Welt und den Vater Jesu Christi (3,9–11); drittens, auch die Apostel haben diesen einen Gott verkündigt (3,12–15). Die Verteidigung des dritten Satzes ist wiederum in zwei Teilen gegliedert. In 3,12 wird die Verkündigung der Apostel vorgelegt, in 3,13–15 wird bewiesen, daß Paulus mit den anderen Aposteln übereinstimmt.

den Toten erweckt wurde (3,12,1–5). Manche behaupten aber, daß die Apostel den Juden keinen anderen Gott verkünden konnten, und sich den jüdischen Auffassungen anpassen mußten. Irenäus erwidert diese häretische Ansicht aber sehr ausführlich. Hätten die Apostel sich nur den bereits bekannten Auffassungen angeschlossen, hätte keiner die Wahrheit von ihnen erfahren; auch die Häretiker hätten nicht die wahre Überlieferung vernommen, sondern auch nur eine solche, die ihren Voraussetzungen entsprechen würde. Erhielte der Herr nur die eingewurzelte Meinung aller Zuhörer, wäre sein Kommen umsonst. Die Apostel haben gepredigt, Jesus sei der Christus, obwohl die Juden ihn ans Kreuz schlugen, und daraus ergibt sich bereits ein solcher Widerspruch, daß sie genausogut einen Gott über den Schöpfergott predigen konnten, wollten sie nur Konflikte vermeiden. Die Apostel haben sich jedenfalls den Heiden nicht angepaßt, als sie ihre Götter beseitigten, und hätten auch den Juden offen von einem anderen Gott geredet, falls sie daran glaubten.

Anschließend beweist Irenäus aus der Apostelgeschichte, daß die Apostel ihre Predigt den Heiden gegenüber nicht änderten. Hätten sie sich den Juden vielleicht anpassen müssen, den Heiden konnten sie auf alle Fälle freimütig predigen, daß der Gott der Christen ein anderer als der Gott der Juden sei. Petrus verkündigt dem Hauptmann Kornelius aber keinen zweiten Gott, sondern die Ankunft Gottes Sohnes (Apg. 10; 3,12,7).¹⁷ Philippus predigte dem Eunuchen aus Äthiopien unter vier Augen, daß der Sohn desselben Gottes, von dem die Propheten sprachen, wie ein Mensch gekommen ist (Apg. 8; 3,12,8). Auf dem Areopag, wo kein Jude dabei war, predigte Paulus den Schöpfergott, und denselben hat er auch mit Barnabas in Lystra verkündigt (Apg. 14; 3,12,9). Auch Stephanus lehrte das Volk über den Gott von Abraham (Apg. 7; 3,12,10).

Aus den Abschnitten 11 und 12 von 3,12 erweist sich, warum die Widerlegung der Behauptung, die Apostel haben sich den Zuhörern angepaßt, Irenäus so wichtig ist. Er meint, die Häretiker verstünden nicht, „daß sowohl das Gesetz nach Mose als auch die Gnade des neuen Bundes, beide zu ihrer Zeit, von ein und demselben Gott zum

¹⁷ „Also haben die Apostel den Sohn Gottes verkündet, den die Menschen noch nicht kannten, und seine Ankunft denen, die schon zuvor über Gott instruiert waren. Aber sie führten keinen zweiten Gott ein. Hätte Petrus nämlich von so etwas gewußt, dann hätte er freimütig den Heiden gepredigt, daß der Gott der Juden ein anderer als der der Christen sei“ (*Haer.* 3,12,7).

Nutzen des Menschengeschlechtes eingerichtet wurden'. Darin kommt der Kern Irenäus' eigener Theologie zum Ausdruck. In der Heilsgeschichte ergreift Gott mehrere Maßnahmen und Anordnungen, damit die Menschheit zur Gemeinschaft mit Gott erzogen werde.¹⁸ Im Prozeß der Erziehung hat das mosaische Gesetz z.B. einen bestimmten, aber auch eingeschränkten Zweck. Das Gesetz lehre den Menschen eine gute Gesinnung durch die Bande der Knechtschaft. Christus hob die Knechtschaft aber auf, und lehrte die Seele ohne fesselnde Bande Gott zu folgen.¹⁹ Wer nur verstehen kann, daß alle Heilsmaßnahmen unter verschiedenen Ordnungen, geeignet für die jeweilige Zeit, zum Nutzen des Menschengeschlechtes, von Gott ergriffen sind, der wird auch den Zusammenhang der apostolischen Lehre mit früheren Offenbarungen und Bedingungen verstehen können (3,12,11). Irenäus zufolge können die Häretiker den Zusammenhang aber nicht verstehen, weil sie den Unterschied zwischen mosaischem Gesetz und Lehre des Evangeliums zwar beobachten, die Gründe für den Unterschied beider Ordnungen aber nicht erforschten. Darum bildeten sie sich ein, sie wüßten mehr als die Apostel, die den jüdischen Auffassungen noch verhaftet wären. Sie seien in ihren Augen aber weiser, und erfanden einen anderen Gott. ‚Das alles brachte ihnen ihre Unkenntnis der Schriften und des Heilsplans Gottes ein. Ich will aber die Ursache für die Unterschiede zwischen den Ordnungen und umgekehrt ihre Einheit und Übereinstimmung in dem, was folgt, auseinanderlegen' (3,12,12).

Nach Irenäus haben die Häretiker aus dem Unterschied beider Ordnungen also auf die Existenz zweier Götter geschlossen. Daß die Apostel nicht selbst zwei Götter predigten, können sie dadurch erklären, daß sie sich ihren Zuhörern anpaßten, sich möglicherweise aber auch selbst ihres eigenen Kontextes nicht bewußt waren,²⁰ oder aber bereits verkündigten, als sie die volle Gnosis noch nicht besaßen.²¹ Auf alle Fälle könnte man nach den Gnostikern aber aus den apostolischen Schriften herauslesen, daß die Apostel einen unnennbaren, vom Alten Testament unterschiedlichen Gott verkündeten. Dem erwidert Irenäus zwar, aber seine Antwort, Gott habe sich in

¹⁸ Siehe z.B. *Haer.* 3,12,13; 4,14,2; 4,20,8.

¹⁹ *Haer.* 4,13,2.

²⁰ Das Argument läßt sich in Irenäus' Aussage in *Haer.* 3,12,12, *apostolos . . . quae sunt Iudaeorum sentientes adnuntiassent evangelium . . .* durchblicken.

²¹ Siehe *Haer.* 3,1,1, obengenannt.

verschiedenen Zeiten der Entwicklung der Menschen angepaßt, ist nicht unbedingt unwiderlegbar. Die Rückfrage wäre: Falls Menschen sich in bezug auf ihre Sitten entwickeln, warum nicht auch in bezug auf ihr Verständnis von Gott? Falls Gott seine Heilsmaßnahmen im Alten Testament auf der menschlichen Entwicklung eingestellt hat, warum konnten die Apostel nicht ihre Verkündigung den Zuhörern anpassen? Da bleibt Irenäus nur die Antwort, die er tatsächlich entwickelt und betont: Die Apostel haben sich ihren Zuhörern nicht angepaßt, sondern immer wahrheitsgemäß gepredigt. Weil es eine Offenbarung der vollständigen Wahrheit durch die Ankunft Christi gibt, lassen die Heilsmaßnahmen des Alten Testaments sich eben als Anpassungen und Vorbereitungen auf die Wahrheit Christi verstehen. Will man aber auch in der Offenbarung Christi zwischen Anpassung und Wahrheit unterscheiden, brauchte man als Maßstab eine Wahrheit, die die Wahrheit der Offenbarung Christi überträfe. Eine solche, noch weiter fortgeschrittene Wahrheit, gibt es aber nicht; die haben die Häretiker sich selbst ausgedacht, und zwar zu Unrecht, denn die Apostel haben immer wahrheitsgemäß und ohne Anpassungen gepredigt. Die apostolische Lehre bedarf keiner Säuberung, sie ist unüberbietbar.²²

In 3,12,13 beweist Irenäus nochmals, daß die Apostel sich ihren Zuhörern nicht anpaßten. Stephanus starb als Märtyrer (Apg. 7), die Apostel haben ihr Leben für das Evangelium eingesetzt (Apg. 15,26). Sie ‚haben den Menschen sicher nicht bloß deren herkömmliche Meinung gepredigt‘. Die Juden konfrontierten sie mit der Predigt, daß Jesus, der von ihnen gekreuzigt wurde, Gottes Sohn ist, die Griechen mit der Verkündigung, daß es nur einen Gott gibt, dessen Sohn Jesus Christus ist. Darin steckt keinerlei Anpassung.

In den abschließenden Abschnitten 14 und 15 von 3,12 behauptet Irenäus, aus dem sog. Apostelkonzil (Apg. 15) gehe noch offenkundiger hervor, daß die Apostel immer der Wahrheit gemäß nur einen Gott verkündigt haben.²³ Die Passage ist wichtig, weil Irenäus darin die Differenz der Apostel zwar anerkennt, aber betont, daß sie trotzdem im Wesentlichen, d.h. in dem Glauben an den einen

²² Vgl. E. Meijering, *Irenaeus, grondlegger van het christelijk denken*, Amsterdam 2001, 117–122.

²³ Siehe G. Ferrarese, *Il concilio di Gerusalemme in Ireneo di Lione. Ricerche sulla storia dell'esegesi di Atti 15,1–29 (e Galati 2,1–10) nel II secolo*, Brescia 1979.

Gott, übereinstimmen. Die Differenz unterstreicht *mirabile dictu* die Übereinstimmung. Die Apostel und Ältesten konferierten in Jerusalem wegen der Frage, ob die Heidenchristen sich beschneiden lassen sollten, und einigten sich darüber, daß die bekehrten Heiden sich nur der Götzenverehrung, der Unzucht und des Blutes enthalten sollten; zur Beschneidung wurden sie nicht verpflichtet (Apg. 15). ‚Aus allem wird völlig klar, daß sie nicht die Lehre verbreiteten, es gebe (noch) einen anderen Vater, sondern sie gaben denen den neuen Bund der Freiheit, die durch den Heiligen Geist auf neue Art an Gott glaubten. Durch die Tatsache, daß sie die Frage stellten, ob die Jünger noch immer beschnitten werden müssen oder nicht, haben sie deutlich bewiesen, daß sie nicht die Vorstellung eines anderen Gottes hatten‘ (3,12,14). Hätten die Apostel nicht an dem Gott des alten Bundes geglaubt, hätten sie sich auch nicht um dessen Bestimmungen gekümmert. Die Apostel glauben alle, zwar auf verschiedene Weisen, aber aufrichtig, daß der Gott des alten Bundes auch der Gott des neuen Bundes der Freiheit ist. Die häretische Auffassung, die Apostel hätten zutiefst einen anderen Gott erkannt, taugt also überhaupt nichts.

Auch über die gemeinsame Mahlzeit von Judenchristen und Heidenchristen waren die Apostel sich uneinig. Die Uneinigkeit bezeugt auf alle Fälle, daß sie den Gott des alten Bundes predigten, ‚sonst hätten sie nicht einen derartigen Respekt vor dem ersten Bund gehabt, daß sie mit Heiden nicht einmal zusammen essen wollten‘. Petrus taufte den Heiden Kornelius (Apg. 10,47–48), obwohl es einem Jude nicht erlaubt war, mit einem Nichtjuden zu verkehren (Apg. 10,28). Die Apostel um Jakobus verblieben aber bei den alten Gesetzesregeln, so daß Petrus, wie Barnabas, aus Angst von ihnen beschuldigt zu werden, nicht mehr mit den Heiden aß, als einige Leute von Jakobus zu ihm kamen (Gal. 2,12–13). ‚So verfuhrten die Apostel . . . mit der Einrichtung des mosaischen Gesetzes gewissenhaft und erklärten, daß es von ein und demselben Gott stammt. Das hätten sie, wie gesagt, nicht getan, wenn sie . . . vom Herrn noch etwas über einen anderen Vater erfahren hätten‘ (3,12,15). Irenäus betont also, zwar der Status des Gesetzes werde zur Debatte gestellt, nicht aber die Frage, ob der Gott des Gesetzes der Gott Christi sei. Die Uneinigkeit der Apostel unterstreicht somit ihre Übereinstimmung darüber, daß der Gott des alten Bundes auch der Vater Jesu Christi ist.

Ergebnis

In *Adversus Haereses* 3,1–5 und 3,12 zeigt sich der große Wert, den Irenäus auf die Apostolizität der kirchlichen Verkündigung legt. Auf Grund dieser Texte lassen sich die Verteidigung und der Sinngehalt der apostolischen Lehre bei Irenäus präzisieren.

Im Kern gründet Irenäus' Verteidigung der apostolischen Lehre sich auf drei wichtigen Punkte. 1. Anerkennung der apostolischen Pluriformität, 2. Übereinstimmung der Apostel über wesentliche Auffassungen in bezug auf Gott und Christus, worüber sie 3. immer aufrichtig, der Wahrheit gemäß, und ohne Anpassung geredet haben. Nach diesen drei Punkten haben die Apostel, durch die wir die Heilsökonomie erkennen (3,1,1), mittels mündlicher und schriftlicher Überlieferung in der Kirche ,wie in einem reichen Vorratsraum alles in größter Vollständigkeit zusammengetragen, was zur Wahrheit gehört' (3,4,1). Es gibt allerdings Unterschiede zwischen den Aposteln (so z.B. in 3,12,14–15), die sich z.B. zum mosaischen Gesetz unterschiedlich verhielten, aber darüber, daß es nur einen Gott und einen Christus gibt, waren sie sich immer einig, wie es gerade auch ihren Differenzen zu entnehmen ist. Die Wahrheit, daß es einen Schöpfergott und einen Christus gibt, haben die Apostel ,alle gemeinsam und jeder für sich' (3,1,2). Weil die Apostel darüber immer wahrheitsgemäß gesprochen haben, kann man hinter ihren Worten nicht noch eine andere, geheime Lehre vermuten.

Diese Verteidigung der apostolischen Lehre verdeutlicht auch, wie Irenäus sich den Inhalt dieser Lehre denkt. Holstein behauptet, die apostolische Lehre sei die Predigt der Heilsökonomie. Das ist sicherlich nicht falsch, aber Irenäus nimmt für die Heilsökonomie nicht nur die Apostel, sondern die Apostel ,und ihre Schüler' in Anspruch (so z.B. 2,22,1). Wir haben die Heilsökonomie zwar durch die Apostel erkannt (*cognovimus per eos*; 3,1,1), und die Heilsökonomie ist deswegen korrekter Ausdruck der apostolischen Lehre, aber sie muß ihr darum nicht identisch sein. Ähnlich wie das Alte Testament das spätere Kommen des Logos schon enthält (vgl. 4,10), enthält die Predigt der Apostel bereits die spätere Ausarbeitung der Heilsökonomie. Irenäus präzisiert das Verhältnis öfters nicht, weil er glaubt, daß das Neue bereits vom Alten umfaßt, und vom Vorhergehenden angekündigt worden ist (4,10). In Irenäus' Sicht bilden apostolische Lehre und Heilsökonomie ein organisches Ganzes. Gegen die Häretiker genügt aber nicht die Behauptung, daß apostolische Lehre und

Heilsökonomie zusammenhängen, sondern ist der Beweis erforderlich. Zu dem Zweck beweist Irenäus erstens, daß die Apostel sich nicht angepaßt haben, so daß man ihnen aufs Wort glauben kann. Dann zeigt er, daß sie alle verkündigt haben, daß der Gott des Alten Testaments auch der Vater Jesu Christi ist. Wenn dieser Konsens der Apostel als Ausgangspunkt ihrer Lehre einmal gesichert ist, läßt sich auch nachweisen, daß diese Ausgangspunkte—Einheit Gottes und Einheit Christi—sich unter dem Begriff der Heilsökonomie verstehen und erläutern lassen, aber unter den Begriffen der häretischen Theologie verneint werden. Der Glaube der Kirche ist die Heilsökonomie, und sie ist die apostolische Überlieferung im weiten, ausgearbeiteten Sinne. Damit sie gegen Häretiker aber tatsächlich als ‚apostolisch‘ bewiesen werden kann, erforscht Irenäus die Ausgangspunkte der apostolischen Verkündigung, die sich auf die Einheit Gottes und seines Sohnes Jesu Christi beschränken, und sie bilden die apostolische Lehre im strengsten Sinne. Der Glaube der Kirche ist ‚apostolisch‘, d.h. er ist der Glaube an eine Heilsökonomie. Wurde dieser ‚apostolische Glaube‘ von den Aposteln gelehrt? Das beweist Irenäus nun eben nicht—er ist nicht naiv. Er beweist nur eine Art ‚Minimalkonsens‘ der Apostel, die alle einen Schöpfergott und einen Christus predigten. Der ausgearbeitete, apostolische Glaube an der Heilsökonomie läßt sich insofern als apostolisch nachweisen, daß sie dem Minimalkonsens der Apostel entspricht, was den häretischen Auffassungen nun ganz und gar abgesagt werden muß. Es geht Irenäus freilich um diesen Nachweis. Er glaubt die Heilsökonomie und will sie als apostolisch beweisen und das bedeutet, daß eben diese Heilsökonomie, und nicht die gnostische Geheimlehre sich auf der Grundlage des apostolischen Minimalkonsenses aufbauen läßt.²⁴

Irenäus behauptet zwar, daß die Apostel die Wahrheit vollständig in der Kirche zusammentrugen,²⁵ er bemüht sich aber nicht um eine spekulative Eindringung in die Wahrheit, so daß seine Theologie eine breite Darstellung der ganzen Wahrheit wäre. Er will nur verteidigen, daß die Auffassung der Heilsökonomie den Auffassungen

²⁴ Dies entspricht der Behauptung von Karlmann Beyschlag in seinem Grundriß der Dogmengeschichte, Band I, Darmstadt 1987², 177: ‚Es konnte sich nicht . . . um eine gesetzliche Autorisation ‚apostolischer‘ Schriften für die Gegenwart handeln, sondern mit diesen Schriften war vielmehr umgekehrt der Nachweis zu erbringen, daß der gegenwärtige kirchliche Glaube mit der „Ur-Kunde“ der Christusbotschaft . . . nach wie vor übereinstimmte‘.

²⁵ Vgl. *Haer.* 1,10 und 2,25–28.

der Apostel entspräche. Darin unterscheidet er sich z.B. von Origenes, der einer jüngeren Generation und einem intellektuellen Milieu zugehört. Irenäus' Auffassungen über die Apostolizität können durch den Vergleich zur Theologie des Origenes deutlicher hervorgehoben werden.

Im systematischen Hauptwerk *De Principiis* erwähnt Origenes eine Liste von ‚ganz klaren Aussagen‘ der Apostel, die den Ausgangspunkt jeder christlichen Theologie bilden sollten.²⁶ Irenäus beweist nur, daß die Apostel einen Gott und einen Christus predigten. Origenes zufolge haben die Apostel z.B. aber auch gelehrt, daß die Seele eigene Substanz und eigenes Leben hat, und über die Entscheidungsfreiheit verfügt,²⁷ daß diese Welt vergehen muß,²⁸ und daß die heiligen Schriften nicht nur einen offenen, sondern auch einen verborgenen Sinn haben.²⁹ Origenes beweist die Apostolizität dieser Auffassungen nicht—und das war eben die Spitze der Theologie des Irenäus—, sondern er versucht sie zu einem Ganzen zu verbinden; eine Aufgabe, die die Apostel denen überließen, die dazu würdig seien.³⁰ Irenäus verharrt auf die kirchliche Lehre, deren Apostolizität zu beweisen ist, Origenes dagegen erforscht den spekulativen Zusammenhang der apostolischen Reichtümer.

Zur Verteidigung der Apostolizität der kirchlichen Verkündigung behauptet Irenäus mit Nachdruck, die Apostel haben sich ihren Zuhörern nicht angepaßt. Origenes, der den verborgenen Sinn der biblischen und apostolischen Botschaft ausfindig machen will, meint dagegen aber, daß die Apostel sich den Zuhörern schon angepaßt haben. Origenes zufolge wird die Anpassung durch die Aussage des Paulus, er rede Weisheit unter den Vollkommenen (1 Kor. 2,6), belegt.³¹ Die Gnostiker meinten nach Irenäus, daß diese Schriftstelle eine geheime mündliche Überlieferung bezeuge. Irenäus opponierte gegen diese Deutung, damit er die kirchliche Lehre als apostolische Lehre verteidigen kann. Origenes meint aber, diese Stelle verweise nicht auf eine geheime mündliche Lehre, sondern auf einen tieferen Sinn der Schriften, der von den Aposteln selber klar bezeugt

²⁶ *Princ.* 1 praef. 4–10.

²⁷ *Princ.* 1 praef. 5.

²⁸ *Princ.* 1 praef. 7.

²⁹ *Princ.* 1 praef. 8.

³⁰ *Princ.* 1 praef. 3.

³¹ Siehe z.B. *Comm. in Rom.* 2,14 (PG 14,917).

worden sei.³² Irenäus will die Apostolizität der Heilsökonomie beweisen, Origenes will den tieferen Sinn aufdecken, die die Apostel selber öffentlich andeuten. Beide lehnen aber eine geheime mündliche Lehre ab.

Mehr als Origenes sah Irenäus sich gezwungen, die Ausgangspunkte der kirchlichen Lehre als apostolisch zu beweisen. Anders als Origenes hat er sich der Entfaltung der apostolischen Reichtümer erwehrt. Irenäus wollte nicht einen tiefen, verborgenen Sinn hinter den kontextuellen Aussagen, sondern die apostolische Übereinstimmung als Grundlage ihrer Aussagen hervorheben. Das kann man ihm als Verdienst und als Schwäche anrechnen.

³² Siehe Anmerkung 28.

ORIGEN'S VIEW OF APOSTOLIC TRADITION

Fred Ledegang

‘All who believe and are convinced that grace and truth came by Jesus Christ [John 1.17] and that Christ is the truth (in accordance with his own saying “I am the truth” [John 14.6]), derive the knowledge which calls men to lead a good and blessed life from no other source but the very words and teaching of Christ. By the words of Christ we do not mean only those which formed his teaching when he was made man and dwelt in the flesh, since even before that Christ the Word of God was in Moses and the prophets.’¹ Thus Origen begins the preface of *De Principiis* and further on he speaks repeatedly about the presence of Christ in the Old Testament.² But like Christ was present in the prophets before, so he has also spoken in his apostles after his Ascension. For the apostle Paul says: ‘Then you will have the proof you seek of the Christ who speaks through me [2 Cor. 13.3].’³ And the *apostolica dignitas* is based upon this speaking of Christ in the apostles.⁴

As Christ has spoken in the prophets as well as in the apostles it can correctly be said that the Church has been built upon the foundation laid by the apostles and the prophets (Eph. 2.20). The difference is that the prophets did not yet see that what the apostles did. Anyway, this is not a matter of superiority of the latter, but of the phase of revelation.⁵ When the apostles quote the Old Testament, they sometimes seem to do that rather freely. The reason is that they don’t quote literally, but according to the spirit and it is part of their *auctoritas apostolica* to depart from the Hebrew text or the Greek translation.⁶ For his allegorical and typological exegesis Origen

¹ *On First Principles* 1 praefatio 1.1–10 (SC 252.76).

² H. de Lubac, *Histoire et Esprit: L'intelligence de l'Écriture d'après Origène* (Théologie 16; Paris 1950) 166–78, 336–46.

³ *On First Principles* 1 praefatio 1.21–4 (SC 252.76–8).

⁴ *Commentary on Romans* 6.9 (ed. C. H. E. Lommatsch, *Origenis opera omnia quae graece vel latine tantum exstant et ejus nomine circumferuntur* [Berlin 1831–48] 7.52).

⁵ *Commentary on John* 13.48.314 (SC 222.204).

⁶ *Commentary on Romans* 3.2 (Lommatsch [n. 4] 6.173); cp. 8.7 (7.236–7); 11 (269).

refers to the apostle Paul, to his pronouncements in Gal. 4 and 1 Cor. 10 respectively.⁷ Apart from that he sometimes expresses his surprise about a certain exegesis or understanding by Paul.⁸ Usually he solves such problems by explaining these pronouncements allegorically.

The apostles received their office to proclaim the Gospel with authority, since Christ himself also was called an apostle (Heb. 3.1), i.e. a messenger of the Father, and he also says 'that he has been sent to announce good news to the poor' (Luke 4.18).⁹ However, the apostles could not understand what the Lord would teach them until the coming of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰ And through the Spirit they did not only see the corporeal Jesus, but also the Word,¹¹ God himself who has become man.¹² And by the Spirit their words get persuasiveness.¹³ It is the Word of God that comes to us in the Law and the Prophets, in the Gospels and the writings of the apostles. Therefore God is in fact the only Teacher and he gives instruction in person or by means of Christ, through the Holy Spirit, by means of Paul and Peter or someone of the other saints.¹⁴ Two things should be mentioned. First, that Origen uses the instrumental *ἐν* in connection with the activity of the Holy Spirit and the preposition *διὰ* which points more to mediation in other cases. Second, that with 'the other saints' he does not mean only the apostles, because for him the circle of the saints is much wider than the circle of the

⁷ For Gal. 4.21–31 see e.g. *Homilies on Leviticus* 11.3.1–56 (SC 287.158–62); for 1 Cor. 10.1 ff. *Homilies on Genesis* 3.4.16–20 (SC 7bis.124); *Homilies on Exodus* 1.5.28–47 (SC 321.58); *Homilies on Leviticus* 7.4.14–54 (SC 286.328–30) with a critical remark against the *doctores* of his days: 'Paul has learned these better than those who now boast to be teachers'; 9.2.1–7 (SC 287.74).

⁸ E.g. in *Homilies on Genesis* 7.3.6–11 (SC 7bis.202); *Homilies on Numbers* 20.3 (GCS 30.191.17 ff.).

⁹ *Commentary on Romans* 1.7 (Lommatzsch [n. 4] 6.30–1).

¹⁰ *On First Principles* 2.7.3.76–81 (SC 252.330); *Homilies on Luke* 24.1 (SC 87.324); *Commentary on Matthew* 40 (GCS 38.78.13–17).

¹¹ *Homilies on Luke* 1.4 (SC 87.104–6). Judas, however, was an exception.

¹² *Commentary on Matthew* fr. 288 (GCS 41.1.28); *Commentary on John* 13.25.153 (SC 222.114); *Homilies on Luke* 3.4 (SC 87.124), where Judas is also mentioned as someone who stands outside the circle of Jesus' disciples, because he did not see the greatness of his divinity.

¹³ *Against Celsus* 3.68 (SC 136.154–6); cp. 8.47 (SC 150.276–8). In *On First Principles* 2.6.1.43–50 (SC 252.310) he says that the apostles were 'filled with the divine power of Christ'. Yet the divine fire was present in Jesus in one way and in those who participate in him in another (2.6.6.197–218 [SC 252.320–2]).

¹⁴ *Homilies on Jeremiah* 10.1.1–12 (SC 232.396).

apostles. ‘Well then’, Origen says, ‘we have to preserve the teaching of the Church, handed down *per successionis ordinem* from the apostles and which still continues to exist in the churches up to the present day. And that only is to be believed as the truth which in no way conflicts with the tradition of the Church and the apostles.’¹⁵

Now the apostolic tradition is not clearly defined by Origen. In the preface of *On First Principles* he may give a list of the most important articles of faith,¹⁶ but he observes that the apostles took certain doctrines, those namely which they believed to be necessary ones, and delivered them in the plainest terms to all believers, but the consequences of their statements they left to be investigated by such as should merit the higher gifts of the Spirit, the graces of language, wisdom and knowledge.¹⁷ That is to say: the apostles have indicated the limit, within which a lot of theological brainwork can be done. Or, to put it in biblical terms: they have laid the foundation, on which others may build further (1 Cor. 3.10–15).¹⁸

It is the question whom Origen has in mind speaking about ‘others’. Who followed the apostles in ‘the unbroken succession’ of faith?¹⁹ Does the *ordo successionis*, the *diadoch*, run via bishops or priests, via the teachers/theologians or via the faithful in general? Sometimes Origen mentions in this respect angels, apostles and *doctores* in the same breath²⁰ and says that the apostles were the first who put aside the literal meaning and revealed the spiritual one and that the *doctores* followed in their footsteps.²¹ In a fragment of a homily on the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10.25–37) the innkeeper is identified with ‘the apostles and their successors, bishops and teach-

¹⁵ *On First Principles* 1 praefatio 2.39–43 (SC 252.78); cp. 4.2.2(9).68–71 (SC 268.300): ‘the rule of the heavenly Church of Jesus Christ according to the succession (*per successionem*) from the apostles.’

¹⁶ *On First Principles* 1 praefatio 4.58–10.187 (SC 252.80–8); cp. *Commentary on John* 20.30(24).269–72 (SC 290.288); 32.16(9).187–93 (SC 385.268–70); *Homilies on Jeremiah* 5.13.14–31 (SC 232.310–12); *Commentary on Matthew* 33 (GCS 38.61.1–11).

¹⁷ *On First Principles* 1 praefatio 3.44–57 (SC 252.78–80).

¹⁸ *Homilies on Genesis* 12.5.64–71 (SC 7bis.306): ‘When you take up a book of the Scriptures, you may begin even from your own understanding to bring forth some meaning, and in accordance with those things which you have learned in the Church, you too attempt to drink from the fountain of your own abilities.’

¹⁹ *Homilies on Genesis* 2.6.56 (SC 7bis.110).

²⁰ *Commentary on John* 32.10(7).122 (SC 385.240); *Homilies on Numbers* 11.4.1.278–82 (SC 442.34); 2.304–14 (36–8); *Homilies on Isaiah* 6.3 (GCS 33.273.10).

²¹ *Homilies on Joshua* 20.5 (SC 71.422).

ers, or their angels.' But the authorship of this passage is uncertain.²² Referring to the story of the washing of the feet he says that 1 Cor. 12.28 shows that God has put the teachers in the Church in order of ranking (directly) after the apostles and the prophets.²³ In the so-called *Regula magistri* from the sixth century this scriptural passage is explained from a historical perspective and the order has been adapted: the prophets stand for the Old Testament preaching, the apostles for the preaching of the New Testament and the teachers are their legitimate successors in the present Church.²⁴ It is striking that in the cited passages Origen mentions more often the teachers in relation to the apostles than the bishops, although bishops may also be teachers. But Vogt and others show that Origen does not see the bishops as the successors of the apostles, nor did Ignatius.²⁵ With this Origen is in agreement with Clement of Alexandria, for whom the apostolic succession runs via the teachers who instructed the apostolic doctrine.²⁶

But the final word has not been said yet. On other occasions it is a matter of Jesus, the apostles and their disciples²⁷ or of the apostles and those who in the second place were sent.²⁸ And sometimes—even more in general—of the apostles and their likes,²⁹ 'priests according to the great High Priest' (Heb. 4.14).³⁰ And Origen remarks: 'Those who are like the apostles or something less, may be from a

²² *Homilies on Luke* fr. 71 (= fr. 168 Rauer) (SC 87.520). Cp. E. Molland, 'Le développement de l'idée de succession apostolique', *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 34 1954 1–29 (esp. 15). On the problems about the authenticity see H. J. Vogt, *Das Kirchenverständnis des Origenes* (Bonner Beiträge zur Kirchengeschichte 4; Cologne and Vienna 1974) 22–3.

²³ *Commentary on John* 32.10(7).122 (SC 385.240).

²⁴ See K. S. Frank, 'Vita apostolica als Lebensnorm in der Alten Kirche', *Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift* 8 1979 106–20 (esp. 116).

²⁵ Vogt (n. 22) 9–10; see also 58–70 about 'Die Lehrer'. Cp. G. Bardy, *La Théologie de l'Église de saint Irénée au concile de Nicée* (Unam Sanctam 14; Paris 1947) 164: '(Origène) n'a pas, comme saint Irénée une théorie de l'épiscopat et de la succession apostolique . . . ; il semble faire dépendre la validité de l'ordination de la sainteté du candidat et l'exercice même des fonctions épiscopales de la vertu actuelle de l'évêque, de sorte qu'à tout instant un chef d'Église pourrait être exposé à perdre ses pouvoirs s'il venait à pécher.'

²⁶ Clement of Alexandria *Stromateis* 1.1.11.3–12.1 (GCS 15.9.4–12); 6.7.61.3 (462.28–30); 7.12.77.4 (17.55.8–11); see Molland (n. 22) 14.

²⁷ *Homilies on Leviticus* 7.5.37–46 (SC 286.336–8).

²⁸ *Commentary on the Song of Songs* 3.11.12 (SC 376.602).

²⁹ *Commentary on Matthew* 15.29 (GCS 40.441.19–20).

³⁰ *On Prayer* 28.9 (GCS 3.381.2).

material viewpoint poor like they were, but spiritually they are rich.³¹ It appears that the *ordo successionis* is not tied to the bishops, nor exclusively to the teachers.³² Who else then are the bearers of the apostolic tradition? With reference to John 13.20, 'In very truth I tell you, he who receives any messenger of mine receives me . . .', Origen says that *everybody* can be an apostle. 'Now also, every time the Saviour sends someone for the salvation of men, the messenger is an apostle of Jesus Christ.'³³ So Origen points for example to the Samaritan woman (John 4.1–42), whom he calls a (female) apostle.³⁴

First of all it is a matter of preaching the Gospel, but the life of the apostles also deserves to be imitated, since for Origen doctrine and life are inextricably bound together.³⁵ Several times Origen refers to the saying of Paul: 'Follow my example as I follow Christ's' (1 Cor. 11.1; cp. 4.16).³⁶ These words of the apostle imply that finally it is always the imitation of Christ (or God) that matters. Nevertheless also the life of those who really have imitated Christ can be made into a standard. In a homily on Ezekiel he says: 'The acts of the apostles are described and we know the deeds of the prophets from the Holy Scriptures. That example is strong, that attitude is solid and he who wishes to follow it goes safely.'³⁷ In the *Commentary on Matthew* he also refers to the book of Acts, when it is about the desire to achieve the perfection of Christ: 'When somebody wants to be convinced by Holy Scripture that something like that is possible [namely to achieve the perfection of Christ], then he must lis-

³¹ *Commentary on Matthew* 15.17 (GCS 40.398.4–8).

³² Otherwise Molland (n. 22) 15–16, who concludes: 'C'est-à-dire, la vraie succession à partir des apôtres, c'est la succession des docteurs spirituels . . .'

³³ *Commentary on John* 32.17(10).204 (SC 385.274). Erroneously Molland (n. 22) 11–12 says: 'Le titre *apostolos* n'était bientôt employé que dans le sens restreint et fut le titre d'honneur réservé pour les douze et pour saint Paul.' Origen is an exception anyway.

³⁴ *Commentary on John* 13.28.169 (SC 222.126); 30.179 (132); cp. Phebe (Rom. 16.1–2), *quae est in ministerio ecclesiae* (*Commentary on Romans* 10.17 [Lommatzsch (n. 4) 7.428–9]).

³⁵ *Homilies on Luke* 37.4 (SC 87.438–40); cp. *Commentary on Matthew* 15.24 (GCS 40.421.3–20; 422.5–10).

³⁶ *Homilies on Ps. 39 (38)* 2.1.39–44 (SC 411.372); *Commentary on Ephesians* 19.50–3 (*Journal of Theological Studies* 3 1902 419); *Homilies on Judges* 1.3.27–47 (SC 389.64); *Commentary on Matthew* 16.1 (GCS 40.462.8–12); *Commentary on Matthew* 73 (GCS 38.174.7–11); *Commentary on Lamentations* fr. 116 (GCS 6.277.15–18); *Commentary on John* 28.4.25 (SC 385.70).

³⁷ *Homilies on Ezekiel* 7.3.65–8 (SC 352.258).

ten to what is told by Luke in the Acts of the apostles about those who by the power which worked in the apostles were inspired to believe and to live perfectly according to the words of Jesus. It is written: "All whose faith had drawn them together held everything in common" [Acts 2.44] etc.' And a bit later that they were united in heart and soul (Acts 4.32).³⁸ He concludes from that that those become perfect who sell their possessions and give to the poor (cp. Matt. 19.21). But also those who in another way throw off the love of the world and give up their desires, fear, passion and wrath. Those are no longer earthly, but become heavenly, like Christ is heavenly. And it appears that the apostles and their likes realize it.³⁹ Because 'from the beginning this doctrine of Jesus had great influence upon his hearers, teaching them to despise the life led by the multitude, and to seek earnestly to live a life like that of God', he says in his apology against Celsus.⁴⁰

About the unanimity he remarks that in the Church of his days there are different opinions, but that that was not the same with the apostles: they were unanimous.⁴¹ That does not exclude that (also among the apostles) may exist different ways of thinking. Although Jesus is One, he has several aspects (*epinoiai*) and those who saw him, did not see him all in the same way. That has to do with their comprehension and their relationship with Jesus. Thus there was among the apostles a difference between Peter, James and John, who saw on the mountain Jesus' glory, and the other apostles.⁴² He also observes that Peter has another approach to the cross than Paul. Peter says that Christ has left an example (1 Pet. 2.21). For him Christ is especially a model. Paul, however, says that Christ on the cross has defeated the Devil (Gal. 6.14). According to Origen both interpretations are legitimate.⁴³

Furthermore we read about the imitation of the apostles: 'Let us be the least of all and say with our deeds and attitude: "For it seems

³⁸ *Commentary on Matthew* 15.15 (GCS 40.391.23–392.29).

³⁹ *Ib.* 15.18 (GCS 40.401.28–403.6); cp. 15 (395.4–7).

⁴⁰ *Against Celsus* 2.45 (SC 132.388).

⁴¹ *Commentary on Matthew* 35 (GCS 38.67.32–68.10); cp. *Homilies on Leviticus* 4.4.11–38 (SC 286.170–2); *Homilies on Exodus* 9.3.62–4 (SC 321.290).

⁴² *Against Celsus* 2.64.1–14 (SC 132.434); cp. *Homilies on Genesis* 1.7.57–60 (SC 7bis.44); 4.5.35–43 (156).

⁴³ *Homilies on Joshua* 8.3 (SC 71.224); also in *Homilies on Numbers* 2.2.2–3 (SC 415.62–4) he goes into the differences between Paul and Peter.

to me God has made us apostles the most abject of mankind" [1 Cor. 4.9]. And even when I am not an apostle, it is possible to be the least, so that God, who "causes the clouds to ascend from the ends of the earth" [Ps. 134(135).7] causes me to ascend.⁴⁴ The point is to imitate the life of the apostles and to be 'a cloud', i.e. a messenger of God's truth. It involves, however, often suffering for the ambassadors of the Word, both for the prophets and the apostles and for us who want to imitate them.⁴⁵ If the apostles, in spite of their prayers, did not escape the persecutions, should not the same go for us, who are inferior to them?⁴⁶ The difference between the original apostles and those who as messengers of the Gospel imitate them, is that the former were sent to the Gentiles or to the circumcised (Gal. 2.9), i.e. 'to many' and the present apostles sometimes only to one person.⁴⁷

We come across this surprising distinction between *one* or *many* also in another context. In Matt. 16.18 Peter, after he has made his confession, is called by Jesus a rock, according to Origen from the spiritual Rock (1 Cor. 10.4), which is the Lord himself.⁴⁸ Because Christ is the Rock, we as his imitators can also be called rocks and on each such a rock the ecclesiastical doctrine and corresponding way of life are built.⁴⁹ For the Church is present in every perfect person. And when Jesus says to Peter: 'You are Peter and on this *petra* I will build my Church', we may conclude from it that 'all those whom the gates of death shall not conquer, who have in themselves a work called "rock", are also rocks.'⁵⁰

In addition to a rock, a *petra*, he identifies the actual imitators of Christ also with Peter himself: 'When we just like Peter have said "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" . . . and become

⁴⁴ *Homilies on Jeremiah* 8.5.16–22 (SC 232.366).

⁴⁵ Ib. 14.14.1–69 (SC 238.94–100); cp. *Exhortation to martyrdom* 34 (GCS 2.30.10 ff.).

⁴⁶ *On Prayer* 29.4 (GCS 3.383.10–24).

⁴⁷ *Commentary on John* 32.17(10).204–13 (SC 385.274–6).

⁴⁸ *Commentary on Matthew* 139 (GCS 38.287.7–15); *Commentary on Matthew* fr. 345 2.3–4 (GCS 41.1.149). Cp. *Commentary on Matthew* 12.11 (GCS 40.88.15–29) for other examples of paronomasia.

⁴⁹ For the *vita apostolica* as a standard for life see Frank (n. 24).

⁵⁰ *Commentary on Matthew* 12.10 (GCS 40.86.1–12); 11 (88.15–21); *Commentary on Matthew* 139 (38.287.7–26). Although Origen in the last quotation mentions especially the apostles and prophets, it is in general about 'all who have a work called "rock"'.

Peter, also to us could be said by the Word of God: "You are Peter" etc.⁵¹ The Church is not exclusively built on Peter, but also on these Peters.⁵² In a polemic passage Origen addresses himself to those who assign an exclusive position to Peter: 'But if you suppose that upon that one Peter only the whole Church is built by God, what would you say about John the son of thunder [Mark 3.17] or each one of the apostles? Shall we otherwise dare to say that against Peter in particular the gates of death shall not prevail, but that they shall prevail against the other apostles and the perfect?'⁵³ Therefore it is said not only to the apostle Peter, but also to all other Peters: 'I will give you the keys of the Kingdom.'⁵⁴ Origen, however, finds that in the Gospel according to Matthew twice is spoken about binding and loosing, viz. in Matt. 16.19 and 18.18. In the former case Peter is the addressee, in the second case the circle of addressees is much wider. Moreover he finds that Jesus speaks to Peter about binding and loosing 'in heavens' (plural), but otherwise about binding 'in heaven'.⁵⁵ And that makes a difference: the better, the more perfect someone is, he binds or looses in more heavens. But when someone passes judgement unrighteously (whether or not officially), it is not binding or loosing.⁵⁶ He says it in particular to the bishops, who monopolize the power of the keys.⁵⁷

We go back to the question who according to Origen are the bearers of the apostolic tradition. Who holds the office of Peter and who has the power of keys? It appears that for Origen there is no essential difference between the clergy and the laity or between the

⁵¹ *Commentary on Matthew* 12.10 (GCS 40.85.25–86.1); cp. 14 (98.6–10); *Against Celsus* 6.77.35–42 (SC 147.372–4).

⁵² R. B. Eno, 'Origen and the Church of Rome', *American Ecclesiastical Review* 167 (1973) 41–50 (esp. 46–8).

⁵³ *Commentary on Matthew* 12.11 (GCS 40.86.15–25). See J. Ludwig, *Die Primatworte Mt.16,18.19 in der altkirchlichen Exegese* (Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen 19.4; Münster 1952) 41; Eno (n. 52) 49; B. Schultze, 'Origenes über Bekenntnis und Fall des Petrus', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 40 (1974) 286–313 (esp. 291 n. 3).

⁵⁴ *Commentary on Matthew* 12.14 (GCS 40.96.6–10).

⁵⁵ *Ib.* 13.31 (268.26–271.9).

⁵⁶ *Ib.* 12.14 (98.14–28; 100.18–26).

⁵⁷ *Ib.* 12.14 (98.28–99.17). Origen says in *Homilies on Judges* 2.5.22–7 (SC 389.90) that God binds sinners not only through the apostles, but also through those who are in charge of the Church. See about Origen as 'einer der hervorragendsten Busstheologen der alten Kirche' H. Freiherr von Campenhausen, *Kirchliches Amt und geistliche Vollmacht in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Beiträge zur Historischen Theologie 14; Tübingen 1963²) 284–8.

apostles and the perfect faithful after them. As the faithful can revert to sin, the example of Judas shows that apostles also can lose their apostleship.⁵⁸ Judas, too, cured patients like the other apostles, when he belonged to 'the cavalry of salvation', but later he belonged to the cavalry of the Devil.⁵⁹ And 'when he was a servant of sin, he was no longer servant of the Word of God, nor apostle of Jesus.'⁶⁰

For Origen the decisive factor is the degree of a person's perfection and to what extent someone really is an imitator of Christ.⁶¹ In general the apostles take first place, although Peter (even he!) once nearly dropped out of the sacred rank of the apostles⁶² and Judas did completely. Subsequently belong to the perfect who make up the true Church those who build upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2.20), Jesus Christ, and those who instruct in the Church hand over this foundation.⁶³ Thus the apostles support those who rest on them, while these for their part together with the apostles support the weaker.⁶⁴ 'Die ganze Kirche steht also in der Apostelnachfolge', Vogt summarizes Origen's view,⁶⁵ but there is an order of perfection, in which the criterion is who stays closest to the foundation. That may be the foundation of the doctrine of the apostles or the foundation Christ.⁶⁶ Holiness and perfection are not given with the office, but exist only in relation to Christ.⁶⁷ Those who are perfect carry on the apostolic tradition by word and action and they are qualified to bind and to loose. And in them Origen sees the *aetas apostolica* still kindle up.

⁵⁸ *Commentary on Romans* 1.2 (Lommatzsch [n. 4] 6.14–16), where Origen mentions among others apostles, prophets and teachers.

⁵⁹ *Homilies on Exodus* 6.2.8–15 (SC 321.174); cp. *Commentary on Matthew* 78 (GCS 38.187.10–20).

⁶⁰ *Commentary on John* 32.13(8).149–50 (SC 385.252); 32.14.168 (258); 32.18(11).232 (284).

⁶¹ Campenhausen (n. 57) 279.

⁶² *Homilies on Leviticus* 16.7.41–8 (SC 287.294–6). See Schultze (n. 53).

⁶³ *Homilies on Jeremiah* fr. 12 (GCS 6.203.17–18).

⁶⁴ *Commentary on John* 10.39(23).268 (SC 157.546–8).

⁶⁵ Vogt (n. 22) 24; Frank (n. 24) 109–10.

⁶⁶ *Homilies on Joshua* 9.1 (SC 71.244).

⁶⁷ *Homilies on Jeremiah* 11.3.16–46 (SC 232.420–2). See my *Mysterium Ecclesiae: Images of the Church and Its Members in Origen* (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 156; Louvain 2001) 192–3, 551, 592–3, 670 et al.

THE PARACLETE MANI AS THE APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE ORIGINS OF A NEW CHURCH

Johannes van Oort

This contribution consists of three parts, all of which are indicated in the title: (a) the origins of a new Church; (b) Mani as the Apostle of Jesus Christ; (c) Mani as the Paraclete. Our main focus is on the *Cologne Mani Codex*, a prime source which documents the origins of Mani and Manichaeism.

It may be feasible to note that, originally, the allotted title of this paper was 'Mani's imitation'. Although, in view of the theme of our *Aetas apostolica* conference, I readily changed this title, it may still be worth mentioning as being highly indicative. When dealing with Manichaeism, one is inclined to see it as a kind of imitation, and its origins even linked with counterfeit and fraud. There are several historical reasons, however, to challenge this view. In opposition to the 'orthodox' Christians, Mani and his followers did indeed consider themselves to be the *veri Christiani* and, accordingly, their Church was the *vera ecclesia*. But they did not do that on the basis of any shining example. Nowhere in their writings do they speak of an *aetas apostolica* in the more or less generally accepted sense: i.e., the age of the first Christian community in Jerusalem under the guidance of the twelve apostles. Consequently, such a period was not imitated: for the simple reason that Mani and the Manichaeans all repudiated Luke's Acts of the Apostles; and thus easily dismissed the orthodox Christian concept of an idealized *ecclesia primitiva*. What Mani brought about, however, was the proclamation of a new revelation: he himself was the new Prophet; the new Apostle of Jesus Christ; the new incarnation of the Paraclete. On the basis of this revelation, he founded a new Christian Church (and even a world religion) of his own. A discussion of the origins of his Church, which for several reasons can be designated as its *aetas manichaica*, may shed light on the general theme of this conference.

1. *The origins of a new Church*

We now have new and crucial information about the origins of Mani's Church thanks to the discovery of a Greek Manichaean document, the *Cologne Mani Codex* or *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis* (CMC). This puts both Mani's descent and the genesis of his Church into a radically different perspective.

But let me, before elaborating on this document, first briefly introduce Mani.¹ The 'prophet from the land of Babylon' Mani (or, according to his Syriac name, M n ajj , i.e., the living Mani) was born on 14 April 216 CE near the southern Mesopotamian town of Seleucia-Ctesiphon on the Tigris. His father's name was Patt g or Patt g (Greek: Παττικός; Latin: Patticius; Arabic: Futtuq). In all probability, the name of his mother was Maryam or Miryam. After receiving several revelations, Mani started his missionary journeys inside and even outside the Persian empire in 240, at first accompanied only by his father and two other members of the Jewish-Christian sect in which he was reared. While missionaries were sent out and even passed beyond the Persian-Roman frontiers, Mani himself journeyed in 241 by boat to India and up the Indus valley to Turan, where he won over the Turan king for himself. Soon after the accession of Shapur I (242–73) as the sole King of Kings of the Persian Empire, Mani seems to have delivered to him his only Middle Persian writing, the *Sh buhrag n*. His admittance into Shapur's entourage (*comitatus*) accorded him unique opportunities to propagate his new prophecy. After Shapur's death, Mani also found a willing ear with Hormizd (Ohrmazd, 272–3). At the beginning of the second year of the reign of Bahr m I (274–6/7), however, this benevolent attitude changed: Kard r, the head of the Zoroastrian Magi began to persuade the Great King to take action against the new prophet. Mani was summoned before Bahr m, duly accused, put in chains, and tortured. After 26 days in prison he died: in all probability on 26.2.277.

¹ For general studies on Mani and Manichaeism, see H.-C. Puech, *Le manichéisme: Son fondateur, sa doctrine* (Paris 1949); F. Decret, *Mani et le manichéisme* (Paris 1974); A. Böhlig, *Die Gnosis*, iii: *Der Manichäismus* (Zürich and Munich 1980); M. Tardieu, *Le manichéisme* (Paris 1981); S. N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China* (Tübingen 1992²); A. Böhlig, 'Manichäismus', *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 22 1992 25–45; J. van Oort, 'Mani' and 'Manichäismus', *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*⁴ 5 2002 731–2 and 732–41.

His religion soon spread from Mesopotamia to the Atlantic in the West and, finally, as far as the Pacific in the East.

The most fundamental document to study the origins of Mani's religion, the *CMC*, was discovered shortly before 1970 in Egypt. It came into the possession of the University of Cologne and hence it received its name. It is probably the smallest parchment codex ever discovered. Its pages measure only 4.5 by 3.5 cm and the writing on them is 3.5 by 2.5 cm. Despite its minute format, Manichaean scribes managed to copy an average of twenty-three lines of Greek majuscules onto each page. The first preliminary report on the *CMC* was presented by Albert Henrichs and Ludwig Koenen in a now famous 1970 issue of the *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*.² From then onwards, these scholars produced their *editio princeps*.³ A critical edition of the first and most legible part of the *CMC* appeared in the year 1988 as *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex*, in 1994 supplemented by the edition of the remaining part.⁴ Ever since the scholarly discussion on the text and interpretation of the *CMC* is going on⁵ and a definitive scholarly edition has not yet appeared.⁶

The *CMC* is written in Greek and has as its running title Περί τῆς γέννης τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ: 'On the Genesis of His Body'. When

² A. Henrichs and L. Koenen, 'Ein griechischer Mani-Codex (P. Colon. inv. nr. 4780)', *ZPE* 5 1970 97–216 [= 'Vorbericht'].

³ *Editio princeps* of *CMC* 1–72.7 in *ZPE* 19 1975 1–85 (with extensive commentary); of *CMC* 72.8–99.9 in *ZPE* 32 1978 87–199 (with very extensive commentary); of *CMC* 99.10–120 in *ZPE* 44 1981 201–318 (with very extensive commentary); of *CMC* 121–192 in *ZPE* 48 1982 1–59.

⁴ L. Koenen and C. Römer, *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex: Über das Werden seines Leibes: Kritische Edition aufgrund der von A. Henrichs und L. Koenen besorgten Erstedition* (Opladen 1988); C. E. Römer, *Manis frühe Missionsreisen nach der Kölner Maniographie: Textkritischer Kommentar und Erläuterungen zu p. 121–p. 192 des Kölner Mani-Kodex* (Opladen 1994) (with ample commentary). Moreover, a diplomatic text has been edited by L. Koenen and C. Römer, *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex: Abbildungen und diplomatischer Text* (Bonn 1985).

⁵ See the studies listed in the *Manichaean Studies Newsletter (MSN)*, now annually edited on behalf of the *International Association of Manichaean Studies (IAMS)* by Gunner Mikkelsen (Cambridge). For the years 1969 through 1994, see J. van Oort, 'The Study of the Cologne Mani Codex, 1969–1994', *MSN* 13 1996 22–30. An important research tool is L. Cirillo, *Concordanze del Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis* (Bologna 2001) (a considerably improved edition of L. Cirillo, A. Concolino Mancini, A. Roselli, *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis: Concordanze* [Cosenza 1985]).

⁶ Substantial parts in English translation will appear in S. N. C. Lieu's and I. Gardner's anthology of Manichaean texts, scheduled to be published by Cambridge University Press in 2003. Rather recently, a translation by E. Bradshaw Aitkin of some parts has been included in R. Valantasis (ed.), *Religions of Late Antiquity in Practice* (Princeton Readings in Religions; Princeton and Oxford 2000) 161–76.

we consider the meaning of the title, it is important to know that two main views prevail. If Mani's physical body is meant, then the Greek word γέννα can be translated as 'procreation'.⁷ Alternatively, the title of the *CMC* could well be an echo of the Pauline elements so evident in Manichaeism. Just as the apostle Paul described in his letters the Church as the body of Christ, so here the (nascent) Manichaean Church (ἐκκλησία) is described as the body of Mani.⁸ In this way, the codex may even have constituted the first part of a history of the early Manichaean Church.⁹ It is difficult to decide between these two viewpoints: it could well be that both are quite correct.¹⁰ In any case, the 192 more or less extant pages of the codex have, as their main theme, the story of the young Mani's sojourn among 'baptists' and his earliest missionary journeys after his final break with the sect at the age of twenty-four. These missionary travels during the *aetas manichaica* resulted in the establishment of Mani's *ecclesia primitiva*.

The *CMC* is not the work of a single author, but comprises excerpts from the testimonies of Mani's closest disciples and early followers. Just as the Evangelists gave their account of the life and work of Jesus—or better: their account of Jesus' deeds and words (cf. Acts 1.1)—so here these earliest witnesses give their account of Mani's

⁷ See e.g. L. Koenen, 'How Dualistic is Mani's Dualism?', in: L. Cirillo (ed.), *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis: Atti del Secondo Simposio Internazionale . . .* (Cosenza 1990) 19 ff.

⁸ Cf. L. Koenen, 'Das Datum der Offenbarung und Geburt Manis', *ZPE* 8 1971 250; 'Augustine and Manichaeism in Light of the Cologne Mani Codex', *Illinois Classical Studies* 3 1978 164–6. It should be remarked, however, that in his later publications Koenen no longer maintained this view.

⁹ One of the Coptic Manichaean codices from Medinet Madi, the greatest part of which is now unfortunately lost, appeared to show the same literary structure as the *CMC* and perhaps was part of the same work. On the contents of this codex, see C. Schmidt and H. J. Polotsky, 'Ein Mani-Fund in Ägypten: Originalschriften des Mani und seiner Schüler', *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Philosophisch-historische Klasse* 1933 27–30; on its fate and remains, J. M. Robinson, 'The Fate of the Manichaean Codices of Medinet Madi, 1929–1989', in G. Wiebner and H.-J. Klimkeit (eds.), *Studia Manichaica* (Wiesbaden 1992) 51–5.

¹⁰ Cf. K. Rudolph, 'Die Bedeutung des Kölner Mani-Codex für die Manichäismuskforschung: Vorläufige Anmerkungen', in *Mélanges d'histoire des religions offerts à Henri-Charles Puech* (Paris 1974) 471 (updated repr. in id., *Gnosis und Spätantike Religionsgeschichte: Gesammelte Aufsätze* [Leiden, New York and Boston 1996] 668): 'Beides läßt sich natürlich schwer trennen, da die irdische Manifestation Manis über seinen Tod hinaus in seiner Gemeinde fortlebt'; Bradshaw Aitkin (n. 6) 162: 'It [sc. the title 'Concerning the Origin of His Body'] refers both to the story of Mani's existence and to the origin of the religious movement he founded'.

deeds and words. And just as one Gospel harmony was made from several Gospels as, for instance, in the case of the *Diatessaron* of Tatian, so here we have a compilation and redaction of the earliest testimonies about Mani. Among the names of the Manichaean witnesses which have been preserved are Salmaios the Ascetic, Baraies the Teacher, a certain Timotheos, Abjesous the Teacher, Innaios the brother of Zabed, a certain Za[cheas?], Koustaios the Son of the Treasure of Life, and Ana the Brother of Zabed the Disciple.¹¹ From the number of these different authors,¹² it must be concluded that Mani often spoke at length about himself and his supernatural experiences in the presence of his closest disciples. Thus, these earliest disciples functioned as trustworthy witnesses of Mani's deeds and words during the formative period of his Church.

It is a veritable eye-opener to analyse the contents of the *CMC* and detect the essentials of the *aetas manichaica*. We cannot enter into all the details here, but some of the most important facts can be mentioned. First, we see that Mani grew up among 'baptists' (βαπτιστάι: *CMC* 5.11; 6.8; 7.6; 9.15; etc.). It is stated in the codex that they performed daily ablutions on themselves and their food (*CMC* 80.1–3; 80.23–83.13; 88.13–15). Besides, their religion is referred to as the Law (Νόμος), which implies that the sect of the baptists lived in conformity with the Jewish Law (e.g., *CMC* 20.9–11; 87.16–18; 89.11–13). Moreover, those baptists appealed to the traditions of the Fathers (πατέρες, e.g. *CMC* 87.2–7; 91.4–9). All these typical features refer to Jewish traditions. Another indication of the Jewish roots of the sect is the fact that its members observed the Rest of the Hands (ἀνάπαυσις τῶν χειρῶν: *CMC* 102.15), which seems to refer to the observance of the Jewish Sabbath.¹³ Moreover, in a passage from

¹¹ On their often typical Jewish names, see J. Tubach, 'Die Namen von Manis Jüngern und ihre Herkunft', in L. Cirillo and A. Van Tongerloo (eds.), *Atti del Terzo Congresso Internazionale di Studi Manicheismo e Oriente Cristiano Antico*, Arcavacata di Rende-Amantea, 31 agosto – 5 settembre 1993 (Louvain and Naples 1997) 375–93.

¹² It seems plausible that several of the testimonies existed in a written form; see A. Henrichs, 'Literary Criticism of the Cologne Mani Codex', in B. Layton (ed.), *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: Proceedings of the International Conference on Gnosticism at Yale, New Haven, Connecticut, March 28–31, 1978*, ii: *Sethian Gnosticism* (Leiden etc. 1981) 724–33; and cf. e.g. Koenen and Römer 1988 (n. 4) xvi and 17 n. 2.

¹³ It probably is this custom which returns in Manichaeism as 'the seal of the hands' of the Manichaean Elect, i.e., their abstinence to perform any task (e.g. tilling the soil, harvesting, even bathing) that might hurt the particles of divine light enclosed in evil matter.

Baraies, one of the witnesses from whose testimonies the editor¹⁴ of the *CMC* compiled his work, no less than five apocalyptic writings are quoted: an Apocalypse of Adam; an Apocalypse of Sethel; one of Enos; one of Sem; and one of Enoch (*CMC* 48.16–60.7). Whatever the precise origin and role of these previously unknown scriptures, their contents clearly refer to Jewish apocalyptic traditions.¹⁵ Evidently, the essential features of the advent of Mani and his Church originated in a Jewish milieu.

The sectarians of the *CMC* acknowledged a certain Alchasaïos (Ἀλχασαῖος, mentioned in *CMC* 94.10,23; 95.13; 96.13,19; 97.3,13,15) as the founder of their rule. This important detail supports the remark of the tenth-century Muslim writer al-Nadīm that the sect of the baptists (‘Mughtasilah’) was instituted by a certain al-ṣāḥib, an alleged Jewish-Christian prophet who is said to have lived at the beginning of the second century. They were definitely (a certain branch of the) Elchasaites.¹⁷ Thus it was not merely in a Jewish, but in a Jewish-Christian¹⁸ community that Mani was reared. Because of his Jewish descent, we may suppose that, like any Jewish boy, he was circumcised,¹⁹ and, from the *CMC*, we know that he lived in accordance with the Mosaic Law.

Against this Law, however, the young Mani protested and so he became a Gnostic.²⁰ In the *CMC*, the break with the religion of his

¹⁴ Or editors?

¹⁵ For an ample and excellent analysis see: J. C. Reeves, *Heralds of that Good Realm: Syro-Mesopotamian Gnosis and Jewish Traditions* (Leiden, New York, and Boston 1996).

¹⁶ Cf. B. Dodge’s English translation of al-Nadīm’s *Fihrist* or *Catalogue*, written c. 988–9 in Baghdad: *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm: A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture*, ii (New York and London 1970) 811. The frequent reference to ‘Baptists’ in the *CMC* proves the reliability of Ibn al-Nadīm’s testimony that Mani grew up among Mughtasilah, ‘those who wash themselves’. Cf. *ibid.* 773 ff.

¹⁷ On both Alchasaïos (Elchasaï, Elkesai, Elxaios, Elxai) and these Jewish-Christian Baptists, see e.g. J. van Oort, ‘Elkesaiten’, *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*⁴ 2 1999 1227–8 (with bibl.).

¹⁸ The Christian inspiration of the Baptists can be perceived in e.g. *CMC* 91.1–11 (they are told to refer to the commandments of the Saviour, i.e., Jesus). Cf. e.g. *CMC* 79.20–1 and 80.11–12.

¹⁹ G. Quispel, ‘Mani the Apostle of Jesus Christ’ (1972), in *id.*, *Gnostic Studies* (Istanbul 1975) 232; cf. *id.*, ‘Hermes Trismegistus and the Origins of Gnosticism’ (1992), revised version in R. van den Broek and C. van Heertum, *From Poimandres to Jacob Böhme: Gnosis, Hermetism and the Christian Tradition* (Amsterdam 2000) 160.

²⁰ In this respect, one might compare him with the ‘Gnostic’ Marcion, who had a considerable influence upon Mani. According to A. von Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott* (Leipzig 1924² = Darmstadt 1996) 22, Marcion’s reac-

youth is told vividly and even dramatically. Here we also find what kind of experience led him to become the founder of a new Gnostic religion. The codex tells us that, since his early childhood, Mani had come under special divine protection and instruction: angels and 'powers of holiness' were entrusted with his safekeeping and he also received visions and signs (*CMC* 1 ff.).²¹ One of these divine messengers turned out to be Mani's special protector. Throughout the whole of the *CMC*, he is described as his Syzygos (Σύζυγος; *CMC* 18.15 etc.),²² i.e., his Twin, Companion or guardian angel.²³ A special revelation by this heavenly Twin was imparted to Mani at the completion of his 24th year (*CMC* 17.8 ff.; 73.5–6). The impact of this revelation eventually led to Mani's break with the sect of his youth.

In the codex we find that, after his departure, Mani was followed by two members of the sect: Simeon and Abizachias (*CMC* 106.16 ff.). They first travelled to Ctesiphon where Mani's father Pattikios joined their company (*CMC* 111 ff.); soon afterwards Mani's first missionary journeys in and even outside the immense Persian Empire appear to have begun (*CMC* 121 ff.).²⁴ In order to establish his Church, Mani also went to India (*CMC* 140 ff.).²⁵ A striking feature of all these early missionary accounts is that nearly everywhere—even in India—the new prophet and apostle of Jesus Christ could start his work in congregations (συναγωγαί) of Jewish-Christian Baptists and, in all probability, even in other Jewish synagogues (*CMC* 137–40).²⁶

Apart from these essential features of the *aetas manichaica*, the *CMC*

tion against Judaism and its Bible sprang from a resentment which stemmed from his youth.

²¹ In the apocalyptic Jewish milieu in which Mani was brought up, such experiences were quite common. See I. Gruenwald, 'Manichaeism and Judaism in Light of the *Cologne Mani Codex*', *ZPE* 50 1983 29–45; cf. B. Visotsky, 'Rabbinic Randglossen to the *Cologne Mani Codex*', *ZPE* 52 1983 295–300.

²² Sometimes (*CMC* 13.2; 101.14 and probably—cf. *ZPE* 58 1985 53–133.12) also called the σύζυξ.

²³ The Syzygos is the figure which in Manichaean teaching is described as an emanation of the Nous or divine intellect (which in turn is an emanation of Jesus the Splendour); see below.

²⁴ Römer 1994 (n. 4).

²⁵ Cf. e.g. *Kephalaia* (ed. H. J. Polotsky and A. Böhlig [Stuttgart 1940]) 15.24–7; 184.23–185.15.

²⁶ Cf. J. M. and S. N. C. Lieu, 'Mani and the Magians (?)—*CMC* 137–140' (1991), repr. in S. N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in Mesopotamia and the Roman East*, Leiden, New York, and Cologne 1994, 1–21, and my additional comments in 'New Directions in Manichaean Research', *Le Muséon* 106 1993 245–6. Cf. also Römer 1994 (n. 4) 95–7.

does not tell us very much about the origins of Mani's Church. From the fragmentarily preserved page 164 we may infer that the story of Mani's encounter with Shapur I on 9 April 243 is related. The extant part of page 165 mentions the name of Adda(s). From many other sources,²⁷ we know that, even during his lifetime, Mani sent out several missions headed by his chief disciples: Add or Addai (the same person Augustine calls Adimantus)²⁸ went as far as Egypt, as did the missionaries Papos and Thomas;²⁹ Mar Ammo reached Chorasán and the Sogdiana.³⁰ Even before 277, a wide-spread Church had sprung up within and even outside the Persian Empire and, in the centuries which followed, Manichaeism spread as far as Spain and Gaul in the West and the China Sea in the East.³¹

Although Mani failed to make his revelation the official religion of Iran, he succeeded in what he really intended: the establishment of a new world religion or Church.³² The firm interior organization of this Church seems to date from the *aetas manichaica* and, in essence, may even be a creation of the prophet himself. The Church was headed by Mani and later by his deputy (*ἀρχηγός*); immediately following this *arch gos* or *princeps* there were, in the order of three subordinate ranks, the 12 apostles or teachers, the 72 bishops, and the 360 presbyters; the fourth rank was constituted by the Elect, both

²⁷ W. Sundermann, *Mitteliranische manichäische Texte kirchengeschichtlichen Inhalts* (Berlin 1981); 'Studien zur kirchengeschichtlichen Literatur der iranischen Manichäer, I', *Altorientalische Forschungen* 13 1986 40–92; 'Studien zur kirchengeschichtlichen Literatur der iranischen Manichäer, II', *ibid.* 13 1986 239–317; 'Studien zur kirchengeschichtlichen Literatur der iranischen Manichäer, III', *ibid.* 14 1987 41–107.

²⁸ E.g. in his *Contra Adimantum* (CSEL 25.115–190). On Adimantus and *Contra Adimantum*, cf. F. Decret, 'Adimantum Manichei discipulum (Contra-)', *Augustinus-Lexikon*, i (Basel and Stuttgart 1986) 90–4; 'Adimantus', *ibid.* 94–5.

²⁹ Cf. A. Villey, *Alexandre de Lycopolis: Contre la doctrine de Mani* (Paris 1985) 20–2; *Les psaumes des errants: Écrits manichéens du Fayyum* (Paris 1994) 47.

³⁰ Sundermann III (n. 27) 68.

³¹ On the diffusion of Manichaeism (apart from the studies mentioned in n. 1): E. de Stoop, *Essai sur la diffusion du manichéisme dans l'empire romain* (Ghent 1909 = 1987); P. Brown, 'The Diffusion of Manichaeism in the Roman Empire' (1969), repr. in *id.*, *Religion and Society in the Age of Augustine* (London 1972) 94–118; S. N. C. Lieu (with a contribution by D. A. S. Montserrat), 'From Mesopotamia to the Roman East—The Diffusion of Manichaeism in the Eastern Roman Empire', in S. N. C. Lieu 1994 (n. 26) 22–131; *id.*, *Manichaeism in Central Asia and China*, Leiden, Boston, and Cologne 1998.

³² For the designation 'church' in a great variety of texts in Greek, Coptic, and Latin see S. Clackson, E. Hunter, and S. N. C. Lieu in association with M. Vermes, *Dictionary of Manichaean Texts*, i: *Texts from the Roman Empire* (Turnhout 1998) 17, 67, 188, 200. It may be noted, however, that in particular from the Latin texts a very limited choice has been recorded in this *Dictionary*.

men and women; and, finally, the fifth rank consisted of the wide circle of auditors. In order to firmly establish the doctrine of his Church, Mani composed a sevenfold canon of authoritative writings:³³ 1. *The Living* (or *Great Gospel*); 2. *The Treasure of Life*; 3. *The Pragmateia* (or *Treatise* or *Essay*); 4. *The Book of Mysteries* (*Secrets*); 5. *The Book of the Giants*; 6. *The Letters*; 7. *The Psalms* and *Prayers*. All of these writings only survive in fragmentary form. It is owing to the discovery of the *CMC* that we now have a highly significant extract from the first and most important of Mani's writing, i.e., his *Living* or *Great Gospel* (*CMC* 66–8).

2. *Mani as the Apostle of Jesus Christ*

These are, in brief, the outlines of the origin of Mani's Church and its earliest development. One may discover a few parallels between this *aetas manichaica* and the *aetas apostolica* in the ordinary sense, since both are obviously relating to an emerging Church. Yet the *aetas apostolica* of the official Christian Church is not a source (neither of imitation, nor of any inspiration) of the Manichaean *aetas*. On the contrary, Mani created a new Church *ab ovo*: he is the new Apostle of Jesus Christ; he is also the promised Paraclete *in persona*.

Both these aspects require further analysis. From the *CMC*, it is evident that Mani assumed the title 'Apostle of Jesus Christ'. According to the first (?) *CMC*-fragment,³⁴ the opening words of the *Living Gospel*, which we now have in Greek,³⁵ run as follows:

I, Mani,³⁶
Apostle of Jesus Christ,
through the will of God, the Father of Truth. . . .³⁷

³³ Apart from his *Sh buhrag n* (see above), Mani wrote all his writings in his East Aramaic (Syriac) mother tongue and used his own variant of the Palmyrene script.

³⁴ In my view it still has to be determined whether the immediately following fragments (*CMC* 68–70) belong to the *Gospel* or to some other writing(s) of Mani.

³⁵ For other testimonies, see A. Adam, *Texte zum Manichäismus* (Berlin 1969²) 1–2 and 111; cf. H.-C. Puech, 'Das Evangelium des Mani', in W. Schneemelcher (ed.), *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, i (Tübingen 1990⁶) 320–7, esp. 323–7.

³⁶ *Λιττ. Μαννιχαίος*; on the variant spellings of the name and its significance, cf. J. van Oort, 'Mani and Manichaeism in Augustine's *De haeresibus*: An Analysis of *haer.* 46,1', in: R. E. Emmerick et al. (eds.), *Studia Manichaica*, iv: *Internationaler Kongress zum Manichäismus, Berlin, 14.–18. Juli 1997* (Berlin 2000) 451–63, esp. 455–62.

³⁷ *CMC* 66.4–7: 'Εγὼ Μαννιχαίος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολος διὰ θελήματος Θεοῦ Πατρὸς τῆς ἀληθείας.

It is important to note that Mani's Gospel consisted of twenty-two chapters or *logoi*, which were arranged according to the twenty-two letters of the Syriac alphabet.³⁸ Thus, in all likelihood, it started in its original Syriac (East Aramaic) form with the words ܐܢܝ ܡܢܝ, i.e., 'Ani Mani'. On the basis of two fragments from Turfan (M 17 and M 172), we have long known the initial words of the Gospel's prooemium: 'I, Mani, the Apostle (prêstag/fr tag) of Jesus the Friend'.³⁹

Where does the title of 'Apostle' come from and what does it mean? It seems *not* to be fashioned after the example and role of the apostles of Jesus in the New Testament. Actually, the well-known eleven or twelve⁴⁰ apostles do figure in the Manichaean texts.⁴¹ For example, in the 'Psalm of Endurance', one of the 'Psalmoi Sarak t n' in the Manichaean *Psalm-Book*,⁴² we are told that 'all the Apostles endured their pains'.⁴³ In order to illustrate this, the 'apostles' Peter, Andrew, John and James, Thomas, and also Paul are mentioned by name, and reference is also made to their disciples such as Thecla; 'the blessed' Drousiane; Maximilla; and Aristoboula.⁴⁴ But, apart from

³⁸ Cf. Adam (n. 35) 1 and Puech (n. 35) 324. In the Manichaean Psalter (C. R. C. Allberry [ed. and transl.], *A Manichaean Psalm-Book*, ii, *Manichaean Manuscripts of the Chester Beatty Collection*, 2 [Stuttgart 1938] 46) it is stated that the Gospel has 'two and twenty compounds (μίγματα)'. I still do not rule out the possibility that the number of books of Augustine's *De civitate Dei* has some connection with the arrangement of Mani's Gospel in twenty-two parts; see J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study into Augustine's City of God and the Sources of his Doctrine of the Two Cities* (Leiden, Copenhagen and Cologne 1991) 78–81.

³⁹ Cf. Adam (n. 35) 111, with reference to F. W. K. Müller, *Handschriftenreste in Estrangelo-Schrift aus Turfan* (Berlin 1904); Puech (n. 35) 326; Henrichs and Koenen (n. 2) 192 and 196–7; H.-J. Klimkeit, *Gnosis on the Silk Road: Gnostic Texts from Central Asia* (San Francisco 1993) 146.

⁴⁰ As a rule, the Manichaean texts mention the twelve apostles familiar from the New Testament, i.e., the eleven apostles plus Paul. Sometimes the texts (e.g. *Manichaean Psalm-Book*, ed. Allberry [n. 38] 190.30 and 191.1) even explicitly express the concept of 'the dozen (δωδεκάς) of Apostles'; the expression 'Eleven' is found in e.g. *Psalm-Book* 187.13 (cf. 192.21).

⁴¹ See the list of apostles in *Psalm-Book* 142 and 194; cf. S. Richter, *Exegetisch-literarkritische Untersuchungen von Herakleidespsalmen des koptisch-manichäischen Psalmbuches* (Altenberge 1994) 193–219.

⁴² *Psalm-Book* 141.1–143.34. Allberry (n. 38) xxii expressed his doubts about the translation of the Coptic *sarak te*; P. Nagel, 'Die Psalmoi Sarakoton des manichäischen Psalmbuches', *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 62 1967 123–30, demonstrated that its meaning is 'wanderer, pilgrim'. On these Psalms, see now Villey 1994 (n. 29).

⁴³ *Psalm-Book* 142.17.

⁴⁴ *Psalm-Book* 142.18–143.14, which passage from 'the Psalm of Endurance' (141.1–143.34) is concluded by the characteristic remark (143.15–16): 'All the godly

the information on Paul,⁴⁵ everything which is said here about those figures appears to originate from the so-called ‘apocryphal’ Acts of the Apostles.⁴⁶ The well-known New Testament ‘canonical’ *Acta apostolorum* do not play any role in these and other Manichaean texts for the simple reason that they tell us that the Paraclete had already been revealed at Pentecost.⁴⁷

When Mani called himself ‘Apostle of Jesus Christ’, he pre-eminently followed in the footsteps of the apostle Paul. It is this apostle who both in the *CMC* and in other Manichaean writings functions as his example.⁴⁸ The expression ‘I, Mani, Apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God . . .’ is directly reminiscent of the typical beginning of several of the Pauline epistles.⁴⁹ Even all of the *exordia* of Mani’s letters seem to reveal this very same *imitatio Pauli*: the former Manichaean Augustine, who so often turns out to be a trustworthy

[that] there have been, male, female,—all have suffered, down to the Glorious One, the Apostle Mani.’

⁴⁵ *Psalm-Book* 142.31–143.2 and cf. 2 Cor. 11.32–3. A plausible interpretation of the ensuing but rather enigmatic expression in *Psalm-Book* 143.3 in Villey 1995 (n. 29) 229: ‘La formule mystérieuse: “Il laissa la place vacante du Seigneur” . . . , plutôt qu’à un détail conté par les Apocryphes, pourrait bien se référer à l’idée d’une vacance du magistère apostolique entre Paul et Mani.’

⁴⁶ See P. Nagel, ‘Die apokryphen Apostelakten des 2. und 3. Jahrhunderts in der manichäischen Literatur’, in: K.-W. Tröger (ed.), *Gnosis und Neues Testament: Studien aus Religionswissenschaft und Theologie* (Berlin 1973) 149–82; W. Schneemelcher, K. Schäferdiek et al. in W. Schneemelcher (ed.), *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, ii (Tübingen 1997⁶) 71–367; P.-H. Poirier, ‘Les Actes de Thomas et le manichéisme’, *Apocrypha* 9 1998 263–89; cf. id., ‘Une nouvelle hypothèse sur le titre des Psaumes manichéens dits de Thomas’, *Apocrypha* 12 2001 9–27.

⁴⁷ For the Manichaeans’ rejection of Luke’s *Acta apostolorum* for this reason, see e.g. Augustine’s discussion with the Manichaean doctor Felix in *C. Felicem* 1.4–6 (CSEL 25.804–7), esp. 1.5–6 (807). Cf. Augustine’s *De util. cred.* 3.7 (CSEL 25.9.23–10.12); *C. Adim.* 17 (CSEL 25.169.27–170.2); *C. ep. fund.* 5.6 (CSEL 25.198.26–199.9); *C. Faustum* 19.31 and 32.15 (CSEL 25.434.26–535.2; 774.24–775.5).

⁴⁸ On Paul in the *CMC*, see H. D. Betz, ‘Paul in the Mani Biography (Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis)’, in L. Cirillo and A. Roselli (eds.), *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis: Atti del Simposio Internazionale (Rende-Amantea 3–7 settembre 1984)* (Cosenza 1986) 215–34; on Paul and the Manichaeans in general: J. Ries, ‘Saint Paul dans la formation de Mani’, in: J. Ries et al., *Le epistole Paoline nei Manichei, i Donatisti e il primo Agostino* (Rome 1989 = 2000) 7–27; F. Decret, ‘L’utilisation des épîtres de Paul chez les Manichéens d’Afrique’, *ibid.* 29–83 (reprinted in Decret, *Essais sur l’Église manichéenne en Afrique du Nord et à Rome au temps de saint Augustin* [Rome 1995] 55–106). As early as 1958, a definite influence of the apostle Paul on the Manichaeans in Central Asia (in particular as regards their sacred meal) was demonstrated by H.-C. Puech: ‘Saint Paul chez les Manichéens d’Asie Centrale’, reprinted in id., *Sur le manichéisme et autres essais* (Paris 1979) 153–67.

⁴⁹ See 1 Cor. 1.1; 2 Cor. 1.1; Eph. 1.1; cf. Col. 1.1; 2 Tim. 1.10.

witness,⁵⁰ testifies to this,⁵¹ as in all likelihood did the now substantially lost letters of Mani which were discovered in Medinet Madi in 1930.⁵² For many years, we have also had a curious piece of Manichaean art which records Mani's self-designation as being 'the Apostle of Jesus Christ'.⁵³

Although this *imitatio Pauli* is quite clear, in the case of Mani the concept of 'Apostle' should be taken in an even wider sense. It is significant that, in the *CMC*, Paul functions as a link in a long chain of 'Apostles of truth'. On p. 45, the Teacher (διδάσκαλος) Baraies introduces his homiletic⁵⁴ account of a number of these 'Apostles of truth' with these words:

Know, then, brethren, and understand everything which has been written here: concerning the way in which this apostolate (ἀποστολή) was sent in our generation, just as we were taught by him; and also concerning [his] body . . . (some 12 lines scraps and lacuna)

(46) concerning this apostolate (ἀποστολή) of the Spirit, the Paraclete, (so that no one) having turned away (from the community practices)⁵⁵ will say: 'Those alone have written about the rapture of their teacher in order to boast.'

Moreover [Mani wrote?] also concerning the origin of his body . . . and also . . . of that . . . (some 10 lines lacuna and scraps)

(47) he sins.⁵⁶ But let him who is willing hear and attend how each one of the forefathers has made known his own revelation to his own elect,⁵⁷ which he chose and brought together in that generation in

⁵⁰ Cf. J. van Oort, *Mani, Manichaeism and Augustine: The Rediscovery of Manichaeism and Its Influence on Western Christianity* (Tbilisi 2000¹) e.g. 43; *Augustinus' Confessiones: Gnostische en christelijke spiritualiteit in een diepzinnig document* (Turnhout 2002), *passim*.

⁵¹ *C. Faustum* 13.4 (CSEL 25.381.2–5): . . . *apostolum quippe eius se dicit . . . omnes tamen eius epistulae ita exordiantur: Manichaeus apostolus Iesu Christi*; cf. e.g. *De haer.* 46.16 (CCSL 46.318): *Unde seipse in suis literis Iesu Christi apostolum dicit . . .*

⁵² See Schmidt and Polotsky (n. 9) 24–7, esp. 26 on the *exordium* of Mani's (now lost) third letter to Sisinnios.

⁵³ See J. P. de Menasce and A. Guillou, 'Un cachet manichéen de la Bibliothèque Nationale', *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 131 1946 81–4, on the so-called 'seal of Mani' which has been carved in rock crystal and is encircled by a Syriac inscription (in Estrangelo script): 'M n l h d l M h'.

⁵⁴ Note e.g. the typically homiletic address 'brethren' in 45.1; cf. ἀδελφοί in this same extract from Baraies in 61.16 and 63.17.

⁵⁵ Cf. μεταβάλλεσθαι in e.g. *CMC* 46.3 and 85.5.

⁵⁶ Or: 'He (sc. who does not believe that) errs (ἀμαρτάνει)'.

⁵⁷ I.e., elected community.

which he appeared, and wrote down it and passed it on to posterity. He declared about his rapture; and they (i.e., his disciples) preached to the outsiders . . . (some 7 lines scraps and lacuna)

(48) (Thus it could happen that every apostle in each generation) wrote down (his revelation) and made it known (to his disciples) and that afterwards (those disciples) praised and extolled their teachers and the truth and hope which was revealed to them. So, then, each one, according to the period and course of his apostolate (ἀποστολή), spoke what he had witnessed and has written it as a memorial, and the same he did about his rapture.

Then, from page 48 onwards, Baraies makes mention of Adam, Sethel, Enos, Sem, and Enoch (*CMC* 48–60), and he continues his homily by putting both Paul and Mani at the end of his enumeration (*CMC* 60–72). In regard to the forefathers, Baraies concludes that ‘All the most blessed Apostles, Saviours, Evangelists, and Prophets of the truth . . . each of them beheld inasmuch as the living hope was revealed to him for proclamation’ (*CMC* 62.10–18). It is important to note that all of these ‘forefathers’ (προγενέστεροι: *CMC* 47.4; cf. 75.23), and also Paul and Mani, are pre-eminently designated as ‘Apostles’ (thus, according to all probability, the very small fragment *CMC* 47.18; cf. 62.11 and 71.19); and that, in line with this, their mission is defined as apostolate (ἀποστολή). The fact that, in order to confirm the veracity of the apostolate of Mani, the teacher Baraies cites from (previously unknown but highly interesting) apocalyptic writings of such forefathers as Adam, Sethel, Enos, Sem, and Enoch, will not further engage us now.⁵⁸ It suffices to remark that both Paul (with reference to e.g. Gal. 1.1; 2 Cor. 12.2–5; Gal. 1.11–12) and Mani (with reference to quotations from—in any case—his Gospel and his Letter to Edessa) are described in the *CMC* as being part of the self-same Jewish apocalyptic tradition. Like those ‘forefathers’, Paul the visionary was called to be the Apostle for *his* time; and the same goes for the (Jewish!) visionary Mani: he was elected to become the Apostle for *his* generation. Every one of those apocalyptic visionaries,

⁵⁸ Not only the curious contents, but also the genuineness of these apocalypses are still debated. See e.g. D. Frankfurter, ‘Apocalypses Real and Alleged in the Mani Codex’, *Numen* 44 1997 60–73; and, in particular, Reeves (n. 15). See also L. Cirillo’s ‘From the Elchasaite Christology to the Manichaean Apostle of Light’, a paper presented at the Fifth International Conference of Manichaean Studies in Naples (Sept. 2001).

‘according to the period (περίοδος) and course (περιφορά) of his ἀποστολή’ (CMC 48.8–11), was called to become the Apostle for his own time and generation. We know about the idea of the cyclical incarnation of the true Apostle (or Prophet or Saviour or Evangelist: evidently these terms are interchangeable; cf. CMC 62.11 ff.) from the information on Elchasaï⁵⁹ and from e.g. a typical Jewish-Christian writing such as the Pseudo-Clementines.⁶⁰ Besides, all over the world this idea has become well known through the Koran: Mohammed is the Apostle (*ras l*) of God and the Seal of the Prophets (Sura 33.40).⁶¹ It is very likely that, for the Manichaeans, Mani was both their Apostle *and* the Seal of the Prophets. Although there still is some discussion⁶² about the epithet ‘Seal of the Prophets’, according to Manichaean thinking one thing is beyond all doubt: Mani is the Apostle of Jesus Christ for *his* time. Thus, with Mani a new *aetas apostolica* was inaugurated; or (more precisely), according to the Manichaeans of the CMC a new *aetas apostolica* began anew in each generation with a new ‘Apostle of truth’.⁶³

⁵⁹ E.g. Hippolytus *Refutatio* 9.14.1 and 10.29.2; cf. e.g. Epiphanius *Panarion* 53.1.8 for the ‘Sampsaeans’ and 30.3.1 ff. for the Ebionites. From the CMC we now have important additional evidence for the occurrence of this idea among the Elchasaïtes, e.g. from CMC 86.9–17: ‘Some of them treated me as prophet and teacher; some of them said, “The living word is sung through him. Let us make him teacher of our doctrine”. Others said, “Has a voice spoken to him in secret and is he saying what it revealed to him?”’.

⁶⁰ Cf. *Pseudo-Clem., Hom.* 17.4 (GCS 42.230) and *Rec.* 2.47 (GCS 51.80). See the discussion of this phenomenon in e.g. H. J. Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums* (Tübingen 1949) 98–116, 327–8, 335 ff.; Puech (n. 1) 144–6; H.-J. Schoeps, *Urgemeinde, Judenchristentum, Gnosis* (Tübingen 1956) 25–6.

⁶¹ See for background and interpretation of this *Sura* e.g. A. J. Wensink, ‘Muhammed und die Prophetie’ (1924), now as ‘Muhammed and the Prophets’ in U. Rubin (ed.), *The Life of Muhammed* (Aldershot etc. 1998) 319–43, esp. 340–1; Schoeps (n. 60) 337; J. E. Fossum, ‘The Apostle Concept in the Qur’an and Pre-Islamic Near Eastern Literature’, in M. Mir and J. E. Fossum (eds.), *Literary Heritage of Classical Islam* (Princeton 1993) 149–67, esp. 151 ff.

⁶² According to G. G. Stroumsa, ‘Seal of the Prophets: the Nature of a Manichaean Metaphor’, *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 7 1986 61–74 (French translation in id., *Savoir et Salut* [Paris 1992] 275–88), the view that Mani was the seal of the prophets can only be demonstrated from Islamic sources; according to C. Colpe, *Das Siegel der Propheten: Historische Beziehungen zwischen Judentum, Judenchristentum, Heidentum und frühem Islam* (Berlin 1989), this does not rule out the possibility that ‘Mani den Ausdruck für sich selbst geprägt hat, und daß Mohammed ihn für sich übernahm’ (231). Cf. Reeves (n. 15) 9: ‘It was Mohammed who adopted and adapted the concept of the cyclical progression of universal (as well as ethnic) prophets from Manichaeism’; see also *ibid.* 22 n. 27.

⁶³ Other apostles mentioned in Manichaean sources (e.g. *Kephalaia* 9.11–16.31:

3. *Mani as the Paraclete*

But, apart from being the Apostle of Jesus Christ, Mani was also the Paraclete. It is this pretension in particular which was treated by the church fathers as sheer blasphemy: Did Mani imagine that he was the Holy Spirit (and, thus, even God himself)? Or, did he (only) pretend that the Holy Spirit dwelt *in him*? In the patristic sources, as in some of the forms of abjuration,⁶⁴ we find both positions. And, from a certain point of view, both are correct.

In order to understand Mani's claim, it is necessary to consider carefully some key elements of the very complicated Manichaean myth.⁶⁵ According to this myth, there took place in the heavenly world a whole series of emanations: from the Father of Greatness came forth the Messenger of Light, and from this divine figure emanated Jesus the Splendour who in turn brought forth the Light-Mind or Light-Noûç. This Noûç called forth the Apostle of Light and, during the course of world history, this (heavenly!) Apostle of Light became incarnate in great religious leaders such as the Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus the Messiah, and Mani. When Mani assumed the title of 'Apostle of Jesus Christ', he actually considered himself an apostle of 'Jesus the Splendour': and *not* of the historical Jesus. As a matter of fact, the figure of 'Jesus the Messiah' was well known in Manichaeism; but, in comparison to the other Apostles, he did not have any unique significance: he also was an apostle of the Light-Noûç and thus of 'Jesus the Splendour'. And, according to the *interpretatio Manichaica*, the same also goes for the apostle Paul (*CMC*

'Concerning the Advent of the Apostle') include the Buddha and Aurentes; Zarathustra; Hermes Trismegistus; and Lao-Tzu. For a discussion of the diverse texts, still see Puech (n. 1) 144–6; cf. e.g. Reeves (n. 15) 7–15 and notes.

⁶⁴ On these formulae, see e.g. Adam (n. 35) 90–103, esp. 92–3 (here the curious mention that Adimantus seems to have been considered the Paraclete as well!) and 97; on the long abjuration formula, see S. N. C. Lieu, 'An Early Byzantine Formula for the Renunciation of Manichaeism—The *Capita VII contra Manichaeos* of Zacharias of Mitylene', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 26 1983 152–218 (updated and revised in S. N. C. Lieu [n. 26] 203–305, esp. 236 and 258).

⁶⁵ Maybe the best account still is the one provided by H. J. Polotsky, 'Manichäismus', *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche, Suppl. Bd.* 6 1935 241–71 (= id., *Abriss des manichäischen Systems* [Stuttgart 1935], repr. in G. Widengren (ed.), *Der Manichäismus* [Darmstadt 1977] 101–44, and in Polotsky's *Collected Papers* [Jerusalem 1971] 699–714). Brief descriptions of the myth in e.g. Böhlig, *Die Gnosis* (n. 1) 29–35; id., 'Manichäismus' (n. 1) 31–3; Van Oort (n. 1) 736–8.

61.4 ff., with explicit reference to 2 Cor. 12.1–5; cf. Gal. 1.1 in *CMC* 60.18 ff.).

In addition to being ‘Apostle of Jesus Christ’, however, Mani is also expressly called ‘the Paraclete’. In a fragment from his Gospel, which was transmitted by the tenth century Muslim historian al-Biruni, it is explicitly stated ‘that he is the Paraclete who had been announced by the Messiah.’⁶⁶ Nowadays, in the *CMC*, we find this title corroborated by Baraies no less than four times: Mani is ‘the Paraclete (παράκλητος) and head (κορυφαῖος) of the apostolate (ἀποστολή) in this generation’ (*CMC* 17.4–7); he himself laid down his supernatural experiences in writings so that nobody would hesitate about ‘this apostolate (ἀποστολή) of the Spirit (πνεῦμα), the Paraclete (παράκλητος)’ (*CMC* 46.1–3); Mani is ‘the Paraclete (παράκλητος) of truth’ (*CMC* 63.21–3); and, finally, after having apologetically cited a number of quotations from Mani’s own writings: ‘In the books of our father there are very many other extraordinary passages similar to these, which demonstrate both his revelation and the rapture of his apostolate (ἀποστολή). For very great is the abundance of this coming which comes to (us) through the Paraclete (παράκλητος), the Spirit (πνεῦμα) of truth’ (*CMC* 70.10–23).

From these quotations from Baraies’ testimonies incorporated into the *CMC* (which in turn go back to autobiographical statements of Mani), it is completely clear that Mani considered himself to be the Paraclete. This particular theologoumenon should therefore not be treated as an example of *Gemeindeftheologie* (though one might be tempted to conclude this from e.g. the Coptic *Kephalaia*⁶⁷ and the even abundant utterances in the Coptic *Psalm-Book*⁶⁸). Another question is how to interpret this claim of Mani. It is from the *CMC*, and again from Baraies’ testimony, that we could well find the clue to solve this problem. At the beginning of his first excerpt (*CMC* 14–26), this disciple quotes Mani as speaking of his *Nous* that is enclosed in his earthly body.⁶⁹ Mani, among other things, states that his *Nous*

⁶⁶ Cf. e.g. Adam (n. 35) 1.

⁶⁷ E.g. *Keph.* (ed. Polotsky) 16.29–30; for other texts from the *Keph.*, cf. Lieu et al. (n. 32) 78.

⁶⁸ Lieu et al. (n. 32) 77–8.

⁶⁹ See the ingenious reconstruction by A. Henrichs and L. Koenen in their edition of the *CMC* in *ZPE* 19 1975 16–19 (commentary 72–6); cf. e.g. L. Koenen, ‘Augustine and Manichaeism in Light of the Cologne Mani Codex’, *Illinois Classical Studies* 3 1978 167–76, esp. 170.

will 'liberate the souls from ignorance by becoming the Paraclete (παράκλητος) and head (κορυφαῖος) of the apostolate (ἀποστολή) in this generation' (*CMC* 17.4–7). So it is his Light-*Nous*, his heavenly Mind or Intelligence,⁷⁰ that is the Paraclete. Mani's *Nous* descended from the heavenly world of Light and was imprisoned in an earthly body. The real Mani was the *Nous* of Mani. This *Nous*, according to Baraies, is the Paraclete.

There are, however, other texts which suggest that it is not the *Nous*, but Mani's heavenly Twin or Syzygos (Σύζυγος), the divine messenger that imparted to Mani his special revelation, which is identified with the Paraclete. In this context, it is important to see first what we are told about Mani's vocation in a passage in the *Kephalaia*: 'From that time on [sc. from the beginning of Mani's apostolate] was sent the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth; the one who has come to you in this last generation. Just like the Saviour said [cf. John 16.7]: "When I go, I will send to you the Paraclete". . . . In that same year, when Ardashir the king was crowned, the living Paraclete came down to me. He spoke with me. He unveiled to me the hidden mystery, the one that is hidden from the worlds and the generations, the mystery of the depths and the heights.'⁷¹ Here and also elsewhere in the *Kephalaia*,⁷² the Paraclete has precisely the same function as the Twin or Syzygos (Σύζυγος) as described in the *CMC*. In short: the Paraclete and the Twin are identical in Manichaean theology.

Was Mani, then, the Paraclete (which in orthodox Christian circles was—and is—identified with the Holy Spirit)? Or was the Paraclete (or Holy Spirit) *in* Mani? And, in what manner may the evidence that both the *Nous* and the Syzygos are named as Paraclete match to each other? The dilemma of the church fathers as well as the seeming contradiction that both the *Nous* and the Syzygos are called 'Paraclete' may be solved by a further examination of the Manichaean (and typical Gnostic) concept of the Syzygos. When Mani, i.e., the *Nous* of Mani, was sent into the world, a mirror image

⁷⁰ On this central concept in Manichaeism, see A. Van Tongerloo and J. van Oort (eds.), *The Manichaean NOÏΣ: Proceedings of the International Symposium organized in Louvain from 31 July to 3 August 1991* (Louvain 1995).

⁷¹ *Keph.* (ed. Polotsky) 14.4–7 and 14.31–15.3; English translation: I. Gardner, *The Kephalaia of the Teacher: The Edited Coptic Manichaean Texts in Translation with Commentary* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne 1995) 20.

⁷² *Keph.* 15.19–24; 16.19–21.

of this *Nous*, i.e., his *alter ego*, remained behind in heaven. One ego, Mani's Light-Noûς, was imprisoned in his body and thus forgot his mission. Then the Syzygos, the *alter ego*, was sent to him from heaven: as it is told throughout the *CMC*, this Twin brought Mani the revelation by reminding him of his divine nature and mission; and, like his guardian angel, he protected him.⁷³ The Noûς of Mani and his Σύζυγος should therefore be treated as two complementary aspects of Mani's identity.⁷⁴

Because Mani's *Nous* (or real Self) and his Syzygos were considered to be one and the same identity, this implies that, if one of them is the Paraclete, the other must be the Paraclete. Perhaps Augustine did not fully understand this identity, and so he and other church fathers stated that Mani was either the Paraclete or that the Paraclete was *in* Mani. The North-African bishop Evodius of Uzali, however, Augustine's pupil and colleague who provided us with some unique information on Mani,⁷⁵ correctly says: *Qui* (sc. Mani) *se mira superbia adsumptum a gemino suo, hoc est [a] spiritu sancto, esse gloriatur. Et utique si geminus est spiritus sancti, et ipse spiritus sanctus est.*⁷⁶ Because Evodius identified this *spiritus sanctus* with the Holy Spirit of fourth century Trinitarian dogma, however, he wrongly concluded that Mani must have considered himself to be God.⁷⁷

Conclusions

At the end of this investigation, the main conclusions in the context of the topic of this book may be summarized:

1. According to the Manichaeans, each human 'generation' has its own *aetas apostolica*;
2. The advent of Mani marked the final *aetas apostolica*: he was the apostle of the last generation;

⁷³ See *CMC* 18.15; 19.17; 22.16–25.1; etc.

⁷⁴ Cf. for this and the preceding remarks: Koenen (n. 69) esp. 173.

⁷⁵ Like Augustine, he quotes a number of fragments from Mani's *Thesaurus* and from the *Epistula fundamenti*; moreover, from Mani's *Epistula fundamenti* he transmits some exclusive readings and a unique fragment. Cf. Evodius *De fide contra Manichaeos* 5.11.14–16.19 and 28 (CSEL 25.952–3; 954–7; 958 and 964).

⁷⁶ Evodius *De fide* 24 (CSEL 25.961).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*: . . . *et ipse deus omnipotens ut spiritus sanctus.*

3. Mani's apostolate reveals striking parallels with the apostolate of Jesus. Just as the historical Jesus is said to have sent out his twelve and seventy disciples, so Mani sent out his twelve missionaries (also called 'apostles' or 'teachers') and appointed his seventy-two⁷⁸ itinerant bishops.
4. Mani considered himself the apostle of Jesus Christ *par excellence*, being at the same time the promised (cf. e.g. John 16.7) Paraclete. The recurrent designation 'Apostle of Jesus Christ', typically styled after the model of Paul, did not refer to the historical Jesus, however, but actually to the heavenly 'Jesus the Splendour'.

⁷⁸ In a typical Jewish-Christian text like the *Pseudo-Clementines*, in the *Acts of Thomas* which were well-known among the Manichaeans and also contain archaic Jewish-Christian traditions, and particularly in Tatian's *Diatessaron* it is said that Jesus sent out seventy-two (and not seventy) missionaries. Mani himself in all likelihood knew the *Diatessaron* and this Gospel text may well have suggested the election of seventy-two bishops to him.

THE APOSTOLIC WORLD OF THOUGHT IN EARLY CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

Arnold Provoost

1. *Introductory considerations*

I would like to give this dissertation on the apostolic world of thought in early Christian iconography the subtitle of 'In the land of the blessed'—'Μακάρων ἐνὶ χώρῳ'. This phrasing is derived from an inscription on a sarcophagus from the second half of the third century (fig. 3). The complete text is as follows: 'Here rests Paulina, in the land of the blessed. Pakata rendered her the last honours, as her sweet wet-nurse, holy in Christ.' The suggestive formula μακάρων ἐνὶ χώρῳ conveys to my mind very well the way the body of thought of the Apostles, at least like it is expressed in iconography, is to be interpreted. And let me be clear from the start: particularly in the first three centuries this 'land of the blessed' is in no way to be interpreted as the heavenly paradise, as the funeral context suggests. It means more than life after death: it means the blissful state of the believer whose life was fundamentally changed by the coming of the Empire of God. Initially for this overwhelming blissful state no distinction was made between the past, the present and the future. Only after *c.* 350 do a few explicitly eschatological scenes situate the Christian *pax/εἰρήνη* particularly in a superterrestrial future.

How to proceed? On the global interpretation of early Christian iconography a consensus appears to have been reached since a few decades. Nearly everybody assumes that Christians and non-Christians used a common late ancient iconographical repertory. Christians, however, selected only those depictions that allowed a deeper meaning for them. Moreover, a number of explicitly biblical-ecclesiastical depictions were selected as well. There even seems to be agreement on the ideological background and nature of Christian iconography. Most early Christian depictions are said to display a strong parallelism with a number of prayers for salvation and with the texts included in the *lectionaria* (a selection of lectures from the Bible, intended for catechesis). Elsewhere I have already tried to demon-

strate why this holistic interpretation based on the salvation paradigms is difficult to maintain and why I choose an alternative vision.¹ Here I can take a step further thanks to the recent research I conducted on funerary early Christian iconography in Rome and Ostia. Through the inventory, interpretation and quantitative processing in the catacombs in Rome and on sarcophagi from Rome and Ostia the body of thought from the early period of Christianity can almost be completely represented, for Roman funerary iconography, we may assume, is representative of the whole of early Christian iconography, at least what concerns the better off (the poor could normally at best permit themselves a simple engraved or painted epitaph).² No less than 403 fresco ensembles and 1394 sarcophagi are available, of which 22 examples (1.22%) are to be situated *c.* 150–250; 957 (53.25%) *c.* 250–325; 526 (29.27%) *c.* 325–375; 279 (15.25%) *c.* 375–500; and 13 (0.72%) *c.* 500–800. This first made it possible—as for Rome anyway, and presumably also what was known as *oikoumenen* at the time—to verify exactly when a certain theme or motif was first used, how long and to which degree it remained popular, and when it disappeared. The same can be done with certain thematic clusters, and with the spheres of influence. It is obvious that such a quantitative approach will also give us information on important qualitative aspects, notably the content and influence of the apostolic body of thought.

Basically we shall sort the iconographical material according to six cultural-anthropological contexts (which concur, broadly outlined, with the traditional periods). For each context we shall establish its characteristic features and, in addition, at least for the most important contexts, try to give, through the analysis of a few representative examples, an as concrete view as possible of the ideas and sentiments that have determined the face of the representations. In

¹ A. Provoost, 'Le caractère et l'évolution des images bibliques dans l'art chrétien primitif', in J. den Boeft and M. L. van Poll-van de Lisdonk (eds.), *The Impact of Scripture in Early Christianity* (Supplements to VC 44; Leiden, Boston, and Cologne 1999) 79–101.

² See A. Provoost, 'Das Zeugnis der Fresken und Grabplatten in der Katakombe S. Pietro e Marcellino im Vergleich mit dem Zeugnis der Lampen und Gläser aus Rom', *Boreas* 9 1986 152–72; 'Van embleem tot icoon', *Lampas* 23 1990 309–25; *De vroegchristelijke beeldtaal* (Louvain 1994), passim; 'Makaron eni choro'—'In het land van de gelukzaligen': *Inleiding tot de vroegchristelijke materiële cultuur, kunst en beeldtaal* (Louvain 2000), passim.

a general conclusion we shall finally try to look at the evolution and impact of the apostolic body of thought from a global point of view.

In advance we shall however have to pay some attention to the problem of dating, since sorting the material inevitably depends on this. For the frescos the situation can be called downright disastrous. Wilpert's *corpus* isn't only incomplete, but it opts for datings that are more than ever debatable.³ Nestori's *repertorium* on the other hand is as good as complete but lacks any form of dating (probably because the publications referred to often supply no or contradictory chronological data).⁴ I myself published a working document in 2000 that not only offers a chronological repertory of all paintings in the catacombs of Rome, but, in addition, inventories, interprets and quantitatively processes all occurring themes and motifs.⁵ For the sarcophagi the situation seems brighter at first. Wilpert's *corpus* does suffer the same shortages as his work on the frescos.⁶ Ever since, however, not only are there the two repertories that came about under the auspices of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut in Rome, but even an ambitious handbook saw the light of day.⁷ In these publications the dating of the separate sarcophagi is not disregarded, and there seems to be less disagreement on chronology. Still, on a closer inspection that certainty is somewhat deceptive. Especially G. Koch can frequently be caught contradicting himself. Moreover, the methodological approach relating to chronology is almost exclusively typological, stylistic and art-historical of nature, so that quite a few datings do not meet the criteria laid down by recent archaeological research. In a just completed but not yet published printed publication I have tried to create a chronological repertory for the sarcophagi as well,

³ G. Wilpert, *Le pitture delle catacombe romane* (Rome 1903; German version: J. Wilpert, *Die Malereien der Katakomben Roms* (Freiburg i. Br. 1903).

⁴ A. Nestori, *Repertorio topografico delle pitture delle catacombe romane* (Roma Sotterranea Cristiana 5; Vatican City and Rome 1975; slightly re-edited edition in 1992).

⁵ A. Provoost, *Chronologisch repertorium van de schilderijen in de catacomben van Rome: Met inventaris, duiding en kwantitatieve verwerking van de thema's en motieven* (Louvain 2000); see 3–12 for a methodological justification.

⁶ G. Wilpert, *I sarcophagi cristiani antichi* (Monumenti dell'Antichità Cristiana pubblicati per cura del Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana; Rome 1929–36).

⁷ F. W. Deichmann, G. Bovini, and H. Brandenburg (eds.), *Repertorium der christlich-antiken Sarkophage*, i: *Rom und Ostia* (Wiesbaden 1967); J. Dresken-Weiland, *Repertorium der christlich-antiken Sarkophage*, ii: *Italien mit einem Nachtrag Rom und Ostia. Dalmatien. Museen der Welt* (Mainz am Rhein 1998); G. Koch, *Frühchristliche Sarkophage* (Handbuch der Archäologie; Munich 2000).

in which the occurring themes and motifs are inventoried, interpreted and quantitatively processed.⁸

Within the scope of this dissertation I unfortunately lack the space to give an elaborate justification of the dating system I have chosen. Out of necessity I limit myself to referring to Table 1 (an overview of the iconographical genres) and to Table 2 (illustrating the relation between the cultural-anthropological situation and iconography). Through a combination of an archaeological/iconological approach with the usual stylistic and typological one it has proved possible to assign all frescos and sarcophagi to one of the six archaeological contexts. Besides, detailed studies about individual pieces, especially sarcophagi, almost always offered evidence for the classification per context.⁹

2. *Considerations of global nature*

2.1.

If we limit ourselves to frescos and sarcophagi with iconographically significant rests¹⁰ we end up with a total of 1797: 403 fresco ensembles and 1394 sarcophagi. We must of course not lose track of the fact

⁸ A. Provoost, *Chronologisch repertorium van de christelijke sarcophagen uit Rome en Ostia: Met inventaris, duiding en kwantitatieve verwerking van de thema's en motieven* (Louvain 2003).

⁹ A more precise chronology is probably not feasible and in my opinion not really desirable either. Koch (n. 7) for instance opts for this subdivision of sarcophagi: Vorkonstantinische Zeit (270/280–312/13); Konstantinische Zeit (312/13–um 340); Nachkonstantinische Zeit (um 340–um 360/70); Valentinianisch-theodosianische Zeit (um 360/70–um 400); spätere Sarkophage (nach 400). These are just a few of the objections: the commencing date 270 is without a doubt far too late; as to the evolution of material culture, historical facts like the Edict of Milan and the reigns of Constantine, Valentinian and Theodosius hardly have any value as chronological reference points (which is obviously still preferable to referring to the papal reigns!); the 'spätere Sarkophage' category is clearly too ample. Methodologically it is understandable that one attempts to take portraits on coins and on historical reliefs as a basis for dating—which would also explain why the chronology of sarcophagi seems more certain than that of frescos. However, it must be borne in mind that the official art, in which the portraits due to their representative function were more strictly bound to time, offer more reliable chronological information than the often routine catacomb paintings and the bulk production sarcophagi.

¹⁰ The quantitative processing was done without taking into account the 51 fresco ensembles and 9 sarcophagi that are included in the repertories mentioned but do not contain any utile iconographical information.

that the repertories do not make mention of the presumably incredibly numerous rooms and walls in the catacombs that never got painted, and of the possibly even more numerous sarcophagi that remained undecorated. Furthermore it is difficult to assess how many pieces got lost or haven't turned up yet in the course of time. This does not prevent that the importance of early Christian catacomb paintings and Roman sarcophagi with significant rests is hard to overestimate. In archaeology there are hardly other sites that supply an equal amount of information. As for representativeness and also given the relatively large numbers, a quantitative evaluation, and even a statistical processing of the Roman frescos and sarcophagi is definitely possible, useful and justified.

2.2.

That way we obtain a pretty accurate view of the origin, the growth and the decline of early Christian funerary iconography, at least the way it featured among the better off, which obviously differed to a large extent from the iconography used by everyone (like can for instance be found on simple memorial plaques or on terracotta lamps built into the graves as identifying marks).¹¹ If we take a closer look at the chronology we obtain a sort of Gaussian curve, which seems to guarantee the correctness of classification according to contexts: 1.22% are to be situated in context 2, 53.25% in context 3, 29.27% in context 4, 15.25% in context 5, and 0.72% in context 6. This immediately puts us in front of a rather unexpected conclusion: the prime of early Christian funerary art is not situated—as is commonly presumed—in the period after the Church Peace when Christianity was an officially tolerated religion, but in the preceding period in which Christians, in spite of the severe persecution campaigns (in the middle of the third century and at the change from the third to the fourth century), apparently enjoyed enough tolerance to organise and manifest themselves as a community.

2.3.

While determining the order in the ranking according to the fields, those according to the thematic clusters, and those concerning the

¹¹ Provoost 1986 (n. 2).

iconographical subjects—cf. Table 3—we must always opt first for the most obvious explanation.

Funerary archaeological objects and features are first of all situated on an infrastructural meaning level (i.e. the vital needs). In everyday life, burying the dead was a vital necessity, and iconography gives us, just like the inscriptions, often also, and even in the first place, information on prevalent data such as the identity of the dead person, the circumstances of their life and decease, about their age, about their relation to the persons or associations taking care of the burial etc. Therefore we are hardly amazed at the high score of the realia/personalia (personally related representations) sphere of influence (44.51%), of orants who almost always symbolically seem to represent the deceased (23.2%), of funerary coloured iconographical items in general (26.65%), but also of items whose prime meaning may not be funerary but still appear to help visualize the reality of death, for example resting personages like the extended Jonah or herdsmen (10.62%) and the resurrection of Lazarus (8.18%).

Mostly neglected is that the structural meaning level (i.e. concerning the social-economic position) must have been even more important. Both the catacomb paintings and the sarcophagi reflect the social-economic position of the better off Christians, who preferred to be buried in a *paradisus* or tomb garden. However, since this was only rarely possible they often settled for an evocation of it.¹² The figures speak for themselves: the idyllic/bucolic sphere of influence gets no less than 62.54%, the intellectual sphere of influence 17.41%; and among the separate themes and motifs items like an ornamental frame, floral/vegetal decoration, birds, decorative patterns and gardens are all in the top twenty, with percentages ranging from 36.78% to 7.23%.

Should we therefore assume that the superstructural meaning level (i.e. the sphere of 'higher ideas') was regarded as a matter of secondary importance, like quite a few authors have seemed to suggest recently? Christians and non-Christians, as is commonly supposed, drew on a common repertory appropriate for the circumstances of a death or the status of the deceased and his family. In other words,

¹² A. Provoost, 'De Cleveland-beeldengroep: bestemd voor een graftuin?', in M. Jordan-Ruwe and U. Real (eds.), *Bild- und Formensprache der spätantiken Kunst, Hugo Brandenburg zum 65. Geburtstag* (Boreas 17 1994) 187–201.

we would mostly be confronted with functional information and emotional clichés, rather than images reflecting a deeper Christian body of thought. The two so-called primal images of early Christian iconography, namely the criophorus (the so-called 'good shepherd') and the orans, are said to be nothing but routine evocations of philanthropy on the one hand, and of pietas or conscientiousness on the other hand. For that reason most recent publications do not even longer consider the presence of a shepherd or an orant an indication of a Christian representation. I am however convinced this has been taken much too far. Although the non-Christian origin of the criophorus and orans is obvious, I do not know of any example of a catacomb painting or a late antique sarcophagus with an orans or shepherd that is to be undisputedly, for instance through an inscription, interpreted as pagan. Besides, the archaeological context speaks against such merely profane interpretations as well. Indeed, the frescos and sarcophagi we are dealing with here form fairly coherent ensembles that can usually be clearly related to aboveground or underground Christian burial places, and never to pagan ones. Furthermore, iconography too usually points in an unambiguously Christian direction. For instance, the biblical/ecclesiastical sphere of influence has a frequency of no less than 61.43% (even though the scores of the separate scenes—including the Jonah and Peter scenes—are relatively low). If de Rossi and Wilpert interpreted certain paintings and sarcophagi as Christian, this was in my opinion done rightly, even though their interpretations are in many aspects outdated. Klauser's hypercritical point of view has, like a kind of cunning poison, particularly in sarcophagus repertories and Koch's textbook, caused an exaggerated scepticism leading to the rejection of many pieces that in my opinion deserve a place in the discussion on the most ancient Christian iconography.¹³ I am on the other hand in no way advocate of labelling early Christian iconography on the whole as a catechesis, and seeing in nearly every scene an allusion to the heavenly paradise.¹⁴ The idyllic/bucolic framework is, as already said, an

¹³ T. Klauser, 'Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte der christlichen Kunst', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 1 1958 20–51; 3 1960 112–38; 7 1964 67–76; 8–9 1965–6 126–70; 9 1967 82–120.

¹⁴ See for example F. Bisconti, 'La pittura paleocristiana', in A. Donati (ed.), *Romana pictura: La pittura romana dalle origini all'età bizantina* [publication on the occasion of the exhibition of the same name in Rimini, 28 March–30 August 1998] (Turin 1998) 33–53.

expression of the social-economic positioning of the Christians concerned, but just as much of the fundamental early Christian experience of joy, so aptly reflected in formulas like *IN PACE*, *EN EIPHNH*, *ΜΑΚΑΡΩΝ ΕΝΙ ΧΩΡΩ*.

2.4.

It is striking that certain iconographical items are exclusively or mainly connected with either the frescos or the sarcophagi. For instance, the following items only feature on sarcophagi: strigiles, parapetasma, niche, capture of Peter, columns as framework, musing shepherd/person, orans + apostles, *traditio legis*, entry in Jerusalem. Restricted to frescos are for example: marble/marble imitation, unrecognizable miracles, cassette decoration, angry Jonah.

I would like to mention an intriguing example of an item which occurs much more frequently on sarcophagi than on paintings, namely the Peter scenes. In spite of a global score of no less than 12.96% (which even places these scenes narrowly into the top ten) the sarcophagi-frescos ratio is 15.42% against 4.46%. I actually see only one explanation for this discrepancy: the choice for Peter scenes on sarcophagi is probably related to the long tradition in Greek-Roman sculpture for military scenes. Sculpting such sturdy male figures of Roman soldiers was apparently an easier job for late antique sculptors than for instance representing ordinary people from miracle scenes (for which hardly any precedents existed).

3. *The nature and evolution of iconography in the six contexts (Tables 2–3)*

3.1. *Context 1: Christ and the charismatic leaders (c. 30–150)*

From an archaeological point of view there is but little to tell on the pioneering time, when charismatic leaders spread the Christian message among pretty much all the important trade cities (especially if a community of Jews dispersed in the diaspora was already present there). At that time a proper Christian material culture was out of the question. For their gatherings and everyday needs believers just made use of all existing material facilities deemed suitable. Concerning buildings and constructions we think in the first place of synagogues, porches around squares, public utility buildings without pagan connotations and private houses. Our main interest here is the question whether Christians at that time already made use of

representations. Most likely they were, in the tradition of the Mosaic legislature, rather averse to depictions of living creatures, but definitely not to visual symbols or ideograms, and not even to figurative scenes (on the condition that they were not the object of veneration).

Due to the absence of Christian material rests from this first context there is but little to tell on the nature of iconography at the time. Following authors such as H. Urs von Balthasar, J. Daniélou, E. Testa and B. Bagatti, Frédérick Tristan recently suggested that for the following biblical-messianic items spread amongst Jews and Jews-Christians a visual pendant is perfectly imaginable: the tav-sign in the shape of a '+' or an 'x'; the palm; the wreath or crown; plantings; water; the ascia or hatchet; the anchor; fish; the palm tree; the lamb; the good shepherd; the orans; a little boat.¹⁵ Nearly all these representations can, be it more and more in a later context, indeed be found in the list of iconographical themes and motifs (Table 3). Previously, J. Daniélou had pointed out the following possibilities: the palm and the wreath; the grapevine and the tree of life; the living water and the fish; the Church's little boat; Elijah's wagon; Jacob's star; the twelve apostles and the zodiac; the tau sign. He even believed, based on a study by E. Testa, he could substantiate this list with a few first and second century examples: a palm on a stele from Khirbit Kilkir, Hebron; a fish on a Jerusalem ossuary; a little boat with ogdoad (= the earth with the seven skies) from a church/synagogue in Nazareth; a plough on a Jerusalem ossuary; a hatchet on a paving brick near the large theatre in Ephesus; a star on a Palestinian ossuary; and a tree and a tau-shaped cross on a Jerusalem ossuary.¹⁶ In this vision, which I regard as an interesting interpretation in spite of the heavy criticism to which it has been subject, the oldest iconography was restricted to such signs symbolizing certain biblical themes.¹⁷

¹⁵ F. Tristan, *Les premières images chrétiennes: Du symbole à l'icône: II^e-VI^e siècle* (Paris 1996).

¹⁶ E. Testa, *Il simbolismo dei Giudei-Cristiani* (Jerusalem 1962); J. Daniélou, *Les symboles chrétiens primitifs* (Paris 1961) fig. 1-3.

¹⁷ See for a critical approach of the Jewish-Christian input J. E. Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places: The Myth of Jewish Christians origins* (Oxford 1993); 'The Phenomenon of Early Jewish-Christianity: Reality or Scholarly Invention?', *VC* 44 1990 313-34. With thanks to L. V. Rutgers for some useful directions on the subject.

3.2. *Context 2: First expressions of organisation (c. 150–250)*

For context 2 we have only a very limited number of usable representations from Rome and Ostia: 12 fresco ensembles (on a total of 403) and 10 sarcophagi (on a total of 1394). This context can therefore definitely not be considered as representative yet.

The classification of the fields, the thematic clusters and iconographical items gives us following overview:

A. Ranking according to the fields:¹⁸

1. Idyllic/bucolic	100%	– 957
2. Realia/personalia	59.09%	– 565
3. Mousikos/culture	54.54%	– 522
4. Pagan	40.9%	– 391
5. Biblical/ecclesiastical	36.36%	– 348
6. Orans	31.81%	– 304
7. Signs	22.72%	– 217

B. Ranking according to the thematic clusters:

1. Pastoral (stricto sensu)	50%	– 479
2. Old Testament	27.27%	– 261
3. New Testament	22.72%	– 217

C. Ranking according to the iconographical subjects:

1. Floral/vegetal	63.63%	– 609
2. Ornamental framework	54.54%	– 522
Mousikos (stricto sensu)	54.54%	– 522
Birds (incl. pigeons)	54.54%	– 522
5. Criophorus	40.9%	– 391
Ornamental pattern	40.9%	– 391
7. Funeral	31.81%	– 304
Orans (excl. biblical orantes)	31.81%	– 304
Scroll/bundle of scrolls	31.81%	– 304
Gardens (incl. scenery/accessories)	31.81%	– 304
11. Genius	27.27%	– 261
Shepherd (excl. criophorus)	27.27%	– 261
Reposing personage	27.27%	– 261
Flock (animals + attributes)	27.27%	– 261
Vases	27.27%	– 261
Peacock	27.27%	– 261

¹⁸ The absolute figures next to the percentages are based on the exact figures in Table 3, but have been converted exponentially.

17. Jonah (all scenes)	22.72%	– 217
Marine	22.72%	– 217
Dolphins	22.72%	– 217
20. Mask/head	18.18%	– 174
Jonah ejected (= orans)	18.18%	– 174
Repast/agap	18.18%	– 174
Pedestal/aedicula	18.18%	– 174
24. Lions	13.63%	– 130
25. Strigiles	9.09%	– 87
Moses/Peter striking the rock	9.09%	– 87
Raising of Lazarus	9.09%	– 87
Parapetasma	9.09%	– 87
Abraham and Isaac	9.09%	– 87
Gesture of speech	9.09%	– 87
Shepherd in position of rest	9.09%	– 87
Milk-scene	9.09%	– 87
Seasons/ornamental heads	9.09%	– 87
Hunting/exotic animals	9.09%	– 87
Victoria	9.09%	– 87

The small number of representations that may be assigned to context 2 obviously prompts us to the greatest care while interpreting. While classifying the fields it is nevertheless hard to disregard the ascendancy of the traditional ‘neutral’ visual repertory: the idyllic/bucolic scenes in the first place with no less than 100%; the realia/personalia in the second place with 55.09%; the *mousikos* scenes in the third place with 54.54%. It is neither surprising that the pagan sphere of influence has remained prominently present (in the fourth place with 40.9%). Still, the biblical/ecclesiastical subject matter too is already emphatically represented, be it with a relatively low frequency (36.36%). The low score of the signs (still 22.72%) is probably the result of the small suitability of this type of representations to paintings and sarcophagi, but can also be related with the reluctance of Hellenistic Western Christians towards a cryptic iconography—cf. the well-known recommendation of Clement of Alexandria (*Paedagogus* 3.59.2) to opt for existing scenes possessing a deeper meaning for Christians.

Concerning biblical subject matter it is notable that the Old Testament scenes (27.27%) eclipse the New Testament ones (22.72%) slightly, and that the individual topics are restricted to a mere four (Jonah in the 17th position with 22.72%; and furthermore the rock miracle of Peter/Moses, the resurrection of Lazarus and the sacrifice of Abraham in the 25th position with 9.09%). Specifically ecclesiastical themes are still out of the question.

The tub sarcophagus dated *c.* 240–50 situated in S. Maria Antiqua in Rome, and also found there, almost perfectly illustrates this start of funerary iconography (fig. 1). On the front can be seen from left to right: Jonah-orans in a little boat; three lying rams; Jonah spit out and resting beneath the foliage; the deceased woman (see the unfinished face) as a standing orans between two trees; a sitting philosopher with open book roll; a criophorus between two trees; the baptism of Christ. The left side shows us Poseidon, the right side two fishermen with a fyke. This almost spontaneous accumulation of scenes, which must have seemed familiar to the pagans as well, shows us the feeling of bliss of better off Christians. The deceased is portrayed as conscientious (orans = pietas) and cultivated (the philosopher), but as much as a Christian (the Jonah scenes and the baptism of Christ). The outstanding symbols of bliss—the criophorus and herd animals—are echoed on the sides in a marine-idyllic fashion with the sea god Poseidon (undoubtedly considered neutral) and a fisherman scene.

Although less and less researchers dare to label the famous Southern French sarcophagus of Brignoles-La-Gayole (fig. 2) as Christian, I am inclined to consider it possibly even more typical of budding Christianity than the sarcophagus of S. Maria Antiqua. This coffin in Proconnesic marble, which in my opinion is dated even before 250, was once placed inside a funeral building of a retired Roman official in La Goyale, and is preserved in the town of Brignoles. As primary figures can be seen in the centre a sitting man, flanked on the left by a female orans and on the right by a criophorus; on the left end is the bust of the sun god Helios and an angler, and on the right end a sitting man with a staff, and a ram looking up to him. The secondary elements are important as well: a garland of acanthus and flowers (beneath the whole), and furthermore three lying rams and a small standing figure (before and beside the trees which the birds are sitting in). Is there a line in this multitude of scenes? The old man in the middle, who through his clothing (a cloak draped around the presumably naked lower body—a fixed attribute of philosophers) manifests himself as cultivated, symbolically represents the deceased. The small figure next to him is a female servant, and seems to hand him a jug of beverage—the whole scene is presumably a meal in the open air, or in any case an idyllic *mousikos* scene. The orans on the left of the old man shows clear portrait traits, and so most likely represents the wife of the deceased,





Fig. 1a-c. Sarcophagus, found and preserved at S. Maria Antiqua in Rome. From: F. W. Deichmann, G. Bovini, and H. Brandenburg (eds.), *Repertorium der christlich-antiken Sarkophage, i: Rom und Ostia* (Wiesbaden 1967) 747.

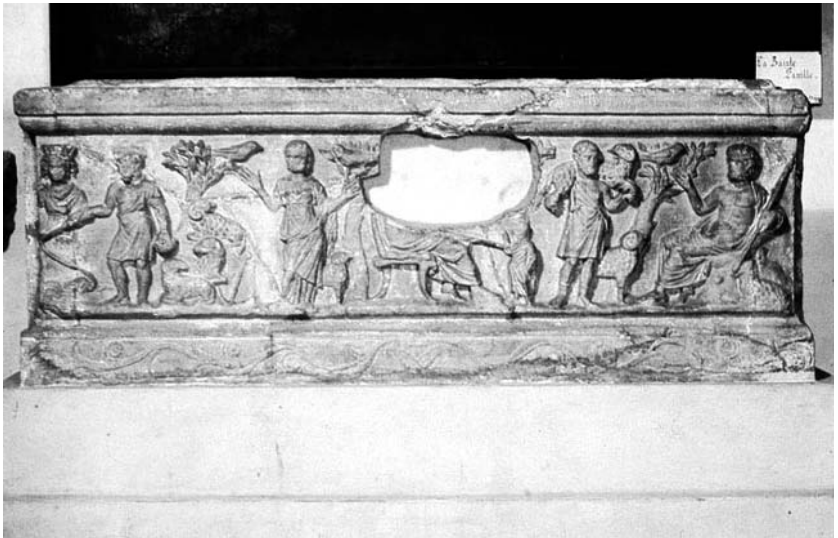


Fig. 2. Sarcophagus from the mausoleum of a villa at La Gayole, and preserved in the Museum of Brignoles. From: A. Provoost, J. Vaes, and J. Pelsmaekers (eds.), *De materiële cultuur van de eerste christenen* (Louvain 1983) pl. 8.

characterized by the orans pose as being devoted. Since the criophorus on the other side presumably shows portrait traits as well, the deceased is therefore labelled as happy. On the far right we see the deceased for a third time, this time in the symbolic guise of a shepherd-teacher-ruler. As a left pendant can be seen the idyllic cliché figure of an angler and the symbolic representation of the sun, source of life, warmth and light. However, critics remark, can't all these figures be found on pagan sarcophagi as well? Here I can give a flat answer: at the best they appear as isolated figures, but never in a comparable connection. What connection could a pagan have seen between disparate elements like an idealizedly depicted man in philosopher's attire during a meal, an orans, a criophorus, a shepherd-teacher-ruler, an angler (with a dolphin on the hook!), an anchor, a Helius bust, herd animals, trees with birds in the branches, and the floral frame? He will probably have, except for the few allusions to the reality of death (the idealized portrayal of the deceased as an old man and as a shepherd-teacher-ruler, and both portraits), recognized most elements, but not understood them. No matter how familiar everything might have seemed, the logic of the whole must have been hardly retrievable to a non-Christian. A Christian on the other hand interpreted the anchor as a crucifix, and knew that the dolphin/fish alluded to the Ichthys acronym (Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σωτῆρ). This immediately made him understand the meaning of the whole frieze: the main stress on the experience of bliss and peace; secondary stress on Christian piety and devotion, tuition in the new doctrine, and pastoral concern about a former official who wanted to be a shepherd for those left in his care. To a Christian the message of this sarcophagus even was rather simple: here a cultivated person formerly in charge is buried, along with his devoted wife; thanks to his faith he was happy, and partly due to that faith he endeavoured to be a shepherd to his subordinates.¹⁹

¹⁹ See A. Provoost, 'De sarcofaag van Brignoles-La Gayole: een compendium van de derde-eeuwse vroegchristelijke emblemen', in A. Provoost, J. Vaes, and J. Pelsmaekers (eds.), *De materiële cultuur van de eerste christenen* (Louvain 1983) 66–78. I am convinced that even the comparable Ludwig sarcophagus in Basel is Christian as well. See G. Berger-Doer, 'Fischer-Hirtensarkophag für ein Ehepaar', in *Antike Kunstwerke aus der Sammlung Ludwig*, iii: *Skulpturen* (Veröffentlichungen des Antikenmuseums Basel 4.3; Basel 1990) 417–36: no. 256. Gratia Berger-Doer's thesis that immortality emblems are involved and that the representations are related to a pagan hereafter contradicts a cultural-anthropological approach of the iconic repertory of that time. For more about this, see Provoost 2000 (n. 2) 85–8.

3.3. *Context 3: Advancing organisation (c. 250–325)*

It cannot be emphasized enough that, as opposed to what might have been expected, this context consists of no less than 53.25% of the total number of representations. The breakthrough of Christianity therefore did not take place after the Edict of Milan, but apparently from the middle of the third century onwards!²⁰

The tables clearly show in what sense this Christianization is to be interpreted:

A. Ranking according to the fields:

1. Idyllic/bucolic	59.97%	– 574
2. Biblical/ecclesiastical	56%	– 536
3. Realia/personalia	54.75%	– 524
4. Orans	25.91%	– 248
5. Mousikos/culture	16.82%	– 161
6. Pagan	7.83%	– 42
7. Signs	4.38%	– 42

B. Ranking according to the thematic clusters:

1. Old Testament	36.57%	– 350
2. Pastoral (stricto sensu)	24.13%	– 231
3. New Testament	22.77%	– 218

C. Ranking according to the iconographical subjects:

1. Ornamental framework	30.3%	– 290
2. Funeral	28.73%	– 275
3. Floral/vegetal	22.15%	– 212
4. Orans (excl. biblical orantes)	21.21%	– 203
5. Criophorus	20.16%	– 193
Jonah (all scenes)	20.16%	– 193
7. Shepherd (excl. criophorus)	15.36%	– 147
8. Reposing personage	15.15%	– 145
9. Mousikos (stricto sensu)	14.94%	– 143
10. Strigiles	13.27%	– 127
11. Birds (incl. pigeons)	12.95%	– 124
12. Genius	12.01%	– 115
13. Peter (all scenes)	11.7%	– 112

²⁰ Even when keeping in mind that I count the archaeological remains from the so-called Early Constantine period among context 3 and that any dating from just before or just after 325 can almost never really be substantiated, it is hard to deny that the number of pre-Constantine representations is unexpectedly high.

14. Scroll/bundle of scrolls	11.18%	– 107
Moses/Peter striking the rock	11.18%	– 107
16. Ornamental pattern	11.07%	– 106
17. Parapetasma	8.15%	– 78
18. Multiplication of bread/fishes	8.04%	– 77
19. Raising of Lazarus	7.62%	– 73
20. Lions	6.68%	– 64
21. Abraham and Isaac	5.95%	– 57
22. Capture of Peter	5.74%	– 55
Noah in the ark	5.74%	– 55
24. Daniel between the lions	5.64%	– 54
Flock (animals + attributes)	5.64%	– 54
26. Gardens (incl. scenery/accessories)	5.43%	– 52
Adoration of the Magi	5.43%	– 52
28. The three youths in the fiery furnace	5.32%	– 51
29. Healing of the blind man	5.01%	– 48

In the evolution of the fields three obvious trends can be observed: the biblical-ecclesiastical field climbs to no less than 56%, only preceded by the idyllic-bucolic sphere of influence (59.97%); the traditional repertory even slightly or heavily declines (realia/personalia—now 54.75%; orans—now 25.91%; mousikos/culture—barely 16.82%; pagan—7.83%); the frequency of the symbols even declines to 4.38%.

The table of thematic clusters seems at first sight to contradict those of the fields. The pastoral group (*stricto sensu*) declines to a quarter (from 50% to 24.13%), although the idyllic/bucolic field maintains its first position with 59.97% (incidentally we shall later have to point to a kind of bucolisation of the main part of the themes and motifs). In the biblical group we see a rise of the Old Testament scenes up to 36.57%, while the New Testament ones nearly stagnate with 22.77%.

The most interesting findings can be seen in the table of themes and motifs. In the first and third place can now be found ornamental framework (30.3%) and floral/vegetal (22.15%), but among the other topics surpassing 5% are no less than ten other ones with a idyllic/bucolic character: criophorus (20.16%), shepherd (15.36%), reposing personage (15.15%), strigiles (13.27%), birds (12.95%), genius (12.01%), ornamental pattern (11.07%), lions (6.68%), flock (5.64%), gardens (5.43%). Besides we see how the Old Testament scenes too may actually be labelled as a sort of biblical idylls: Jonah (20.16%),



Fig. 3. Sarcophagus found in the Vigna of the Cimitero dei Giordani and preserved in the Vatican Museum Pio Cristiano. From: F. W. Deichmann, G. Bovini, and H. Brandenburg (eds.), *Repertorium der christlich-antiken Sarkophage*, i: *Rom und Ostia* (Wiesbaden 1967) 118.

Moses/Peter striking the rock (11.18%), Abraham and Isaac (5.95%) and Noah in the ark (5.74%).²¹

This explicit bucolisation becomes even clearer through the analysis of three concrete examples.

The sarcophagus preserved in the Vatican Museum Pio Cristiano referred to in the introductory paragraph (fig. 3—with the *μακάρων ἐνὶ χώρῳ* formula), dating from the second half of the third century, shows at the left of the tabula with inscription no less than three types of shepherds, namely a sitting shepherd, a criophorus and a musing shepherd. The rests of a little boat on the right of the tabula presumably belonged to a Jonah scene. The inscription confirms the main stress that is unmistakably idyllic: 'Here rests Paulina, in the land of the blessed. Pakata rendered her the last honours, as her sweet wet-nurse, holy in Christ.'

The bucolisation is almost excessive in the cubiculum of Ianuarius in the Praetextatus catacomb, a burial chamber that can be dated *c.* 310–20 (fig. 4). The four vault copings are fully covered with vegetal motifs, with in between a few birds. This scenery symbolizes the seasons: volutes of wild roses for spring and of ears of corn for

²¹ Furthermore such relatively simple scenes (and particularly the Jonah scenes) are particularly suitable as isolated motifs or emblems—characteristic of context 3—, whereas they have proved to be for instance less usable in the fixed panel structure of the Irish high crosses from the eighth to the tenth centuries (from which the Jonah scenes are even missing altogether).



Fig. 4. Cubiculum of Ianuarius in the Praetextatus catacomb: right wall with arcosolium and vault. From: G. Wilpert, *Le pitture delle catacombe romane* (Rome 1903) tav. 34.

summer, vines for autumn, and olive branches for winter. On top of this there are garlands appearing from vases, placed in the corners. On the walls of the room we find similar scenes in great measure: mowers (= summer) on the front of the niche in the left wall; small circles with birds and stylized flowers on the arch of the same niche, and a criophorus in the lunette; vintage (= autumn) on the front of the niche in the back wall; rows of peacocks and pigeons facing each other on the arch of that same niche, and the rock miracle in the lunette; olive crop (= winter) on the front of the niche in the right wall; rows of storks (?) and pigeons on the arch of that same niche, and Jonah thrown into the sea in the lunette; children picking roses (= spring) on the entrance niche.



Fig. 5. So-called Cubiculum of the five saints in the Callixtus catacomb. From: G. Wilpert, *Le pitture delle catacombe romane* (Rome 1903) tav. 34.

Of the so-called Cubiculum of the five saints in the Callixtus catacomb, dating from the beginning of the fourth century, only the back wall has been preserved (fig. 5). The remarkable scenery consists of a garden setting and five deceased people in the guise of orans figures. The captions identify them as *Dionisia*, *Nemesius*, *Procope*, *Eliodora* and *Zoe*. Every name has the standard formula of *IN PACE* ('in peace') added. There is also a sixth name, namely *Arcadia*, which however evidently stands near a peacock. Are these five (or six) souls in bliss in the heavenly paradise, as is invariably claimed? Or should this evocation of an idyllic funeral garden perhaps be seen as the iconic equivalent of the *IN PACE* inscriptions, and isn't the situation of bliss of the Christian deceased represented strikingly here (without being explicitly projected into the future)?

3.4. *Context 4: Beginning stabilisation (325–75)*

After a first absolute peak in context 3 with 53.25%, funerary early Christian iconography rises to a second peak in context 4 with 29.27%. Converted to an identical length of time (namely half a century as opposed to three quarters of a century) we obtain a ratio of 789 for context 4 to 957 for context 3.

The tables show both continuity and change:

Ranking according to the field:

1. Biblical-ecclesiastical	68.82% – 659
2. Idyllic/bucolic	64.44% – 617
3. Realia/personalia	32.69% – 313
4. Orans	24.14% – 231
5. Mousikos/culture	17.87% – 171
6. Signs	12.35% – 118
7. Pagan	7.6% – 73

Ranking according to the thematic clusters:

1. New Testament	49.8% – 477
2. Old Testament	36.69% – 351
3. Pastoral (stricto sensu)	21.1% – 202

Ranking according to the iconographical subjects:

1. Floral/vegetal	44.29% – 424
2. Ornamental framework	42.96% – 411
3. Orans (excl. biblical orantes)	22.24% – 213
4. Funeral	21.29% – 204
5. Mousikos (stricto sensu)	15.96% – 153
6. Birds (incl. pigeons)	15.58% – 149
Ornamental pattern	15.58% – 149
8. Peter (all scenes)	14.82% – 142
9. Criophorus	12.92% – 124
10. Moses/Peter striking the rock	12.73% – 122
11. Genius	12.54% – 120
Raising of Lazarus	12.54% – 120
13. Strigiles	11.02% – 106
Scroll/bundle of scrolls	11.02% – 106
Multiplication of bread/fishes	11.02% – 106
14. Gardens (incl. scenery/accessories)	10.07% – 96
15. Apostles	9.31% – 89
16. Lions	9.12% – 87
17. Daniel between lions	8.55% – 82
18. Shepherd (excl. criophorus)	8.36% – 80
19. Jonah (all scenes)	7.79% – 75

20. Adoration of the Magi	7.6%	—	73
21. Niche	7.41%	—	71
Columns as framework	7.41%	—	71
23. Healing of the blind man	7.22%	—	69
24. Marble/marble-imitation	6.27%	—	60
25. Adam and Eve + tree	6.08%	—	58
26. Abraham and Isaac	5.89%	—	56
Paul (all scenes)	5.89%	—	56
28. Reposing personage	5.7%	—	55
29. Healing of the paralytic	5.51%	—	53
30. Capture of Peter	5.32%	—	51
Marine	5.32%	—	51
32. Haemorroissa	5.13%	—	49

Two important changes can be noted in the ranking of the fields. Both are related to the way Christianization is being made increasingly more explicit. The biblical-ecclesiastical sphere of influence now comes in the first place, not stepping aside from it in the next two contexts. The symbols—especially crucifixes and Christ monograms, no longer modestly placed in a corner, but mostly taking a prominent place—are starting a revival that will manifest itself even more clearly in the following contexts. Except for the realia/personalia the other spheres of influence can just about maintain their frequency.

Inside the thematic clusters the Old Testament and New Testament scenes are changing place; also in the following contexts the New Testament scenes will maintain this ascendancy.

The ranking of the separate themes and motifs likewise shows the advance of biblical-ecclesiastical scenes. The Peter scenes and the rock miracle even make the top ten, followed in a downward tendency by the resurrection of Lazarus, scenes with apostles, Daniel in the lion's den, Jonah scenes, the adoration of the Magi, the healing of the blind man, Adam and Eve, representations concerning Paul, the healing of the paralysed man, the arrest of Peter, and the healing of the haemorroissa. In the bucolic-idyllic themes we see a decline of the floral/vegetal elements. On the other hand, the ornamental framework comes more and more to the forefront, which even leads to separate types of sarcophagi (for example with niches, columns, city gates as ornamental framework).

A tree sarcophagus with five niches from the Vatican Museo Pio Cristiano from the second third of the fourth century illustrates this evolution of iconography well (fig. 6). The tree niches with birds in the branches show how the idyllic/bucolic framework remains a



Fig. 6. Sarcophagus from the hypogaeum of the *Confessio* of S. Paolo fuori le mura in Rome, and preserved in the Vatican Museo Pio Cristiano. From: F. W. Deichmann, G. Bovini, and H. Brandenburg (eds.), *Repertorium der christlich-antiken Sarkophage*, i: *Rom und Ostia* (Wiesbaden 1967) 61.

constant, but at the same time changes its countenance. The scenes in the tree niches have become either an abstract appearance or have evolved to pure illustrations of the biblical or apocryphal stories. From the left to the right can be seen: God the Father with Cain and Abel; the arrest of Peter; the triumphal cross crowned with wreathed chrismon (*tropaion*) and two guarding soldiers; the chained Paul, just before his execution; the mourning Job with wife and friend.

3.5. *Context 5: Final stabilisation (c. 375–500)*

From context 5 onwards funerary early Christian iconography in Rome has started a regression. In spite of the duration of 125 years the percentage amounts to just 15.25% of all the early Christian representations in Rome and Ostia. This should be interpreted in the light of the total evolution: an increase up to context 3, and an irrevocable decrease from context 4 onwards. If the numbers are chronologically reduced to one and the same denominator (namely to 25 years) the following view is obtained: 5.5 for context 2; 319 for context 3; 263 for context 4; as opposed to 60 for context 5; and 1 for context 6.

The ranking tables confirm the trends manifested for the first time in context 4:

Ranking according to the fields:

1. Biblical-ecclesiastical	67.02% – 641
2. Idyllic/bucolic	66.3% – 635

3. Realia/personalia	31.89% – 305
4. Signs	25.44% – 244
5. Mousikos/culture	15.77% – 151
6. Orans	12.9% – 123
7. Pagan	5.01% – 48

Ranking according to the thematic clusters:

1. New Testament	38.35% – 367
2. Old Testament	20.78% – 199
3. Pastoral (stricto sensu)	5.37% – 51

Ranking according to the iconographical subjects:

1. Ornamental framework	44.44% – 425
2. Floral/vegetal	28.31% – 271
3. Funeral	27.59% – 264
4. Apostles (all scenes)	26.88% – 257
5. Strigiles	18.27% – 177
6. Chrismon/cross/monogram	17.92% – 175
7. Mousikos (stricto sensu)	15.77% – 151
8. Peter (all scenes)	15.41% – 147
9. Niche	15.05% – 144
Columns as framework	15.05% – 144
11. Scroll/bundle of scrolls	12.18% – 117
12. Criophorus	11.82% – 113
13. Orans (excl. biblical orantes)	11.46% – 110
14. Genius	10.75% – 103
15. Wreath/corona	10.39% – 99
16. Birds (incl. pigeons)	8.96% – 86
17. Marine	8.6% – 82
City gate	8.6% – 82
19. Traditio legis	6.81% – 65
20. Parapetasma	6.45% – 62
21. Gardens (incl. scenery/accessories)	6.09% – 58
Paul (all scenes)	6.09% – 58
23. Shell	5.37% – 51
24. Christ + apostles (context uncertain)	5.01% – 48

The biblical-ecclesiastical sphere of influence is in the lead with 67.02%, but the idyllic-bucolic subject matter stays at nearly the same level with 66.3%. The symbols with 25.44% move up to the fourth position.

Among the thematic clusters can be noted that the frequency of the biblical scenes (with 38.35% for the New Testament, and 20.78% for the Old Testament representations) decreases considerably. The

purely pastoral subject matter reaches a critical bottom limit with 5.37%.

In the classification of the separate themes and motifs the sixth place of chrismon/cross/monogram (17.92%) and the nineteenth place of the newcomer 'traditio legis' (6.81%) are an obvious expression of the increasing influence of the Church management.

3.6. *Context 6: The rise of different Christian subcultures at the cost of the common 'Roman' culture (c. 500–800)*

In spite of the duration of no less than three centuries context 6 has to do with a mere 0.72%. This low number evidently summons us to certain caution while interpreting.

The tables nevertheless show how the turns that were clearly visible from context 4 onwards seem to have become definitive.

Ranking according to the field:

1. Biblical-ecclesiastical	84.61%	–	810
2. Idyllic/bucolic	38.46%	–	368
3. Signs	30.76%	–	294
4. Realia/personalia	15.38%	–	147
Mousikos/culture	15.38%	–	147
6. Orans	7.69%	–	74
7. Pagan	0%	–	0

Ranking according to the thematic clusters:

1. New Testament	15.38%	–	147
Pastoral (stricto sensu)	15.38%	–	147
3. Old Testament	0%	–	0

Ranking according to the iconographical subjects:

1. Floral/vegetal	84.61%	–	810
Christ + apostles	84.61%	–	810
3. Ornamental framework	69.23%	–	663
4. Funeral	61.53%	–	589
Christ (bust/portrait/sitting)	61.53%	–	589
6. Chrismon/cross/monogram	38.46%	–	368
7. Marble/marble-imitation	15.38%	–	147
8. Orans (excl. biblical orantes)	7.69%	–	74
Mousikos (stricto sensu)	7.69%	–	74
Birds (incl. pigeons)	7.69%	–	74
Scroll/bundle of scrolls	7.69%	–	74
Gardens (incl. scenery/accessories)	7.69%	–	74

Flock (animals + attributes)	7.69%	–	74
Trellis/rastering	7.69%	–	74
Cassette-decoration	7.69%	–	74

Among the fields the symbols move up to third place with 30.76%.

Among the thematic clusters the Old Testament scenes seem to have completely vanished, while the New Testament and purely pastoral themes maintain themselves with a poor 15.38%.

The ranking per theme or motif shows a kind of generalisation of the markedly ecclesiastical items: Christ + apostles in the shared first place (84.61%); the isolated Christ in the shared fourth place (61.53%) and chrismon/cross/monogram in sixth place (38.46%).

4. *Conclusion: the development of the apostolic body of thought in early Roman Christian iconography*

The quantitative approach of early Christian Roman iconography has enabled us to distinguish several steps in the development of the apostolic body of thought, which coincide with the evolution of early Christian material culture according to six contexts (Table 2).

In context 1 (*c.* 30–150), when a proper Christian material culture was evidently out of the question, iconography was probably restricted to the direct transformation of biblical, possibly merely Old Testament concepts into visual symbols (in analogy with cuneiform characters and hieroglyphs).

In context 2 (*c.* 150–250) Jewish-Christian cryptic iconography was abandoned resolutely in favour of the Hellenistic-Roman repertory. This led to a selection of mainly idyllic/bucolic images expressing the Christian feeling of bliss. The Old Testament ‘biblical idylls’ (genre Jonah, Noah and the like) were complemented with several New Testament scenes. The *mousikos an r* and *pietas* themes (*cfr.* especially the teaching and reading scenes and the orants) indicate in the first place that the graves in the catacombs as well as the sarcophagi were primarily destined for the better off, to whom being literate was a status symbol.

In context 3 (*c.* 250–325), which includes little more than half of the frescos and sarcophagi, the idyllic-bucolic character gets even more explicit. The more elaborate biblical scenes are becoming more numerous, with still a lead of the Old Testament on the New Testament scenes. The *mousikos* representations and the orants remain

mainly an expression of the social-economic positioning of the better off. The portraits or symbolic representations of the deceased and the realia are apparently mainly functional distinguishing marks.

In context 4 (c. 325–375) the basic elements we got acquainted with in the previous contexts continue to exist, but the elaborate biblical scenes are seen to be more and more evolving into really narrating scenes (*historiae*, i.e. the systematic observation and representation of the most relevant features of an event), and the portraits into devotional depictions (*characteres*, i.e. the ideoplastic expression of the essence of a person)—which leads to the first devotional portraits of Christ, martyrs and saints. There may even be talk of a kind of mutation, in the sense of an increasing management of the Church. That the New Testament scenes surpass the Old Testament ones for the first time may be equally symptomatic of this advancing process of dogmatizing.

In context 5 (c. 375–500) Christian iconography reaches its peak and at the same time the first signs of quantitative and qualitative regression can be noted. For instance the symbols receive a more markedly Christian countenance. The portraits get more and more outspokenly the character of worshipped depictions (and later of icons). The narrating scenes become mostly real illustrations of episodes from the Bible or apocryphal literature (instead of idyllic evocations). Some emblems become elaborate allegories or attributes with didactic purposes. Incidentally, from the whole of iconography the direct influence of the doctrine and cultus controlled by the Church becomes more and more clear.

In context 6 (c. 500–800) iconography differentiates per cultural territory. Rome doesn't escape the tendency towards a stricter application of image prohibition either, with reduction or even disappearance of figurative scenes (cfr. iconoclasm). Only the symbols seem unthreatened and even come more clearly to the fore, at the expense of the *characteres* and *historiae*.

Table 1 Evolution of the iconographic genres

ca. 30–150	30	
Christ	40	Biblical signs
+ charismatic	50	
leaders	60	
	70	
	80	
	90	
	100	
	110	
	120	
	130	
	140	
ca. 150–250	150	→ Emblems/ Dispersed motifs
First expressions of	160	
organisation	170	
	180	
	190	
	200	
	210	
	220	
	230	
	240	
ca. 250–325	250	→ Scenes/ Portraits
Advancing organisation	260	
	270	
	280	
	290	
	300	
	310	
	320	
ca. 325–375	330	→ Historiae/ Characteres
Beginning stabilisation	340	
	350	
	360	
	370	
ca. 375–500	380	
Final stabilisation	390	
	400	
	410	
	420	
	430	
	440	
	450	
	460	
	470	
	480	
	490	
ca. 500–800	500	
Differentiated Christian	510	
subcultures	520	
	530	
	540	
	550	
	560	
	etc.	
	800	

Table 2 Relation between the cultural-anthropologic situation and the iconography

ca. 30–150	30	CONTEXT 1
Christ	40	Creation of Christian communities in
+ charismatic	50	many places, in consequence of the action
leaders	60	of Christ and the charismatic leaders.
	70	Spontaneous co-ordination.
	80	The iconography is probably limited to
	90	a restricted number of cryptic signs with
	100	explicitly Christian character; perhaps also
	110	some neutrally disposed personalia/realia.
	120	
	130	
	140	
ca. 150–250	150	CONTEXT 2
First expressions of	160	First expressions of common provisions,
organisation	170	like house-churches and separate sections
	180	on cemeteries; foundation of some schools
	190	and libraries. General break-through of the
	200	signs and the personalia/realia; evolution
	210	of the signs, in the framework of the
	220	pictural stripes-style and the plastic art of
	230	the sarcophagi, into dispersed motifs
	240	(emblems).
ca. 250–325	250	CONTEXT 3
Advancing organisation	260	Long period of peace between two violent
	270	campaigns of persecution; continuing
	280	realisation, perhaps through a central
	290	strategy, of common provisions like burial
	300	and poor-relief; adaptation of existing
	310	buildings for religious services and the
	320	earliest new buildings; euergetism of the
		rich; beginning monachism; further
		extension of schools and libraries.
		In the iconography: continuation of the
		signs and personalia; emblems/dispersed
		motifs become frequently elaborated scenes
		and portraits.
ca. 325–375	330	CONTEXT 4
Beginning stabilisation	340	Christianity is now a tolerated religion;
	350	more material possibilities.
	360	In the iconography: continuation of the
	370	signs, the personalia/realia and the
		emblems/dispersed motifs; the elaborate
		scenes evolve into 'historiae', and the
		portraits into 'characteres'.

ca. 375–500

Final stabilisation

380 **CONTEXT 5**
 390 Christianity becomes the state religion, so
 400 that the public and the religious
 410 organisation melt more and more together;
 420 more and more explicit Christian
 430 interventions in the existing topography of
 440 the cities.
 450 In the iconography: signs receive a more
 460 emphasised appearance; the portraits
 470 evolve still more explicitly into
 480 'characteres' (and later on into icons), the
 490 narrative scenes into 'historiae'; some
 emblems become elaborated allegories,
 other ones become attributes; growing
 influence of the doctrine and cult
 controlled by the Church.

ca. 500–800

Differentiated

Christian subcultures

500 **CONTEXT 6**
 510 Christianity splits up, under the influence
 520 of the invaders and the expansion of
 530 Byzantium, in divergent subcultures: the
 540 Byzantine Empire and the Coptic
 550 civilization in the East; the Germans,
 560 Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Burgundians,
 570 Saxons/Anglo-Saxons and Vandals in the
 580 West. Large diversity of social patterns
 590 and liturgical practices.
 600 The iconography differentiates according
 610 to the subcultures; everywhere inclination
 620 towards stricter application of the
 630 prohibition of images, with reduction or
 640 even vanishing of figurative scenes (cf.
 650 iconoclasm); the signs are uncontested; the
 660 'characteres' and 'historiae' survive, but
 670 become more scanty.

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Table 3 Ranking-Lists

	CONTEXT 2	CONTEXT 3	CONTEXT 4	CONTEXT 5	CONTEXT 6	TOTAL
Total	22 (1.22%)	957 (53.25%)	526 (29.27%)	279 (15.25%)	13 (0.72%)	1797
Fresco-ensembles	12 (2.97%)	197 (48.88%)	169 (41.93%)	14 (3.47%)	11 (2.72%)	403
Sarcophagi	10 (0.71%)	760 (54.51%)	357 (25.6%)	265 (19.01%)	2 (0.14%)	1394
RANKING ACCORDING TO THE FIELD						
Idyllic/bucolic	22 (100%)	574 (59.97%)	339 (64.44%)	185 (66.3%)	5 (38.46%)	1124 (62.54%)
Biblical/ecclesiastical	8 (36.36%)	536 (56%)	362 (68.82%)	187 (67.02%)	11 (84.61%)	1104 (61.43%)
Realia/personalia	13 (5.09%)	524 (54.75%)	172 (32.69%)	89 (31.89%)	2 (15.38%)	800 (44.51%)
Orans (incl. biblical orantes)	7 (31.81%)	248 (25.91%)	127 (24.14%)	36 (12.9%)	1 (7.69%)	419 (23.2%)
Mousikos/culture	12 (54.54%)	161 (16.82%)	94 (17.87%)	44 (15.77%)	2 (15.38%)	313 (17.41%)
Signs	5 (22.72%)	42 (4.38%)	65 (12.35%)	71 (25.44%)	4 (30.76%)	187 (10.4%)
Pagan	9 (40.9%)	75 (7.83%)	40 (7.6%)	14 (5.01%)	0 (0%)	138 (7.67%)
RANKING ACCORDING TO THEMATIC CLUSTERS						
Old Testament	6 (27.27%)	350 (36.57%)	193 (36.69%)	58 (20.78%)	0 (0%)	607 (33.77%)
New Testament	5 (22.72%)	218 (22.77%)	262 (49.8%)	107 (38.35%)	2 (15.38%)	594 (33.05%)
Pastoral (stricto sensu)	11 (50%)	231 (24.13%)	111 (21.1%)	15 (5.37%)	2 (15.38%)	368 (20.47%)
RANKING CONCERNING THE ICONOGRAPHICAL SUBJECT						
Ornamental framework	12 (54.54%)	290 (30.3%)	226 (42.96%)	124 (44.44%)	9 (69.23%)	661 (36.78%)
Floral/vegetal	14 (63.63%)	212 (22.15%)	233 (44.29%)	79 (28.31%)	11 (84.61%)	549 (30.55%)
Funeral	7 (31.81%)	275 (28.73%)	112 (21.29%)	77 (27.59%)	8 (61.53%)	479 (26.65%)
Orans (excl. biblical orantes)	7 (31.81%)	203 (21.21%)	117 (22.24%)	32 (11.46%)	1 (7.69%)	360 (20.03%)
Criophorus	9 (40.9%)	193 (20.16%)	68 (12.92%)	33 (11.82%)	0 (0%)	303 (16.86%)

Mousikos (stricto sensu)	12 (54.54%)	143 (14.94%)	84 (15.96%)	44 (15.77%)	1 (7.69%)	284 (15.8%)
Jonah (all scenes)	5 (22.72%)	193 (20.16%)	41 (7.79%)	13 (4.65%)	0 (0%)	252 (14.02%)
Birds (incl. pigeons)	12 (54.54%)	124 (12.95%)	82 (15.58%)	25 (8.96%)	1 (7.69%)	244 (13.57%)
Strigiles	2 (9.09%)	127 (13.27%)	58 (11.02%)	51 (18.27%)	0 (0%)	238 (13.24%)
Peter (all scenes)	0 (0%)	112 (11.7%)	78 (14.82%)	43 (15.41%)	0 (0%)	233 (12.96%)
Genius	6 (27.27%)	115 (12.01%)	66 (12.54%)	30 (10.75%)	0 (0%)	217 (12.07%)
Scroll/bundle of scrolls	7 (31.81%)	107 (11.18%)	58 (11.02%)	34 (12.18%)	1 (7.69%)	207 (11.51%)
Ornamental pattern	9 (40.9%)	106 (11.07%)	82 (15.58%)	9 (3.22%)	0 (0%)	206 (11.46%)
Shepherd (excl. criophorus)	6 (27.27%)	147 (15.36%)	44 (8.36%)	5 (1.79%)	0 (0%)	202 (11.24%)
Reposing personage	6 (27.27%)	145 (15.15%)	30 (5.7%)	10 (3.58%)	0 (0%)	191 (10.62%)
Moses/Peter striking the rock	2 (9.09%)	107 (11.18%)	67 (12.73%)	12 (4.3%)	0 (0%)	188 (10.46%)
Apostles	0 (0%)	40 (4.17%)	49 (9.31%)	75 (26.88%)	0 (0%)	164 (9.12%)
Raising of Lazarus	2 (9.09%)	73 (7.62%)	66 (12.54%)	6 (2.15%)	0 (0%)	147 (8.18%)
Multiplication of bread/fishes	0 (0%)	77 (8.04%)	58 (11.02%)	8 (2.86%)	0 (0%)	143 (7.95%)
Gardens (incl. scenery/ accessories)	7 (31.81%)	52 (5.43%)	53 (10.07%)	17 (6.09%)	1 (7.69%)	130 (7.23%)
Lions	3 (13.63%)	64 (6.68%)	48 (9.12%)	7 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	122 (6.78%)
Parapetasma	2 (9.09%)	78 (8.15%)	15 (2.85%)	18 (6.45%)	0 (0%)	113 (6.28%)
Daniel between the lions	1 (4.54%)	54 (5.64%)	45 (8.55%)	6 (2.15%)	0 (0%)	106 (5.89%)
Adoration of the Magi	0 (0%)	52 (5.43%)	40 (7.6%)	10 (3.58%)	0 (0%)	102 (5.67%)
Abraham and Isaac	2 (9.09%)	57 (5.95%)	31 (5.89%)	10 (3.58%)	0 (0%)	100 (5.56%)
Flock (animals + attributes)	6 (27.27%)	54 (5.64%)	25 (4.75%)	10 (3.58%)	1 (7.69%)	96 (5.39%)
Healing of the blind man	0 (0%)	48 (5.01%)	38 (7.22%)	10 (3.58%)	0 (0%)	96 (5.34%)
Niche	0 (0%)	8 (0.83%)	39 (7.41%)	42 (15.05%)	0 (0%)	89 (5%)
Chrismon/cross/monogram	0 (0%)	7 (0.73%)	25 (4.75%)	50 (17.92%)	5 (38.46%)	87 (4.84%)
Capture of Peter	0 (0%)	55 (5.74%)	28 (5.32%)	3 (1.07%)	0 (0%)	86 (4.78%)
Columns as framework	0 (0%)	5 (0.52%)	39 (7.41%)	42 (15.05%)	0 (0%)	86 (4.78%)
Noah in the ark	0 (0%)	55 (5.74%)	26 (4.94%)	2 (0.71%)	0 (0%)	83 (4.61%)

Table 3 (*cont.*)

	CONTEXT 2	CONTEXT 3	CONTEXT 4	CONTEXT 5	CONTEXT 6	TOTAL
Healing of the paralytic	1 (4.54%)	44 (4.59%)	29 (5.51%)	6 (22.15%)	0 (0%)	80 (4.45%)
The three youths in the fiery furnace	0 (0%)	51 (5.32%)	22 (4.18%)	6 (22.15%)	0 (0%)	79 (4.39%)
Marine	5 (22.72%)	21 (2.19%)	28 (5.32%)	24 (8.6%)	0 (0%)	78 (4.34%)
Gesture of speech	2 (9.09%)	47 (4.91%)	20 (3.8%)	9 (3.22%)	0 (0%)	78 (4.34%)
Adam/Eva + tree	0 (0%)	31 (3.23%)	32 (6.08%)	10 (3.58%)	0 (0%)	73 (4.06%)
Mask/Head	4 (18.18%)	45 (4.7%)	13 (2.47%)	7 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	69 (3.83%)
Vases	6 (27.27%)	35 (3.65%)	25 (4.75%)	2 (0.71%)	0 (0%)	68 (3.78%)
Jonah ejected (= orans)	4 (18.18%)	47 (4.91%)	15 (2.85%)	1 (0.35%)	0 (0%)	67 (3.72%)
Musing shepherd/person	0 (0%)	47 (4.91%)	16 (3.04%)	1 (0.35%)	0 (0%)	64 (3.56%)
Traditio clavium	0 (0%)	25 (2.61%)	26 (4.94%)	10 (3.58%)	0 (0%)	61 (3.39%)
Wreath	0 (0%)	12 (1.25%)	20 (3.8%)	29 (10.39%)	0 (0%)	61 (3.39%)
Peacock	6 (27.27%)	28 (2.92%)	25 (4.75%)	1 (0.35%)	0 (0%)	60 (3.33%)
Marble/marble-imitation	0 (0%)	21 (0.2%)	33 (6.27%)	2 (0.7%)	2 (15.38%)	58 (3.22%)
Cana	0 (0%)	28 (2.92%)	25 (4.75%)	5 (1.79%)	0 (0%)	58 (3.22%)
Haemorroissa	1 (4.54%)	21 (2.19%)	27 (5.13%)	8 (2.86%)	0 (0%)	57 (3.17%)
Shepherd in position of rest	2 (9.09%)	40 (4.17%)	11 (2.09%)	3 (1.07%)	0 (0%)	56 (3.11%)
Dolphins	5 (22.72%)	19 (1.98%)	19 (3.61%)	11 (3.94%)	0 (0%)	54 (3%)
Christ (bust/portrait/sitting)	0 (0%)	6 (0.62%)	26 (4.94%)	13 (4.65%)	8 (61.53%)	53 (2.94%)
Paul (all scenes)	0 (0%)	5 (0.52%)	31 (5.89%)	17 (6.09%)	0 (0%)	53 (2.94%)
Milk-scene	2 (9.09%)	29 (3.03%)	15 (2.85%)	4 (1.43%)	0 (0%)	50 (2.78%)
Christ + apostles	0 (0%)	6 (0.62%)	19 (3.61%)	14 (5.01%)	11 (84.61%)	50 (2.78%)
Articulation by columns/pilasters	0 (0%)	14 (1.46%)	22 (4.18%)	13 (4.65%)	0 (0%)	49 (2.72%)
Shell	0 (0%)	9 (0.94%)	24 (4.56%)	15 (5.37%)	0 (0%)	48 (2.67%)
Grapes/wine	0 (0%)	17 (1.77%)	19 (3.61%)	10 (3.58%)	0 (0%)	46 (2.55%)
Seasons/ornamental heads	2 (9.09%)	25 (2.61%)	15 (2.85%)	3 (1.02%)	0 (0%)	45 (2.5%)

Repast/agap	4 (18.18%)	28 (2.92%)	9 (1.71%)	2 (0.71%)	0 (0%)	43 (2.39%)
Pedestal/aedicula	4 (18.18%)	25 (2.61%)	8 (1.52%)	3 (1.07%)	0 (0%)	40 (2.22%)
Moses receives the Law	0 (0%)	10 (1.04%)	20 (3.8%)	8 (2.86%)	0 (0%)	38 (2.11%)
Nebukadnessar + the three youths	0 (0%)	22 (2.29%)	12 (2.28%)	4 (1.43%)	0 (0%)	38 (2.11%)
Trellis/rastering	0 (0%)	9 (0.94%)	15 (2.85%)	13 (4.65%)	1 (7.69%)	38 (2.11%)
Scale-decoration	0 (0%)	11 (1.14%)	19 (3.61%)	6 (22.15%)	0 (0%)	36 (2%)
Hunting/exotic animals	2 (9.09%)	21 (2.19%)	6 (1.14%)	3 (1.07%)	0 (0%)	32 (1.78%)
Unrecognizable miracles	0 (0%)	18 (1.88%)	7 (1.33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (1.39%)
Orans + apostles	0 (0%)	14 (1.46%)	8 (1.52%)	3 (1.07%)	0 (0%)	25 (1.39%)
City gate	1 (4.54%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	24 (8.6%)	0 (0%)	25 (1.39%)
Victoria	2 (9.09%)	10 (1.04%)	11 (2.09%)	1 (0.35%)	0 (0%)	24 (1.33%)
Acclamation	0 (0%)	4 (0.41%)	6 (1.14%)	13 (4.65%)	0 (0%)	23 (1.27%)
Cassette-decoration	0 (0%)	5 (0.52%)	14 (2.66%)	2 (0.71%)	1 (7.69%)	22 (1.22%)
Job	0 (0%)	6 (1.59%)	16 (3.04%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	22 (1.22%)
Entry in Jerusalem	0 (0%)	9 (0.94%)	10 (1.9%)	3 (1.07%)	0 (0%)	22 (1.22%)
Tending shepherd	0 (0%)	14 (1.46%)	6 (1.14%)	2 (0.71%)	0 (0%)	22 (1.22%)
Traditio legis	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (0.38%)	19 (6.81%)	0 (0%)	21 (1.16%)
Hunting animals	0 (0%)	10 (1.04%)	10 (1.9%)	1 (0.35%)	0 (0%)	21 (1.16%)
Cantharus/basin	0 (0%)	8 (0.83%)	10 (1.9%)	2 (0.71%)	0 (0%)	20 (1.11%)
Angry Jonah	0 (0%)	12 (1.25%)	8 (1.52%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	20 (1.11%)

- 19 scenes (1.05%): Denial of Peter; Abel and Cain; Capsa
 18 scenes (1%): Stars; Baptism; Harvest/gathering
 17 scenes (0.94%): Punition of Adam and Eve; Pilate; Sea-creatures; Fossor; Crossing of the Red Sea; Mandorla; He-goat/buck
 16 scenes (0.89%): Samaritan woman at the well; Angler/fisher; Healing of youth at Naïm; Dragon/snake; Palm; Musical instruments; Alpha and/or omega
 15 scenes (0.83%): Moses pulling off boots; Madonna/woman with child; Articulation by trees; Pastoral/rural scene; Genius with torch; Soldiers near cross; Triumphal cross

Table 3 (*cont.*)

14 scenes (0.77%):	Christ-teacher; Daniel + dragon/destruction of temple; acanthus; olive-branch (incl. with pigeon); Arcade
13 scenes (0.72%):	Rastering; Dionysiac/Bacchic
12 scenes (0.66%):	Christ + Peter and Paul; Pigeon/bird with twig; Chest; Crib
11 scenes (0.61%):	Fishes; Susanna with the elder men; Martyrium of Paul; Dextrarum iunctio; Throne; Deer
10 scenes (0.55%):	Cathedra; Christ in unrecognizable scene; vision of Ezekiel; Muse/Polyhymnia; Codex; Servant
9 scenes (0.5%):	Prophet; Balaam; Moon/Luna; Sun-dial; Tritons/Nereids; Hunting scenes
8 scenes (0.44%):	Barrel; Orpheus; Helius/Sol/sun; Ivy; Olive-tree; Hare/boy with hare; Yoke; Gems/jewels; Scrinium; Shield; Thyrsus
7 scenes (0.38%):	Swastika; Ascension of Elijah; Amor and Psyche; Griffin; Kneeling person; Cornucopia; Raising of a deceased person; Jonah-orans in a boat; Creation; Shepherd-teacher
6 scenes (0.33%):	Angels; Orans + Peter and Paul; Christ-Lamb on rock/mount; Eagle; Door; Trident; Peter and Paul
5 scenes (0.28%):	Hercules; Tobias; Healing of the leper; Phoenix; Raising of the daughter of Jairus; Capture of Christ; Diptychon; Peter and Paul; Pegasus/winged horse; Horseman; Lance
4 scenes (0.22%):	Felix; Medusa/Gorgo; Lamb of God; Sermon on the Mount; Washing of the feet; Christ + chief of Capharnaum; Zacchaeus; Lily; Adoration of the shepherds; Punition of the elder men (Susanna); Sea-horse; John the evangelist; Herme; Eros
3 scenes (0.16%):	Felix + Adauctus; Martyrium of Peter; Caelus/vault of heaven; Canaanite woman; Peter + the dog of Simon Magus; Axe; Herodes + Magi; Writing materials/theca calamaria; Lotus; Kymation; Panther/sea-panther; Christ + soldiers; Cock-fight; Mark; Oceanus; Palmbranch
2 scenes (0.11%):	Milestone; Merita + Felix + Adauctus; Meal of Isaac; Pillar of fire; Samson; Daniel condemns the older men; Samson strangles the lion; Hercules robs the apples of the Hesperides; Miracle of the manna; Hermes/Mercurius; The wise and stupid virgins; Healing of the deformed woman; Jacob; Lot; Coronation; Boat; Joseph and his brothers; Soldiers raming the dress; David with sling; Miracle of the quails; David and Goliath; Satyr; Lighthouse; Iuno; Baldachin; Healing of the sick at the Bethesda-pool; Healing of three blind men; Driver; Jacob blesses Ephraim and Manasse; Stork; Bucket

1 scene (0.05%):

Pudicitia; Hymenaeus; Incensory; Anchor; Cuirass; Dionysus; Silenus; The massacre of the Innocents; Pyxis; Simon of Cyrene; Atlas; Christ + evangelists; Concordia; John the Baptist; Christ menaced by the Jews; Christ and Caiphas; Birth of Christ; Salvation of Peter; Peter heals the blind widow; Moses menaced; Capture of Moses; Christus Pronubus; Resurrected Christ + two Maries; Peter walking on the water; Poseidon; Fight-scène; Helmet; Capture of apostle; Mouse; Knuckle-motif; Judas kiss; Dioscure; Ibex; Bear; Tamer of wild beasts; Journey; Flagellation; Prisoner between two soldiers; Cursor; Urn upon pillar; Amphore; Graces; Boy with goose; Flutes; T-cross with hanging cloth; Duck; Punition of Ananias; Healing of the servant of the centurion; Visitation; Drunk Noah; Odysseus; Mortuary monument; Procession; Pluto; Sabazius; Caduceus; Prostratio; Wheel-motif; Venus; Devastation of idol; Meeting Judah-Tamar; Grieved Adam and Eve; Vision of Mamre; Jacob and the vision of Bethel; Dream of Jacob; Moses saved from the water; Arrival of Jacob in Egypt; Dreams of Joseph; Phinehas with Zimri and Cozbi; Absalon; Samson sends foxes; Dea Tellus; Anatomic lesson; Ornamentation with lambda and omega; Hercules saves Alcestis from Hades; Hercules kills the hydra; Dying Admetus with family; Hercules kills enemy; Athena and Hercules; Abundantia; Demeter-Abundantia; Apparition of Christ to Peter; Spies with bunch of grapes; Prophecy of Micah; Gorgonius/Peter/Marcellinus/Tiburtius; Moses and Aaron; Maurus/Papias/Sisinnius; Marcellus/Pollion/Petrus/Milis/Pumenius; Turtura/Felix/Adauctus; Merita/Adauctus/Petrus/Paulus/Stephanus; Luke; Agnes; Philip and eunuch; Lamb multiplicates breads; Martyrium of Callixtus; Viatrix/Simplicius/Faustinus/Rufus; Sixtus/Optatus/Cornelius/Cyprian; Protus and Hyacinthus; Abdon/Sennen/Milix/Vincentius; John the evangelist/Hermes/Benedictus; Felicitas and sons; Cecilia/Urbanus/Polycanus/Sebastian/Quirinus

THE ERA OF THE APOSTLES ACCORDING TO EUSEBIUS' *HISTORY OF THE CHURCH*

Adelbert Davids

Apologetic approach of Eusebius of Caesarea

The *History of the Church* by Eusebius of Caesarea in Palestine (d. c. 339) is a most important source for our knowledge of the history of the first three Christian centuries, and in some cases our only source.¹ Eusebius' aim was to show how the Christian religion spread 'throughout the whole world' after Christ's Ascension until, after the cessation of persecutions and elimination of heresies, it reached its final status of free religion in the Roman Empire under the Emperor Constantine—an event of which Eusebius himself was a witness of the first order.² In his historiography he set out the main lines for centuries to come: a Syriac translation of his *History* was in circulation in the East as early as the fourth century, and it was translated into Armenian not long after; and in the West his book—after the Latin translation by Rufinus in 403—was also highly appreciated.

Eusebius' *History* has known successive 'original' editions. It is believed that Eusebius started work on it in the last decade of the third century, that is, before the great persecution by Emperor Diocletian.³ Eduard Schwartz, editor of the critical edition of the *History*, has suggested that the first edition appeared soon after the so-called edict of Galerius in 311.⁴ Subsequent events, such as new

¹ The edition used in this contribution is E. Schwartz, *Eusebius, Kirchengeschichte: Kleine Ausgabe* (Leipzig 1914² = Berlin 1955³). The translations are taken from G. A. Williamson, *Eusebius: The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine* (Harmondsworth 1965).

² See W. Völker, 'Von welchen Tendenzen liess sich Eusebius bei Abfassung seiner "Kirchengeschichte" leiten?', *VC* 4 1950 157–80.

³ T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass. 1981) 128, 149–50; the first edition dates from around 295. For the different editions of the *History* see R. M. Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian* (Oxford 1980) 10–21.

⁴ E. Schwartz, *Eusebius Werke*, ii: *Die Kirchengeschichte* 3 (GCS 9.3) lvi: between 311 and 313. See also R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean World from the Second Century AD to the Conversion of Constantine* (Harmondsworth 1988) 608–9.

persecutions by Maximin Daia in the East, the victory of Licinius and, finally, the succession of Constantine in 324, made further editions with additions necessary. A final tenth book is a panegyric on the Christian Emperor Constantine.

In his plan to be the first author to describe the history of the Church, Eusebius could rely on his own *Chronicle* and on his apologetical works *Praeparatio evangelica* and *Demonstratio evangelica*. He had also collected Old Testament texts in his *Eclogae*, which proved in his eyes that the doctrine of Christ would finally be triumphant throughout the world. He was convinced that Christianity was the oldest religion, that it had been 'secretly' present since Abraham, that the Law of Moses had prepared humankind for the theophany of the *Logos* of God on earth, and that the coming of Christ had happened providentially at the very time that the *pax romana* was spreading over the whole *oikoumenē*. These perspectives were not new; the great Alexandrian theologian Origen in particular, who had spent the last part of his life in Caesarea in Palestine, had already clearly shown the way to follow.

The sources

Many sources from the earliest history of the Christian church are known to us only through Eusebius' *History*. He quotes extensively from them or describes their content. As assistant to Pamphilus, who died as a martyr in about 310, he had easy access to the impressive library of Origen in Caesarea, of which Pamphilus, a great admirer of Origen, was in charge. He could also make use of the library of the church of Jerusalem. The Jewish writers Philo and Flavius Josephus were very important witnesses for Eusebius, and of the Christian authors writing about the apostolic era, Hegesippus, Irenaeus, and Clement of Alexandria were particularly important;⁵ that is, the authors of Greek texts which dealt almost exclusively with the situation in the Eastern part of the empire. Eusebius was hardly interested in the Latin West. If the West was mentioned, it was always in reference to Roman contacts with the East.

⁵ See F. G. Chesnut, *The First Christian Histories: Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, and Euagrius* (Théologie historique 46; Paris 1978) 32. The 2nd rev. ed. (Macon, Ga., 1986) was not available to me.

For the apostolic era, Eusebius quotes from only one text of Latin origin: the first part of chapter V of Tertullian's *Apologeticum*, which Eusebius read in a poor Greek translation. For instance, Eusebius cites from Tertullian:

ἐντύχετε τοῖς ὑπομνήμασιν ὑμῶν. ἐκεῖ εὐρήσετε πρῶτον Νέρωνα τοῦτο τὸ δόγμα, ἡνίκα μάλιστα ἐν Ῥώμῃ, τὴν ἀνατολὴν πᾶσαν ὑποτάξας, ὠμὸς ἦν εἰς πάντας, διώξαντα.

Study your records; there you will find that Nero was the first to persecute this teaching when, after subjugating the entire East, in Rome especially he treated everyone with savagery.⁶

But Tertullian actually wrote:

Consulite commentarios vestros, illic reperietis primum Neronem in hanc sectam cum maxime Romae orientem Caesariano gladio ferocisse.

Consult your histories; you will there find that Nero was the first who assailed with the imperial sword the Christian sect, making progress then especially at Rome.⁷

The participle *orientem* (from *oriri*) has been misunderstood as the accusative of the noun 'the East' (τὴν ἀνατολήν), as if Nero had conquered the entire East, and the whole meaning of Tertullian's sentence is changed.

The apostolic period

The era of the apostles described by Eusebius covers the period from the Ascension of Christ (2.1.1) until the reign of Emperor Trajan (98–117), because when dealing with Trajan he writes: 'In these pages I have set down all the facts that have come to my knowledge regarding the apostles and the apostolic period (ἀποστολικῶν χρόνων).'⁸

When dealing with the period, he more or less loosely follows the guidelines for his *History* as proposed in the introduction to book I. He focuses especially on the succession of the holy apostles (τὰς τῶν

⁶ Eusebius *History* 2.25.4 (GCS 9.1.72–3); trans. Williamson 104.

⁷ Tertullian *Apologeticum* 5.3 (CCSL 1.1.95), trans. The Ante-Nicene Fathers, iii (repr. Grand Rapids, Mich. 1993), 22.

⁸ Eusebius *History* 3.31.6 (GCS 9.1.111); trans. Williamson 142.

ἱερῶν ἀποστόλων διαδοχάς), on the important events, ‘the outstanding leaders and heroes . . . in the most famous Christian communities; the men . . . who by preaching or writing were ambassadors of the divine word.’⁹ He also pays particular attention to the ‘innovations’ of the heresies (esp. Gnosticism) and to the ‘calamities that immediately after their conspiracy against our Saviour overwhelmed the entire Jewish race’. In addition, he highlights the attacks by pagan unbelievers and the heroic resistance of the martyrs.

The twelve apostles and the seventy disciples

Already in the time of Emperor Tiberius (14–37), who was well disposed towards Christians, ‘the whole world was suddenly lit by the sunshine of the saving word.’¹⁰ That had already been announced by the Holy Scriptures: ‘the voice of its inspired evangelists and apostles went forth into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.’¹¹ In every city and village, churches with large congregations were built (2.3.2). In fact Eusebius, who in Book II of his *History* mainly follows the story as related in Acts, substantiates his optimistic vision only by mentioning the conversion of Cornelius at Caesarea and the beginnings of the church of Antioch as set forth in Acts 10 and 11.

At the beginning of Book III, which deals with the reign of Trajan, Eusebius mentions again that the apostles and disciples had spread over the whole world. Referring to Origen’s *Commentary on Genesis*—the only explicit mention of Origen before the story of Origen’s life and works in book VI of the *History*—the various regions of the world to be evangelized were divided among the apostles: Thomas was chosen for Parthia, Andrew for Scythia, John for Asia, whereas Peter ‘seems to have preached in Pontus, Galatia and Bithynia, Cappadocia and Asia, to the Jews of the Dispersion’ before coming to Rome, where he was put to death. Paul undertook his missions as far as Illyricum, before being martyred in Rome (3.1.1–3). Eric Junod, following Adolf von Harnack, has carefully investigated this

⁹ Eusebius *History* 1.1.1 (GCS 9.1.2); trans. Williamson 31.

¹⁰ Eusebius *History* 2.5.3 (GCS 9.1.45); trans. Williamson 76. Eusebius quotes in the context from Tertullian *Apol.* 5.1–2 (CCSL 1.1.94–5); see also above, n. 7.

¹¹ Eusebius quotes Ps. 18[19].5 LXX; in the Hebrew text of the Psalm it is the voice of the heavens that has gone out into all the earth.

passage and come to a conclusion that goes further than that of Harnack: Eusebius here uses Origen, whose source was based on a Syriac tradition from Edessa, still available in the *Acts of Thomas*: the various regions to be Christianized were assigned by lot to the apostles.¹²

Eusebius tries to draw a distinction between the twelve apostles and the seventy disciples of Jesus. The twelve were elected by a special privilege (γέρας) by Jesus at the start of his public appearance after his baptism by John in the Jordan (1.10.7). Their names are known from the gospels (1.12.1). But a list of names of the seventy disciples did not yet exist in Eusebius' time.¹³ For some names he refers to Acts and Paul: Barnabas, Sosthenes, Cephas,¹⁴ Matthias and 'the other man' in the drawing of lots,¹⁵ and Thaddaeus (1.12.1–3). But besides them there were a great number of other disciples, because Paul says in 1 Cor. 15.5,7 that Jesus was seen after his Resurrection 'by all the apostles' (1.12.5).

Thaddaeus plays an important role in the legend of King Abgar of Edessa and the correspondence between the king and Jesus (1.13). Eusebius says that he found the Syriac texts in the archives of Edessa and translated them into Greek. The sick king begged Jesus for relief from his disease. As the Jews were treating Jesus with contempt, Jesus was offered refuge in Edessa. Jesus replied that he was not able to come, but that after his Ascension he would send a disciple. In due course the disciple Thaddaeus was sent by the apostle Judas Thomas to the king, who in his encounter with him professed his faith in Jesus and stated that he had planned to destroy the Jews who had crucified Him. The king and many citizens with him were cured of their corporeal diseases.¹⁶

¹² E. Junod, 'Origène, Eusèbe et la tradition sur la répartition des champs de mission des apôtres (Eusèbe, *Histoire ecclésiastique*, III, 1, 1–3)', in F. Bovon et al. (eds.), *Les Actes apocryphes des apôtres: Christianisme et monde païen* (Geneva 1981) 233–48. For missions in earliest Christianity see W. Reinbold, *Propaganda und Mission im ältesten Christentum: Eine Untersuchung zu den Modalitäten der Ausbreitung der frühen Kirche* (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 188; Göttingen 2000) 253–64.

¹³ In Luke 10.1 and 10.17 Eusebius read seventy not seventy-two disciples, cf. B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart 1994²) 126–7.

¹⁴ This Cephas, a homonym of the apostle Peter, is meant in Gal. 2.11; Eusebius refers to the *Hypotyposes* of Clement of Alexandria.

¹⁵ Joseph Barsabbas of Acts 1. 23 is meant here.

¹⁶ The legend of King Abgar is also known from the later Syriac *Doctrine of Addai*;

The first succession of the apostles

When speaking of the foundation of the churches by the apostles, Eusebius' only facts are the missions by Paul among the pagans from Jerusalem to Illyricum and by Peter among the circumcized Jews in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (3.4.1). Concerning their direct succession, he mentions only those people known from the letters of Paul and from Acts as leaders of churches: Timothy as first bishop of Ephesus, Titus of Crete, Luke the evangelist, Crescens in Gaul, Linus as first bishop after Peter in Rome, Clement as third bishop there, and Dionysius the Areopagite as first bishop of Athens (3.4.3–5). The subsequent episcopal successions in Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem are carefully noted by Eusebius throughout his *History*.

In the time of Trajan, many of the direct successors of the apostles and their disciples were still living. They continued to organize the hierarchical structure and propagated the faith all over the world (3.37.1). Following the advice of the Lord, they had distributed their goods among the poor, left their country and founded churches in foreign regions, where they appointed others as shepherds of the new flocks in order to continue their evangelization into further parts of the world and among other nations (3.37.2–3). In this generation Eusebius mentions Ignatius of Antioch, Clement of Rome, and Papias, whom he knows from Irenaeus' *Against heresies* (3.38–9).

The family of Jesus

Jerusalem plays an important role. James, the brother of the Lord (Gal. 1.19), was the first bishop there. Because of his virtue he was called 'the Just' (2.2.2). To save the apostolicity of the see, Eusebius borrows from the *Hypotyposes* of Clement of Alexandria: the three foremost apostles Peter, James, and John unanimously chose James the Just as the first bishop. His martyrdom in year 62 is carefully depicted with extensive quotations from Hegesippus and from *The Antiquities* of Flavius Josephus (2.23).¹⁷

see H. J. W. Drijvers, 'Edessa', *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 9 1982 277–88; id. in W. Schneemelcher (ed.), *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, I (Tübingen 1987⁵) 389–93.

¹⁷ On the family of Jesus and, in particular, on James, the brother of the Lord

The person of James the Just has recently been the subject of many public discussions, mainly due to Robert Eisenman's controversial thesis. In his voluminous book *James the Brother of Jesus: The Key to Unlocking the Secrets of Early Christianity and the Dead Sea Scrolls*¹⁸ he tried to prove that James was the head of the sect of Qumran and identical with 'the teacher of righteousness' of the Qumranic commentary of Habakkuk. According to Eisenman, he was the opponent of 'the man of lies' and 'the false prophet', as Paul was called. The thesis has met with much criticism, especially from John Painter in his book *Just James: The Brother of Jesus in History and Tradition*.¹⁹

But the family of Jesus and the race of David also play another role in the apostolic era. Here, Eusebius relies heavily on a letter by Julius Africanus to Aristides and on Hegesippus' book, called by Eusebius *Hypomnemata* (1.7). Julius Africanus tries in his letter to harmonize the different genealogies of Jesus in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. In this connection he speaks of members of Jesus' family (δεσπόσωνοι) from the Jewish villages of Nazareth and Cochaba²⁰ who spread to other parts of the country. These δεσπόσωνοι had discovered their family register, a book called 'The Book of the Days' (1.7.14). Hegesippus is Eusebius' source for his knowledge about the episcopal succession after James. After the fall of Jerusalem in year 70, the apostles and disciples gathered together in Jerusalem with family members of the Lord because most of them were still alive. Unanimously, they chose Jesus' cousin Symeon, the son of Joseph's brother Clopas, as successor to James (3.11). This Symeon, the second bishop of Jerusalem, died as a martyr at the age of 120 during the reign of Trajan (3.32.3). All the bishops of Jerusalem down to the revolt of Bar Kochba (132–135) were of Jewish-Christian origin. Eusebius knew all fifteen by name (4.5.3).

see W. A. Bienert in Schneemelcher (n. 16) 373–9 and esp. P.-A. Bernheim, *James, Brother of Jesus* (London 1997).

¹⁸ New York 1997.

¹⁹ Edinburgh 1997, 277–88. See also P. R. Davies, 'James in the Qumran Scrolls', in B. Chilton and C. A. Evans (eds.), *James the Just and Christian Origins (Novum Testamentum, Supplements 98; Leiden 1999)* 17–31; cp. R. M. Price, 'Eisenman's Gospel of James the Just: A Review', in B. Chilton and J. Neusner (eds.), *The Brother of Jesus: James the Just and his Mission* (Louisville, Ky. 2001) 186–97.

²⁰ Two villages with the name of Cochaba are known, see M. Avi-Yonah, *Gazetteer of Roman Palestine* (Qedem 5; Jerusalem 1976) 50, but Eusebius' *History* 1.7.14 is not mentioned there.

In the meantime, the offspring of King David were regarded with great suspicion by the Roman emperors. After year 70, Vespasian wanted to trace the descendants (3.12) and Domitian ordered them all to be exterminated. According to Hegesippus, heretics had accused the grandchildren of Judas, brother of Jesus, of planning a restoration of the kingdom of David. When these grandchildren appeared before the emperor, they showed their callous labourers' hands and explained that the kingdom of Christ was a heavenly kingdom, not of this earth and would only appear at the end of time. Thereupon Domitian stopped further plans for persecution (3.19–20). On their release the freed grandchildren became leaders of the churches 'both because they had borne testimony and because they were of the Lord's family.' They were still alive in the time of Trajan (3.20.6).

The Jews

The main obstruction to the apostles performing their missionary tasks came from the Jews. Eusebius is firmly convinced of this. The Jews had been responsible for the deaths of Christ and many of the apostles and disciples: Stephen, the apostle James, James the Just, 'and of the other apostles' (3.5.2). It is only because of the patience of God that the Jews were not struck by divine punishment until forty years after Jesus' crucifixion. God had allowed them sufficient time to convert. Eusebius' account of the apostolic era culminates in the 'definitive destruction' of Judaism. The fall of Jerusalem in year 70 is in his eyes the final judgment upon this 'whole impious race' (3.5.3).²¹

In this connection Eusebius makes use (and abuse) of *The Jewish War* by the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus. It has been said that Josephus is not only the most read but also the most distorted and abused historian in the whole of historiography. Although Josephus was against the Jewish revolt, he would never have believed that God would turn away forever from his people. But throughout the

²¹ Eusebius quotes extensively from Josephus' *Jewish War*, in which the calamities in Jerusalem are vividly depicted. Eusebius follows Origen's theory about the final punishment of the Jews, see J. Ulrich, *Euseb von Caesarea und die Juden: Studien zur Rolle der Juden in der Theologie des Eusebius von Caesarea* (Patristische Texte und Untersuchungen 49; Berlin 1999) 267 (on 'Bestrafungsmotiv').

centuries the Christian tradition has made use of Josephus as a propagator of anti-Semitism.²²

Many disasters had fallen upon the Jewish people as signs of the coming final destruction. But the murder of James the Just in year 62 was the immediate cause of the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple by the Romans (2.23.9). In the meantime, the Christian community of Jerusalem had received a divine advice to move to the city of Pella in Trans-Jordan (3.23.19). Eusebius, and after him Epiphanius of Salamis, are the only early Christian authors to give an account of the removal to Pella. Among the sources suggested are Aristo of Pella, Hegesippus, and Julius Africanus. But Joseph Verheyden has pointed out that the story of the flight to Pella must have arisen in the anti-Jewish brain of Eusebius. The idea fitted well into his vision: the Roman emperor could conquer Jerusalem and destroy Judaism without censure as the Christian community was no longer there.²³

The heresies

Another menace in the apostolic era were the heresies. During the lifetime of the apostles they managed to remain concealed, but after the deaths of the apostles 'the godless deceit' began to emerge. That, at least, is the opinion of Hegesippus, whom Eusebius quotes (3.32.7-8). Earlier in his *History* Eusebius quoted extensively from the *First Apology* of Justin Martyr: Simon the Magician of Acts 8 was the patriarch of all heresies and was unmasked as such by the apostle Peter in Samaria. Simon found a refuge in Rome during the reign of Claudius and was even honoured with a statue. But Peter met him there once more and again revealed his true nature. This was to demonstrate that through Peter the true light of the East could also shine in the West (3.14.6).

²² F. J. A. M. Meijer and M. A. Wes in the introduction to their translation of Josephus' *Jewish War* and autobiography: *Flavius Josephus, De Joodse oorlog & Uit mijn leven* (Baarn 1992) 25; cf. H. Schreckenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld (1.-11. Jh.)* (Europäische Hochschulschriften 23.172; Frankfurt am Main etc. 1995³) 263 and 763.

²³ J. Verheyden, *De vlucht van de christenen naar Pella: Onderzoek van het getuigenis van Eusebius en Epiphanius* (Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse der Letteren 50.127; Brussels 1988) 24.

Simon was succeeded by Menander, who also came from Samaria. Thus further heresies arose at the end of the apostolic era, such as those of the Ebionites, Cerinthus, and the Nicolaitans. For this information Eusebius relied on Justin, Gaius, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and Dionysius of Alexandria. But each of these heresies disappeared after a short time (3.26–9, esp. 3.29.4).

Philo and the apostolic era

In addition to the leading motifs of the Christianizing of the whole world, the destruction of Judaism, and the fight against the heresies, the description of the daily life of the first Christians is a special item which Eusebius was eager to borrow from the Jewish author Philo of Alexandria (2.17). In his book *On Contemplative Life*, composed in the years 33–4, Philo depicted the philosophical and ascetic way of life of the Egyptian Jewish *Therapeutai*. According to Eusebius, Philo was thinking of the first Christians of Acts 4.34–5, and he called them *Therapeutai* because the name ‘Christians’ was not yet commonly known. The ‘old writings’, which the Egyptian Jewish ascetics were eager to allegorize, were in fact the gospels and the writings of the apostles. The liturgical services, held in the ascetics’ sacred room, called *σημνεῖον* and *μοναστήριον*, were in fact, according to Eusebius, Christian services under the supervision of the bishops.²⁴

The lives of Christian monks later in the fourth century do indeed resemble the asceticism and abstinence of Philo’s Egyptian Jewish ascetics. But around 300—the time that Eusebius was writing—there was not yet a thorough organization of Christian anchorites or coenobites. It could be that Eusebius when interpreting Philo’s description had the Christian example of the philosophical and ascetic way of life of Origen and his pupils at Caesarea in mind. This ambience had been depicted by Origen’s pupil Gregory Thaumaturgus,²⁵ but there is no proof of any direct literary dependence by Eusebius on Gregory here.

²⁴ Philo *De vita contemplativa* 25 (ed. L. Cohn and P. Wendland vi.52) on the sacred *σημνεῖον* and *μοναστήριον* of the ‘philosophically’ living ascetics; *ibid.* 28 (*ibid.* 53) on their allegorical explanations of Holy Scripture.

²⁵ Gregory Thaumaturgus *Pan. Or.* 6.73–80 (SC 148.124/6); Origen teaches his disciples the ‘philosophical’, ascetic life; and 15.173–83 (SC 148.168/72): on the allegorical interpretation of Scripture by Origen. Eusebius knew, of course, that Gregory Thaumaturgus was pupil of Origen, see e.g. *History* 6.30.

MONKS: THE ASCETIC MOVEMENT AS A RETURN TO THE AETAS APOSTOLICA

G. J. M. Bartelink

The description of the conversion of Anthony in his *Vita* written by Athanasius is the *locus classicus* for the portrayal of a radical conversion. Numerous are the echoes of this passage in early Christian writers. The author of the *Vita Antonii* may have stylized the biography in some respects, the outline of the aspirations of the new ascetic movement, as described by Athanasius, presents very authentic features.

Right at the beginning we notice that the example of the apostles and of the first Christian community led by them influenced the young Anthony.¹ One Sunday morning, Anthony, son of a well-to-do Egyptian farmer, eighteen years of age, goes to the church and on the way, considers how to shape his life. At once texts from the New Testament occurred to him: that the apostles had given up all their possessions following the Lord;² that some Christians had sold their possessions and put down the proceeds at the feet of the apostles to be distributed among the poor.³ After he entered the church, he heard another text of the same tenor⁴ and moreover, a week afterwards, he had a similar experience. It meant to him that those divine words were—like an oracle—intended for him personally. His answer was the radical resolution to detach himself from all property and so to be free to follow Christ and to seek perfection.

This is the first time a monastic text presents the apostles who follow Christ and the first community of Christians in Jerusalem with an ideal to aim at. The same idea is to be found in many later monastic writings. The texts about Jesus sending out His apostles and instructing them to set off without purse, rucksack or footwear were also quoted in this connection.⁵ The ascetics aimed at the revival

¹ Athanasius *Vita Antonii* 2.2–4 (SC 400.132).

² Matt. 4.20.

³ Acts 4.32–5.

⁴ Matt. 19.21.

⁵ Matt. 10.5–15; Mark 6.7–13; Luke 10.2–12.

of the enthusiastic Christian community described in *Acta Apostolorum* 4. The life of the first Christians was interpreted as a programme of the way towards perfection.⁶

In the life of the Church, again and again, these texts received a new actuality bringing about a new dynamic power. They accompanied the ascetics on their path of life, for asceticism is a laborious process and the imitation of Christ demands continuous attention from day to day. Monastic texts emphasize that restriction of material needs and the *fuga mundi* are only a first step and that essentially it is the attitude of inner abstinence that is most important; it is this that makes possible the *imitatio Christi* and total devotion to God. Only by means of continuous effort can the consistent way of life be acquired that reflects this ideal. Many ascetics looked back to the inspiring examples from the first days of the Church. 'Heimweh nach der Urkirche', as Bacht called it,⁷ was a characteristic feature of early Christian monasticism. Even more than the prophets of the Old Testament, did the apostles, as leaders of the earliest Christian communities, impose *exempla*. They were, as Theodoret of Cyrillus says, torches lighting the way for the Christians.⁸

In the course of time, the importance of the apostles—who at first chiefly provided a standard of the Christian doctrine—in setting an example for Christian life was gradually stressed. Called by Christ Himself, they had given up their earthly possessions and, as Irenaeus already remarked, those who follow their example may also expect the reward of the apostles.⁹ In fact, the principal monastic ideas are a heritage of the earliest Christian traditions. The vocation of the monk is properly speaking the vocation of the baptized Christian. Monasticism has its roots in a spirituality that applies to all Christians.

⁶ See G. Morin, *L'idéal monastique et la vie chrétienne des premiers jours* (Abbaye de Maredsous 1931); K. S. Frank, 'Vita apostolica. Ansätze zur apostolischen Lebensform in der alten Kirche', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 82 1971 145–66. Cf. 146–7: 'Tatsächlich war auch das frühe Mönchtum vom Willen zu vita apostolica erfüllt. Ohn' alles Bedenken verknüpften die ersten Mönche ihre asketische Lebensweise mit der der Apostel. Die Eremiten von Ägypten wollten das Leben der Apostel nachahmen, ihre Brüder in den ersten Koinobien nicht weniger. Die klösterliche Gemeinschaft des Basilius und die klerikale Familie des Augustin sahen das Leben der Apostel und der apostolischen Urgemeinde in ihren Gemeinschaften zu neuem Leben erweckt.'

⁷ H. Bacht, 'Heimweh nach der Urkirche', *Liturgie und Mönchtum* 7 1950 64–78.

⁸ Theodoret of Cyrillus *Graecarum affectionum curatio* 8.5,70 (SC 57.312,335).

⁹ Irenaeus of Lyons *Adversus haereses* 4.12.5 (SC 100,II.523).

The only difference is that, for the monks, the authentic Christian perfection is an absolute aim and the only prospect. Hence Basil the Great sometimes uses the general term 'Christian' to design the monk. Monasticism fits in a living tradition that goes back to the time of the apostles.¹⁰

Even before the rise of monasticism the expression 'apostolic life' had been applied to the manner of life of the perfect, ascetic Christians. Clement of Alexandria, for instance, describing the true Christian Gnostic, makes use of it¹¹ and according to Origen the ascetics lead an 'apostolic life'.¹² For Methodius Christian asceticism is an apostolic institution.¹³ Epiphanius mentions the *Apostolikoi*, name of an ascetic sect, otherwise called *Apotaktikoi*.¹⁴ And the Church historian Socrates praises the 'apostolic life' of the Desert Fathers in Nitria and Scete.¹⁵

For their view on the apostles as imposing examples, monastic authors chiefly appealed to New Testament texts, but they also underwent the influence of some apocryphal writings, especially apocryphal Acts. These writings, which circulated among premonastic groups of ascetics, are nearly all characterized by strong ascetic and encratite tendencies. Here we see the apostles as ascetic wandering missionaries, possessing miraculous powers.¹⁶

Some monastic authors idealizing the primitive Church

Cassian

Because in the first Christian community of Jerusalem the *imitatio Christi* had been practised in an impressive way, it is considered as an ideal to strive after in many monastic writings. Cassian is one of

¹⁰ Cf. H. Holstein, 'L'évolution du mot 'apostolique' au cours de l'histoire de l'Église', in A. Plé et al. (eds.), *L'Apostolat* (Paris 1957) 41–61.

¹¹ Clement of Alexandria *Stromata* 4.9.75.1–2 (GCS 15.281–2).

¹² Origen, *Matthäuseklärung I. Die griechisch erhaltenen Tomoi* (GCS 40.352,421–2).

¹³ Methodius of Olympus *Symposium* 10.2 (GCS 27.123).

¹⁴ Epiphanius of Salamis *Panarium* 61.1 (GCS 31.380).

¹⁵ Socrates *Historia ecclesiastica* 4.2.3 (PG 67.512B).

¹⁶ Cf. M. Blumenthal, *Formen und Motive in den apokryphen Apostelgeschichten* (Leipzig 1933); R. Söder, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten und die romanhafte Literatur der Antike* (Stuttgart 1932 = Darmstadt 1969). Some topics are common to the apocryphal Acts and monastic texts.

these authors. Although his retrospective view of the historical development of monasticism has little to do with reality, there is no denying that an essential idea is right: during the first centuries asceticism has continuously accompanied the Church. In his eighteenth *Collatio* he puts into the mouth of abba Piamun the following exposition.¹⁷ After the death of the apostles the initial enthusiasm diminished, the faithful became less fervent and newly converted people introduced pagan practices into the Church. The demands made upon them were less high, they were allowed to keep their possessions, and this, in its turn, had a repercussion on the way of life of the other faithful. But some of them—*quibus adhuc apostolicus inerat fervor*—were determined to continue their apostolic way of life. They left the cities and practised individually what the apostles had prescribed for the whole Church community. Groups came into being that began to lead their own lives. Living in communities, as cenobites, they were called ‘monks’.¹⁸ Their cells and abodes were called *cenobia: Istud ergo solummodo fuit antiquissimum monachorum genus*. These communities, according to Cassian, existed already long before the first hermits appeared, such as Paul of Thebes and Anthony. They were the first representatives of another, secondary form of monasticism: anachoretism.

In some Pachomian texts the apostolic community appears as an example of the *koinobion*. In his *Liber Orsiesii*, a kind of spiritual testament, Horsiesi admonishes the Pachomian monks that they must follow the great leaders of beginning monasticism.¹⁹ ‘They built us on the foundations of the apostles and the prophets and on the doctrine of the Gospel that have been built on the cornerstone Jesus Christ.’²⁰ These pioneers, Horsiesi says, carried out what they had

¹⁷ Cassian *Collationes* 18.5–6 (SC 64.14–18), cf. *Instituta* 2.5 (SC 109.64–8). See A. de Vogüé, ‘Monachisme et Église dans la pensée de Cassien’, in *Théologie de la vie monastique* (Théologie 49; [Paris] 1961) 213–40 at 214–22.

¹⁸ *Monachus*, however, was not used before the fourth century as a technical term to refer to the ascetics in the desert.

¹⁹ *Liber Orsiesii* 6 (*sanctorum exempla sectantes . . . habentes principem et perfectorem Iesum*) and 21 (*patres nostri aedificaverunt nos super fundamentum apostolorum et prophetarum, et evangeliorum disciplinam, quae angulari lapide continetur Domino Iesu Christo*) (ed. A. Boon, *Pachomiana Latina: Règle et épîtres de S. Pachôme, épître de S. Théodore et «Liber» de S. Orsiesius. Texte latin de S. Jérôme* [Bibliothèque de la Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique 7; Louvain 1932] 112 and 123). Cf. H. Bacht, ‘Pakhôme et ses disciples (IV^e siècle)’, in *Théologie de la vie monastique* (Théologie 49; [Paris] 1961) 39–71; id., *Das Vermächtnis des Ursprungs: Studien zum frühen Mönchtum*, i (Würzburg 1972) 66 and 110.

²⁰ Cf. Eph. 2.20.

learnt from the apostles and the prophets. As to the poverty of the prophets, Horsiesi could have thought of Hebrews 11.37 ('they wandered around in goatskins, in poverty, distress and misery') and as to the exemplary poverty of the apostles, he thought of the texts about their vocation: they left behind all they possessed to follow Christ.²¹ And in *Liber Orsiesii* 50: 'That our group and the community that holds us together go back to God, the Apostle told us: "But do not forget to be helpful and generous, for that is the kind of sacrifice that pleases God."²² Likewise we read in the Acts of the Apostles: "There was but one heart and soul in the multitude who had become believers, and not one of them claimed anything that belonged to him as his own, but they shared everything they had. The apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, with great power."²³ The Psalmist agrees with these words saying: "Lo, how good and lovely it is when brethren dwell together as one."²⁴ In some later monastic texts Acts 4.13 and Ps. 132(133).1 are also sometimes quoted together.

Pachomius too, the founder of the 'way of the cenobites', had been inspired by the ideal of the 'apostolic life', where poverty had a central place. He had shaped that ideal especially in the perspective of the primitive community around the apostles, where private property had been abolished. It was taken over by Shenoute, Besa and Horsiesi. But in the Coptic *Vita Pachomii* we read that among his first disciples Pachomius found only little comprehension for his new kind of evangelic poverty.²⁵

In his *Catechesis* Pachomius's disciple Theodore describes the *koinonía* as a revelation from the time of the apostles to all those who want to live for the Lord after their example.²⁶ And in the introduction to his translation of the *Rule of Pachomius* Jerome likewise calls Pachomius and his disciples 'apostolic men'. Pointing out that he—as a true interpreter—had maintained the simple style of the Coptic text, he motivates this as follows: 'we want to prevent that

²¹ Cf. Matt. 4.20; Mark 1.18.

²² Heb. 13.16.

²³ Acts 4.32–3.

²⁴ Ps. 132(133).1.

²⁵ Cf. L.-T. Lefort, *Les vies coptes de s. Pachôme et de ses premiers successeurs* (Louvain 1943 = 1966) 3 and 65.

²⁶ Theodore of Tabennisi *Catechesis* (Lefort [n. 25] 38).

rhetorical embroidery might alter the image of these apostolic men, who are completely filled with the grace of the spirit.²⁷

Quotations of Acts 4.32–5 are lacking in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*. The character of the *Sayings of the Fathers*, which contain chiefly practical admonitions and rules of life, leaves no room for theorizing about the background and the origin of monasticism.

Basil the Great

In the ascetic writings of Basil we are frequently confronted with a nostalgic hankering after the first period of the Church. This pioneer of monasticism in Asia Minor considered the community of a monastery as a real revival of the primitive community of Jerusalem.²⁸ At the end of the seventh of his *Regulae fusius tractatae* he remarks that the monastic community has the characteristic features of the saints in Acts 2.44. In *Epistula* 2 he stresses that it is a condition for the monk to detach his soul from the world that leads us away from the essential. When, in *Epistula* 22, Basil refers to models and admonitions of Scripture, he quotes mainly from the epistles of Paul. Before the *vita apostolica* the *vita prophetica* (the example of Elijah and the other prophets) pales into insignificance. Bound up with the ideal pattern of the primitive Christian community the *vita apostolica* traces a direct line from the beginnings so that there is a straight link with the example of Christ Himself. Texts from the Pauline epistles play a prominent part in the monastic tradition. In *Epistula* 295 Basil likewise defines life in a monastery as an imitation of the way of life that was prescribed by the apostles. The ascetic life—especially in the *koinobion*—in the view of Basil meant the true form of Christianity, a reflection of their authentic beginning. The monastery is the body of Christ, the house of God and an image of the Church. There one can live as a new man, as the New Testament teaches us.²⁹

²⁷ Jerome *Praefatio in Regulam Pachomii* 9 (ed. Boon [n. 19] 9).

²⁸ Acts 2.44: *Regulae fusius tractatae* 7.4 (PG 31.933C); 35.3 (PG 31.1008A); Acts 4.32: *Ethica* 60.1 (PG 31.793C); *Regulae fusius tractatae* 7.4 (PG 31.933C); 32.1 (PG 31.996A); 35.3 (PG 31.1008A); *Regulae brevius tractatae* 85 (PG 31.1144A); 183 (PG 31.1205A); Acts 4.35: *Regulae fusius tractatae* 19.1 (PG 31.968B); 34.1 (PG 31.1000B); *Regulae brevius tractatae* 93 (PG 31.1148B); 131 (PG 31.1169C); 135 (PG 31.1172C); 148 (PG 31.1180C); 252 (PG 31.1252B). Cf. W. K. L. Clarke, *The Ascetic Works of Saint Basil* (London 1925) 42–6; P. Humbertclaude, *La doctrine ascétique de saint Basile de Césarée* (Paris 1952) 313–20.

²⁹ Cf. Eph. 2.15; 4.24; Col. 3.10.

In his monastic communities Basil wanted the spirit of the apostolic communities to reign, including the charismatic character he describes in his *Regulae fusius tractatae*. Unity of spirit and harmony is a main requirement. The Spirit will distribute His gifts according to the needs of the entire community. In this way the individual gift will become a common possession. In Basil's *Regulae fusius tractatae*, then, one is frequently reminded of the early times of the Church. Because all monks, in the words of Paul, are members of the body of Christ, the individual *charismata* contribute to the well-being of the whole. The monk, as *pneumatikos*, receives spiritual gifts for the benefit of others. But, Basil says, supernatural healings and visions—which were not lacking in the first period of the Church—do not belong to the *charismata* of the monks.

In his *Ethical Rules* 58 Basil develops his view that the Spirit grants some monks special gifts for the good of the whole community. The *charismata* accompany everyone in the function he holds and make him more suitable for it. This applies particularly to the abbot who is charged with the leadership and who has to preach the word of God. Here Basil refers to Paul, who says that the gift of eloquence is a *charisma*.³⁰

In the biographies of anchorites, on the other hand, the *charisma* of the working of wonders—sometimes compared with those of the apostles—is essential to show the greatness of a holy monk. When, for instance, Amun crosses the river Lycus³¹ with dry feet, Athanasius compares him with Peter walking on the lake.³² The Syrian ascetic Peter, when healing someone, is compared with the apostle Peter working a similar wonder.³³ Especially the raising of a dead person is considered an apostolic wonder.³⁴

John Chrysostom

When John Chrysostom, who knew the monastic world—both of the hermits and of the cenobites—from his own experience, started to charge the monks with a missionary task among the heathens, he

³⁰ Basil *Ethica* 58 (PG 31.788–92B); cf. 1 Cor. 12.8.

³¹ Athanasius *Vita Antonii* 60.9 (SC 400.296).

³² Matt. 14.29.

³³ Theodoret of Cyrrhus *Historia religiosa* 9.14 (SC 234.433); cf. Acts 9.36–41.

³⁴ Theodoret of Cyrrhus *Historia religiosa* 21.14 (SC 257.92).

also appealed to the Pauline texts on the *charismata*. All Christians, but especially the monks, are called to the imitation of the apostles.³⁵ In the opinion of Chrysostom, the imitation of the apostles also comprised that of the *k rugma*, apostolic missionary activity. Just as at the time of the apostles, according to him, a right way of life was more credible than miracles, also in his days. For this reason the preaching of the faith by the monks could be of great value. Coupled as it was with an ascetic life of high moral standing it could be an auspicious starting-point to convert the unbelieving.³⁶ In his numerous references to the *charismata* mentioned by Paul, Chrysostom did not omit to present the missionary activity of the monks as one of their special gifts. In *Homilia* 33.4 on Matthew,³⁷ he describes monasticism as going back directly to the apostles: they founded the choirs of the monks.

Augustine

The pericope Acts 4.32–5 played an important part in the description Augustine presents of ideal religious life. Possidius says that Augustine, after becoming a priest at Hippo, before long established a monastery *intra ecclesiam*, where he, together with the other servants of God, started to live *secundum modum et regulam sub sanctis apostolis constitutam*. Nobody was allowed to have their own possessions whatsoever, but they should have all things in common and everything should be distributed according to their needs. Augustine had already lived in such a way after his return from Italy to Thagaste.³⁸ Referring especially to the studies of Luc Verheijen,³⁹ I will restrict myself here to some short remarks.

³⁵ Cf. 1 Cor. 4.16; John Chrysostom *Ad populum Antiochenum* 16.2 (PG 49.175). See I. Auf der Maur, *Mönchtum und Glaubensverkündigung in den Schriften des hl. Johannes Chrysostomus* (Fribourg 1959); J.-M. Leroux, 'Monachisme et communauté chrétienne d'après saint Jean Chrysostome', in *Théologie de la vie monastique* (Théologie 49; [Paris] 1961) 143–90.

³⁶ *In Epistulam I ad Corinthios* Homilia 6.4 (PG 61.54).

³⁷ PG 57.393.

³⁸ Possidius *Vita Augustini* 5 (ed. A. Bastiaensen, *Vite dei Santi* 3; Rome 1975, 140).

³⁹ L. Verheijen, *Saint Augustine's Monasticism in the Light of Acts 4.32–35* (Villanova, Pa., 1979); 'Spiritualité et vie monastique chez saint Augustin: l'utilisation monastique des Actes des Apôtres 4, (31) 32–35', in *Jean Chrysostome et Augustin* (Théologie historique 35; Paris 1975) 93–123 at 99–102 = *id.*, *Nouvelle approche de la Règle de saint Augustin* (Bégrolles en Mauges 1980) 75–105 at 81–4; cf. also T. J. van Bavel, 'Die erste christliche Gemeinde und das religiöse Leben. Apostelgeschichte 4,31–35

Augustine aimed at reviving the apostolic example of the first Christian community in the new monastic communities. Describing the life of the brothers in his monastery at Hippo, he made a deacon recite the above mentioned passage from Acts 4. Then Augustine himself took over the same text addressing the people: 'I myself want to read this passage to you also. It is more satisfying to read these words than to say to you something of myself.' And he concluded the lecture with the words: 'You heard what we desire to practise. Pray that we may be able to fulfil it.'⁴⁰ The words 'one heart and one soul' became as it were a motto in Augustine's descriptions of monastic life. Augustine emphasized that it was the Holy Spirit who descended on the young community and brought it to life⁴¹ and that in his days it was the same Spirit who poured out love into the hearts of the faithful and gave them the force to follow the commandments of God. It is to be noticed that more than once Augustine linked the first verse of Psalm 132(133) with Acts 4.32-5. In *Epistula* 57.39⁴² he refers to the example of the apostles, relating it to his own situation. According to the words of the Lord to the rich young man the striving after perfection means detachment from earthly possessions, as Augustine himself did with the help of the grace of God. It does not matter whether one abandons a lot or only little: *nam neque ipsi apostoli, qui priores hoc fecerunt, divites fuerunt.*

In the Middle Ages the Rule of Augustine (*Epistula* 211) had a loud echo. *Apostolicam vitam optamus vivere* from the Rule became the motto of many a reformer of monastic life.

Jerome

Jerome, author of the *Vitae* of the monks Paul, Malchus and Hilarion and translator of the Rule of Pachomius, regarded the communal

in der Interpretation des Augustinus', *In unum congregati* 29 1982 79-100; 'Apostolisch religieus leven: spiritualiteit', *Aggiornamento* 20 1988 166-73.

⁴⁰ Augustine *Sermo* 356.1 (PL 39.1574).

⁴¹ Cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of Religious Life* (New York 1986) 131. The device 'one heart and one soul': Augustine *Contra Faustum* 5.9 (CSEL 25.281); *De opere monachorum* 25.32 (PL 40.572); *Enarratio in Ps.* 132.2,6,12 (PL 37.1729,1732-3, 1736). See also T. J. van Bavel, 'Ante omnia et in Deum dans la Regula sancti Augustini', *VC* 12 1958 157-65 (especially 162-4).

⁴² CSEL 44.485. On Ps. 132(133).1: L. Verheijen, 'L'Enarratio 132 de saint Augustin et sa conception du monachisme', in *Forma Futuri: Studi in onore di Michele Pellegrino* (Turin 1975) 806-17; A. Solignac, 'Le monachisme et son rôle dans l'Église

life of the community of Jerusalem (adding that of Alexandria, on account of the Therapeutae, whom he, following the footsteps of Eusebius, took for Christians) as a prefiguration of the cenobitical life in a community.⁴³ To him, the monastery is a training-ground for acquiring virtue, and, following Paul, he frequently uses the image of the competition and the wrestling-match against the Adversary and his satellites, the demons. According to Jerome, the exhortations and prescriptions of the apostles are the foundation of the monastic rules.⁴⁴

Complete detachment from the world, family ties, possessions and prestige is the cornerstone of the ascetic ideas of Jerome, after the example of the apostles, who left all to follow Christ.⁴⁵ He exhorts Paulinus of Nola, who desires to lead an ascetic life, to put the proceeds of his possessions at the feet of the apostles.⁴⁶ The reference to Acts 4 in this text has become a symbol for the treading under feet of riches: *pecuniam esse calcandam*. Thus, in a humble and detached life, one can despise forever what has been despised once.⁴⁷

Theodoret of Cyrrhus

In his *Historia religiosa*, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, in short biographies of monks, describes models of Christian life, modelled in their turn on the life of Christ and of the great figures of the Old and the New Testament. Nearly all the heroes of this important representative of Syrian monasticism are, as Canivet formulates it,⁴⁸ a *replica*

d'après l'Enarratio in Psalmum 132', in C. Mayer (ed.), *Homo Spiritualis: Festgabe für Luc Verheijen O.S.A. zu seinem 70. Geburtstag* (Würzburg 1987) 327–39.

⁴³ Jerome *De viris illustribus* 11 (ed. W. Herding, Bibliotheca Teubneriana; Leipzig 1924, 16).

⁴⁴ Cf. Jerome *Epistula* 108.20 (CSEL 56.335–6) (appeal to 1 Tim. 6.8).

⁴⁵ Cf. Jerome *Tractatus in Marci Evangelium* 1.12,20 (CCSL 78.459,463); *Homilia in Matthaeum* 18.9 (ibid. 505).

⁴⁶ Jerome *Epistula* 58.4 (CSEL 54.532–3).

⁴⁷ Cf. Jerome *Epistula* 66.6 (ibid. 654); the words of Paul (Gal. 1.10) should serve for the guidance of the monks: 'When I am trying to please people, I can't be a servant of Christ'; *Epistula* 3.4.4 (ibid. 16); (Bonosus) *totus de apostolo armatus* (cf. Eph. 6.12). See P. Antin, 'Le monachisme selon saint Jérôme', in *Recueil sur saint Jérôme* (Collection Latomus; Brussels 1968) 101–28 (especially 114–15).

⁴⁸ P. Canivet, *Histoire du monachisme syrien* (Paris 1977) 277; cf. A. Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient: A Contribution to the History of Culture in the Near East*, ii: *Early Monasticism in Mesopotamia and Syria* (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 197; Louvain 1960); J. Gribomont, 'Le monachisme au sein de l'Église en Syrie et en Cappadoce', *Studia Monastica* 7 1965 7–24.

of the apostles by their love and their *charismata*. Sometimes Theodoret refers to their way of life, but mostly to analogies with the miracles worked by the apostles. When, in his introduction, he appeals to the authority of eye-witnesses, Theodoret immediately refers to the apostles, who recorded the Gospels.⁴⁹ Particularly Peter who, as the first bishop of Antioch, was attached to Syria by special ties, is mentioned as an example.⁵⁰

The expectation of the parousia

Some ideas living in the beginning period of Christianity revived in the monastic world, such as the expectation of the *parousia* and the *xeniteia* (to be a foreigner on earth). The expectation of the imminent return of the Lord (*parousia*), which lived strongly among the first Christians, is also found with the monks. It becomes part of the central idea of the *imitatio Christi*. Virginity is an anticipation of a situation that once will be. From an eschatological viewpoint, asceticism as real evangelic life points forward to the future reign of God. When the author of the *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*⁵¹ unfolds the programme of life of the monks, he does not omit to give this expectation a clear accent: the monks expect the coming of Christ as children expect the coming of their father, an army that of its king or a faithful servant that of his lord and his liberator. 'They will not care about clothes or about food any more but, with the singing of hymns, they will only look out for the coming of Christ.'⁵² Time and again we see the ascetics detaching themselves from this world and turning to the future world. Already Anthony says in one of his letters: 'We must free ourselves for the coming of the Lord'.⁵³ Horsiesi

⁴⁹ The apostles Matthew and John were eye-witnesses, Mark and Luke were informed by others. Cf. Gregory the Great *Dialogi* 1, Prol. 10 (SC 260.16): *quia Marcus et Lucas evangelium quod scripserunt, non visu sed auditu didicerunt*; Augustine *De consensu evangelistarum* 1.3-8 (CSEL 43.3-4,7-8).

⁵⁰ *Historia religiosa* 1.9 the episode of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5.1-11); 2.19 the healing of the lame by Peter and John (Acts 3.1-16); 2.11 the humbleness of Peter who did not allow the Lord to wash his feet (John 13.5-14), referred to as example of the humility of the monk Julianus (SC 234.176,238/40,220).

⁵¹ *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* Prol. 7 (ed. A.-J. Festugière, *Subsidia Hagiographica* 53; Brussels 1971, 7).

⁵² *Ibid.*, Prol. 8 (*ibid.* 7).

⁵³ Antonius *Epistula* 4.3 (PG 40.994; Latin translation by Valerio de Sarasio, published in 1516 by Symphorianus Champerius).

admonishes the leaders of the Pachomian monasteries to be prepared for the advent of the Redeemer, and he urges the monks: 'You must bear burning lamps in your hands like servants expecting their lord.'⁵⁴ In the ascetic writings of Basil the expectation of the *parousia* is also a central thought.

When Augustine characterizes ascetic life as angelic⁵⁵ and views it as an anticipation of life after death, he describes it from the perspective of the spirituality of the primitive Church. Asceticism makes us foreigners in this world, being *amatores huius mundi* no more. In the monastic works of Augustine—as in those of Ambrose also—the theme of the expectation of the *vita caelestis* is strongly represented. At the end of *Enarratio in psalmum 132* we read: 'Therefore, now go and seek for yourself a dwelling in heaven. "But", you will answer, "how can I live in heaven, being clad in the flesh and tied to the flesh?" But hasten with your heart, when you cannot follow with your body. Don't be deaf, when you hear: "Elevate your hearts."⁵⁶

The xeniteia

In the world of the monks the awareness of the Christians of the first hour revived that during their stay on earth—as strangers, foreigners and pilgrims—they were only on their way to heaven, their native country and their proper destination. The monks in the East used the word *xeniteia* to denote this alienship that was linked with the idea of the *fuga mundi* and at the same time was a facet of the *imitatio* of Christ, of whom it was written that He, wandering through Palestina, had nothing to lay His head on.⁵⁷ Some monks therefore sought an abode far from their country, others did not settle permanently anywhere.

In the monasteries the idea of *xeniteia*, based on New Testament tradition,⁵⁸ also lived. In 1 Pet. 2.11 the conclusion had been drawn

⁵⁴ *Liber Orsiesii* 10 and 19 (ed. Boon [n. 19] 114 and 120).

⁵⁵ Cf. Matt. 22.30; Augustine *Enarratio in Ps.* 76.4 (CCSL 39.1054–5).

⁵⁶ Augustine *Enarratio in Psalmum* 132.13 (CCSL 40.1935).

⁵⁷ Matt. 8.20.

⁵⁸ Heb. 11.13: the exemplary faithful of the Old Testament, who lived on earth as *xenoi* (*peregrini*) and *parepid moi* (*hospites*); 1 Pet. 2.11 *paroikoi* (*advenae*) and *parepid moi* (*peregrini*). See H. von Campenhausen, *Die asketische Heimatlosigkeit im altkirchlichen und frühmittelalterlichen Mönchtum* (Tübingen 1930); A. Guillaumont, 'Le dépaysement

already that the Christians should abstain from earthly cupidity. Likewise abba Tithoës defines *xeniteia* as control of the mouth, referring to two forms of self-restraint: fasting and keeping silent.⁵⁹ Such a spiritualization became current. According to Palladius a monk lives like a stranger to be able to practise virtue.⁶⁰ In the view of Eulogius *xeniteia* is the highest of the monastic exercises.⁶¹ And another ascetic says that to live as a stranger is better than to offer hospitality.⁶² Thus *xeniteia* revived in monastic circles.

The aetas apostolica reflected in monastic language

It has not remained unnoticed that some characteristic terms of the *aetas apostolica*—in the course of time fallen into desuetude—were restored in the monastic world. Words that had become conventional, were so to speak re-defined. These linguistic facts also reflect the strife of the monks to model their lives as much as possible in the spirit of the Gospel. *Adelphos/frater*, reduced to formulaic use, is a well-known example. In the words of Loricé: ‘Hence also the christian “frater” is endued with a fresh and unwonted vigour, when applied to the monks, the earliest revivalists of the ideal christian way of living: monks are *fratres in Christo par excellence*.’⁶³

Other fading terms were likewise recharged with a new force. In ascetic texts the athletic terminology after Pauline model received a new impulse. The agonistic terminology, just as that of the *militia Christi*, flourished in reference to the theme of the struggle against the demons. For his spiritual asceticism, a monk had to gird on the spiritual armour.⁶⁴ Origen was the first to adapt this terminology to

comme forme d’ascèse dans le monachisme ancien’, in *Aux origines du monachisme chrétien* (Spiritualité orientale 30; Bégrolles en Mauges 1979) 89–116; J. Roldanus, *Vreemdeling zonder vaste woonplaats* (Leiden 1980).

⁵⁹ Cf. *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Systematic Collection 4.52 (SC 387.213).

⁶⁰ Palladius *Historia Lausiaca* 4.3 (ed. G. Bartelink, *Vite dei Santi* 2; Rome 1974, 28).

⁶¹ Nilus *Tractatus ad Eulogium* 2 (PG 79.1096B).

⁶² *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Abba Jacobus 1 (PG 65.232B).

⁶³ L. T. A. Loricé, *Spiritual Terminology in the Latin Translations of the Vita Antonii with reference to the fourth and fifth century monastic literature* (Latinitas Christianorum Primaeva 11; Utrecht-Nimeguen 1955) 43.

⁶⁴ Cf. Eph. 6.11–17; 2 Tim. 2.3.

ascetic life. The frequency of this kind of expressions in Jerome without doubt goes back to the example of Origen.⁶⁵

Monastic use of the term *agap* was also a conscious choice. In the fourth century the practice of the *Agapes* (common meals organized by well-to-do Christians in the first centuries with charitable intentions in order to express fraternal love) had been opposed to by the ecclesiastical authorities. As can be seen from some canons of synods and councils, there was a growth of malpractices.⁶⁶ In his commentary on 1 Cor. 11, John Chrysostom describes the *agape* as gone out of use.⁶⁷ But in monastic circles the term could persist. The hermits in the desert of Scete in the north of Egypt who on Saturday or Sunday assembled for a common meal, could call it *agap*, because they were guided by the ideal example of former times and worldly admixtures did not play a part here.⁶⁸ Still about 800 Theodore of Studios used *agap* for the meal in a monastery.⁶⁹ It is to be noticed, however, that in some texts the use of *agap* is ambiguous ('common meal' or 'alms').⁷⁰

Conclusion

We may conclude that in the early monastic texts the topic of a return to the ideal Christian community of the first period and the nostalgic retrospective view of the very beginning of Christianity where the *imitatio Christi* was lived in an ideal way, was clearly present. The stress on the alienship of the Christian on earth and the eschatological expectation constitute a part of it. The exemplary char-

⁶⁵ See A. Harnack, *Militia Christi: Die christliche Religion und der Soldatenstand in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Tübingen 1905 = Darmstadt 1963) 93–5; W. Völker, *Das Vollkommenheitsideal des Origenes* (Tübingen 1931) 36–62. The theme is to be found also in baptismal catecheses: the newly baptized must be fighters for Christ; cf. John Chrysostom *Homiliae catecheticae* 1.1; 7.31 (SC 50.108,245).

⁶⁶ Cf. *Concilium Laodicenum*, can. 27 and 28. But in the Egyptian churches common meals still seem to have been practised in the fourth century; cf. Socrates *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.22 (PG 67.636A–B); Sozomen *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.19.1 (GCS 50.330).

⁶⁷ John Chrysostom *In Epistulam I ad Corinthios*, Homilia 27.1 (PG 61.224).

⁶⁸ Cf. *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Abba Isaias 4 (PG 65.181A); Abba Motius 1 (PG 65.300A); Abba Sisoës 20 (PG 65.400B); John Moschus *Pratum spirituale* 13 (PG 87.2861B).

⁶⁹ Theodore of Studios *Oratio* 12.6 (*Laudatio S. Arsenii anachoretæ*; PG 99.853A).

⁷⁰ Cf. e.g. H. I. Bell, *Jews and Christians in Egypt* (London 1914) 28 (*agap n poiein*).

acter of the first Christian community in Jerusalem is likewise a regular theme in somewhat later theological reflection, as in ascetic writings of Basil, Jerome, Augustine, Cassian and John Chrysostom. Different aspects are stressed. Cassian, for instance, considers cenobitism as coming into existence in postapostolic times and passing later into anachoretism. Basil, in his Rule, draws a parallel between the community of Jerusalem and cenobitic life. In the view of John Chrysostom, monks are bearers of a *charisma* as described by the apostle Paul: because of their respectable life, this makes them more than others suitable for the service of the Church through missionary activities.

PRIMUM ENIM OMNES DOCEBANT:
AWARENESS OF DISCONTINUITY IN THE EARLY
CHURCH: THE CASE OF ECCLESIASTICAL OFFICE

B. Dehandschutter

It has commonly been assumed that the Early Church looked back with reverence to the Apostolic Age. This may be illustrated from a document as early as the end of the first century A.D. The author of the so-called First Epistle of Clement¹ writes: 'Our apostles also knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife over the meaning of the *episkop*. So for this reason, having perfect foreknowledge, they appointed the aforesaid persons and subsequently gave them permanence, so that if they should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their service' (*1 Clem.* 44.1–2). There is no need to give further analysis of this well-known passage²—it shows how early the reference to the Apostolic Age became important. The apostles foresaw everything, and as a consequence those early times received an almost normative status.

One could observe the same tendency in other early Christian writings, such as the Epistle of Jude: 'You, beloved, remember the words of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they said you that at the end of time there will be deceivers . . .' (Jude 17–18), a recommendation becoming an *entol*, an order, in 2 Pet. 3.2.³ It is no wonder either that in that way many early Christian writings

¹ For a discussion of the date of *1 Clement*, see H. E. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief* (Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern 2; Göttingen 1998) 75–8, 116; and our remarks in *VC* 54 2000 326–31.

² See the excellent commentary by H. E. Lona, *ibid.* 455–71; one remark however about the translation of τὸ ὄνομα τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς by 'die Würde des Episkopenamtes' (455). As *1 Clement* does not show any trace of a theory of ministry (see the excursus on 'Amt', 471–81), it seems better to avoid the idea of 'Amt' also in the translation of the noun ἐπισκοπή. We left it untranslated, to leave any anachronistic translation aside, though the English provides us with the term 'supervision'; cf. A. Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe* (Tübingen 1992) 121: 'das „Amt“ der Aufsicht', with emphatic quotation marks. Perhaps one could follow the ancient translation of E. J. Goodspeed: 'the title of overseer'.

³ 'Remember . . . the commands given by the Lord and Saviour through your apostles . . .' Afterwards, Irenaeus has taken up once for all the notion of foreknowledge, cf. *Adversus Haereses* 3.1.1.

took the shape of 'teachings' or 'instruction' attributed to the apostles.⁴ Whatever their differences may be, the same tendency may be recognised: the problems of the post-apostolic generations are anticipated by a solution, given in what the Apostles said or did. In other words, from the apostolic times to the present, there is a continuity based on the authoritative status of the 'beginnings'.⁵

But has the Early Church always embraced without much reservation this idea of 'apostolic continuity', so often present in expressions such as 'apostolic teaching', 'apostolic tradition', 'apostolic succession' etc.? It might be instructive to investigate the possibility that the early times were also considered as venerable but past. In other words, they belong to a period different from the present. It is indeed not impossible to find some testimonies about an idea of 'discontinuity' with regard to the Apostolic Age, which might indicate in the Early Church itself the existence of a more 'historical' approach.

Our investigation about this will necessarily be affected by some limitations. It seemed useful to focus on texts about early Christian ministry, as this should give some occasion for a reflection on 'then' and 'now'. Moreover, we do so through some cases of scriptural interpretation dating from the second half of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth centuries, as a larger number of commentaries and homilies is available only then. We will take the story of Acts 6 as a starting point, then turn to the text of Ephesians 4.11–12,⁶ and finish with a consideration of the terms *episkopos* and *presbiteros* as interchangeable in the earliest Christian literature.⁷

⁴ The *Didache of the Twelve Apostles*, the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, the *Apostolic Constitutions* etc. See B. Steimer, *Vertex traditionis: Die Gattung der altchristlichen Kirchenordnungen* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 63; Berlin and New York 1992); G. Schöllgen, 'Der Abfassungszweck der frühchristlichen Kirchenordnungen', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 40 1997 55–77.

⁵ Cf. G. G. Blum, *Tradition und Sukzession: Studien zum Normbegriff des Apostolischen von Paulus bis Irenäus* (Berlin and Hamburg 1963).

⁶ This text often is explained in connection with 1 Corinthians 12.28: 'Within the church God has appointed in the first place apostles, in the second place prophets, thirdly teachers . . .', see e.g. Chrysostom's homily 11 on Ephesians, English translation in P. Allen and W. Mayer, *John Chrysostom* (London and New York 2000) 59–72.

⁷ This phenomenon has been studied sufficiently, see e.g. J. Ysebaert, *Die Amtsterminologie im Neuen Testament und in der Alten Kirche* (Breda 1994); but in the context of this contribution we focus the indicated aspect of the reference to the Apostolic Age.

1. *Acts 6*

This text on the appointment of the Seven receives a remarkable interpretation by John Chrysostom in his fourteenth homily on Acts.⁸ It is known that the Seven are chosen to relieve the activities of the apostles, especially by devoting themselves to the support of widows (Acts 6.1–4). Chrysostom refers to a number of peculiarities of this passage: the choice made by the disciples, the unanimity, the presence of the Spirit. Then comes the question: but what kind of instruction was given to the Seven? Chrysostom flatly denies that it was the diaconate (in the later sense of the word) or any other function we know about (e.g. the presbyterate). The story of Acts points to a peculiar situation, and it was to find a solution to that situation that the Seven were appointed.

Of course one could suspect Chrysostom's carefulness is due to the fact that the Book of Acts does not make any use of the word *diakonos* as such, and that the terms *diakonia* and *diakonein* are still used in a general way.⁹ Moreover, it should not have escaped him that the Seven, as far as we know, did everything except that for which they were singled out. Acts 6 continues with the episode on Stephen, a man full of faith and holy spirit, who achieves great miracles among the people. He gets in trouble with the Jewish leaders, and, after his famous oration, his martyrdom is the consequence. Philip, the second of the Seven, brought to Samaria by the persecution after Stephen's death, preaches there the Messiah. Later he is guided by an angel to meet the Ethiopian, teaches and baptises him (Acts 8).

However one judges Chrysostom's interpretation,¹⁰ we can't but discover the expression of a clear difference between the Apostolic Age and the later developments in his mind. There is no question

⁸ Cf. PG 60.111–20, esp. 115–16. The homily might be dated about AD 400, cf. J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom—Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (London 1995) 166–8; but see Allen and Mayer (n. 6) 177.

⁹ See Acts 6.1,4: *διακονία*; Acts 6.2: *διακονεῖν*.

¹⁰ Cf. M. Lochbrunner, *Über das Priestertum: Historische und systematische Untersuchungen zum Priesterbild des Johannes Chrysostomos* (Bonn 1993) 238–40; but this author analysed our passage too much from the presumption that *χειροτονία* could be interpreted as 'ordination' ('Weihe'). In our view this is contrary to the sense Chrysostom wants to give to the passage about the Seven.

that Acts 6 should point to the diaconate: at that time there were only apostles.¹¹

2. *Ephesians 4.11–12*

The difference between the Apostolic Age and the present can be found even more explicitly in the commentary on the Pauline letters by the famous ‘Ambrosiaster’. This anonymous author¹² starts his exegesis of Ephesians 4.11 (‘And He gave apostles as well as prophets and evangelists, shepherds and teachers . . .’) with some details about these ‘offices’, a subject ‘greatly interesting’ him.¹³ Those who are called in the text apostles are now bishops, the prophets are now people explaining sacred Scripture, the evangelists now the deacons, shepherds the readers, teachers exorcists! Ambrosiaster then gives some more explanation about the exorcists, to arrive at this crucial observation: ‘But when in all places churches were established and ministry (*officia*) organised, it was different from the beginning; in the beginning everybody was teaching and everybody baptised according to the occasion given, at whatever day or hour; so Philip did not question the moment or the day when he was to baptise the eunuch, nor did he precede it by a fast . . .’¹⁴ Ambrosiaster continues in the same way: Paul and Sileas did not delay the baptism of the guardian with his house, nor did Peter in the case of Cornelius. Only afterwards, as many communities were established, the leadership was organised and the *officia* were arranged, so that no one was occupying himself with the duties of another. All this means that deacons for instance no longer preach. In other words, Ambrosiaster clearly observes a difference between the Apostolic Age

¹¹ Καίτοι οὐδέπω οὐδεὶς ἐπίσκοπος ἦν ἀλλ’ οἱ ἀπόστολοι μόνον (PG 60.116). Again, this statement contrasts with the view of ‘Westerners’ such as Ambrosiaster or Jerome, who connect the diaconate with the Apostolic Age.

¹² See the presentation of M. G. Mara, ‘Ambrosiaster’, in A. Di Berardino (ed.), *Patrology*, iv (Westminster 1986) 180–4.

¹³ Cf. A. Souter, *The Earliest Latin Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul* (Oxford 1927) 76.

¹⁴ *Tamen postquam omnibus locis ecclesiae sunt constitutae et officia ordinata, aliter composita res est quam coeperat. primum enim omnes docebant et omnes baptizabant, quibuscumque diebus vel temporibus fuisset occasio; nec enim Philippus tempus quaesivit aut diem, quo eunuchum baptizaret neque ieiunium interposuit . . .* (CSEL 81.iii.99).

and a later development, which is illustrated again by his remark to the effect that, as Paul's letters belong to the earliest period, one cannot read everything in the apostolic letters as corresponding with regulations in the churches now.¹⁵

3. Episkopos—Presbuteros

Ambrosiaster's interpretation pointed also to another phenomenon illustrating the difference between the Apostolic Age and later times: the fact that the terms *episcopus* and *presbyter* were understood as interchangeable.¹⁶ The original lack of differentiation of these terms has occupied many a Father, and this is due no doubt to the number of New Testament texts giving occasion to such a conclusion: in Acts 20 Paul summons the *presbyteroi* of Ephesus to Miletus, but speaks in his farewell address only about *episkopoi*; the address of the Epistle to the Philippians, mentioning only *episkopoi* and *diakonoi*, no *presbuteroi*; again several passages from the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.¹⁷ Ambrosiaster comes back to the question more than once, for example at 1 Timothy 3.8, besides the aforementioned Ephesians text,¹⁸ but also very explicitly in the *Quaestiones* (101).¹⁹

¹⁵ Of course the text of Ephesians can give rise to other considerations. We already referred to Chrysostom's homily 11. But also Jerome shows his own pre-occupation. For him the text is an important proof against Sabellianism. See further B. Jeanjean, *Saint Jérôme et l'hérésie* (Paris 1999). It might be added that Origen took up the passage of Ephesians to stress the position of the teachers, cf. H. J. Vogt, *Das Kirchenverständnis des Origenes* (Cologne 1974) 19, 58–70; cf. U. Neymeyr, *Die christlichen Lehrer im zweiten Jahrhundert* (Leiden 1989) 95–102.

¹⁶ *nam et Timotheum presbyterum a se creatum episcopum vocat, quia primi presbyteri episcopi appellabantur . . .* (CSEL 81.iii.100).

¹⁷ As a matter of fact, the text quoted at the beginning from *1 Clement* shows the same phenomenon. The problem of the troubled position of the presbyters in Corinth is answered by the reference to the position of the *episkopoi* (and *diakonoi*) as ordered in the Old Testament, with an adapted quotation from Isaiah 60.17 as a 'proof-text'. The whole notion of *episkopos* is however limited to the passage in *1 Clement* 42–4, with exception of *1 Clem.* 59.3, where God is called *episkopos* in the final prayer, see H. E. Lona (n. 1) 595.

¹⁸ For 1 Timothy 3.8 see Vogels, CSEL 81.iii.267. In ch. 3 of the Letter to Timothy considerations about the *episkop* are followed by recommendations about the deacons. There again the question about the presbyters could arise.

¹⁹ CSEL 50.193–8. Though the authorship of this writing has been a matter of discussion, there seems to be a consensus to attribute it to Ambrosiaster, see Mara (n. 12) 184; but as a final proof seems to lacking we do not refer too much to this text.

However, Jerome may not be neglected here. It is well known how he dealt with the question in his Epistle to Evangelus (*Ep.* 146).²⁰ This Roman presbyter must have made a complaint to Jerome about the importance of the (Seven) deacons in the Roman church over against the (many) presbyters. Jerome's answer essentially is that a presbyter initially is no less than an *episcopus*, so that there is no reason for feelings of inferiority. It should not be neglected however that Jerome at the same time builds up an argument about the position of the *presbyter* over against the *episcopus*.

Most instructive is Jerome's commentary on the Epistle to Titus, where he treats the question of the original equivalence of both, and this once more against the background of some disputation about the matter.²¹ Jerome argues that those who oppose the equivalence should read Scripture. He quotes eagerly Acts 20, the address of Philippians, Hebrews 13.17 and 1 Peter 5.1, where Peter himself indicates his person as *sunpresbuteros!* The conclusion is evident: *apud veteres eosdem fuisse presbyteros quos et episcopos*.²² Jerome has another striking remark to add: if it is so that at some moment the *episcopus* has been chosen as the head of the community to avoid dissension and scission, it implies that all this was a matter of *consuetudo ecclesiae*.²³ However, it must be recognised that the presbyter of Strido leaves no doubt about the difference between the 'then' (see the apostolic writings) and the 'now'.

Another author certainly not to be neglected is Theodore of

²⁰ CSEL 56.308–12.

²¹ Jerome knew the commentaries of the anonymous, and though he 'heartily disliked' Ambrosiaster, he might have been influenced by the position of the latter, cf. J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings and Controversies* (London 1975) 146, 212. However, Ambrosiaster's *Quaestio* 101 is more occupied with answering the pretensions of the Roman deacons and less with the position of the presbyters. As the commentary on Titus precedes *Epistula* 146, the latter may be also dependent on the former, see S. L. Greenslade, *Early Latin Theology: Selections from Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose and Jerome* (London 1956) 383–4.

²² PL 26.563.

²³ Cf. R. Hennings, 'Hieronymus zum Bischofsamt', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 108 1997 1–11; we are not convinced that Hennings is right in recognising in Jerome's writings a concept of the *one* ministry as *dispositio dominica*. In our view, *Epistula* 52 ad Nepotianum is only relevant as an attempt to link Christian ministry with its (presumed) Old Testament models. However, Jerome certainly wants to say that those who claim a privileged position for the *episcopus* cannot do so by making an appeal to an institution of the Lord Himself.

Mopsuestia, whose commentaries on the Pauline epistles offer interesting materials. On the occasion of 1 Timothy 3.8 Theodore even arrives at a lengthy excursus, a kind of history of early Christian ministry.²⁴ Its main elements may be summarised as follows: in ancient times presbyters were also called *episkopoi* (so Paul does not neglect them in the address of Philippians 1.1). As a matter of fact, the leaders of the early communities were called *presbuteroi*, 'elders', according to the Jewish model. Sometimes they were called *episkopoi*, 'overseers', according to their responsibility. This can conveniently be read in Acts 20. Further it is manifest that those in charge as 'overseers' were not the same as those in charge of a whole region, as the latter were called 'apostles', travelling around and creating local leaders (by the imposition of hands). The post-apostolic generation has not dared to appropriate the title of 'apostle', and so a further differentiation of the terms was made necessary. Otherwise, it did not escape Theodore's attention that *episkopoi* had been local leaders, long before they became in charge of a whole region.²⁵

As a kind of *inclusio* it might be interesting to return for a moment to John Chrysostom, whose first homily on Philippians is here again instructive.²⁶ When in Phil. 1.1 Paul addresses himself to the *sunepiskopoi*²⁷ and the *diakonoï*, one could wonder whether there was more than one bishop in Philippi. Of course not, Chrysostom answers, Paul addresses the presbyters—the terminology was not yet differentiated. An *episkopos* could even be called *diakonos*. So Paul writes to Timothy: accomplish thy *diakonia*.²⁸ From an early time presbyters were indicated as *episkopoi* and *diakonoï christou*,²⁹ or *episkopoi* could be desig-

²⁴ Cf. H. B. Swete, *Theodori Episcopi Mopsuesteni in epistolas B. Pauli commentarii: The Latin version with the Greek fragments*, ii (Cambridge 1880–2) 118–26.

²⁵ See again Theodore, *1 Thess.-Phil.*, ad Titum 1.7. Like a number of Fathers (e.g. Jerome) before him, Theodore also refers to the importance of the presbyterate in the Egyptian church. This testifies to a historical consciousness that takes into account the particularities in the development of the different churches.

²⁶ Cf. P. Allen and W. Mayer, 'Chrysostom and the Preaching of Homilies in Series: A Re-examination of the Fifteen Homilies in Epistulam ad Philippenses (CPG 4432)', *VC* 49 1995 270–89.

²⁷ Chrysostom's reading. It is rejected by B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart 1994²), 544, with a reference to Theodore, but this does not affect the sense given to it by Chrysostom.

²⁸ 2 Timothy 4.5: 'do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy *diakonia*.'

²⁹ Cf. 1 Tim. 4.6. See also on this J.-N. Guinot, 'L'apport des panégyriques de Jean Chrysostome à une définition de l'évêque modèle', in *Vescovi e pastori in epoca teodosiana: XXV incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana*, ii (Rome 1997) 395–421.

nated as *presbuteroi*.³⁰ Only afterwards did the designations get separated to refer to different functions.

With all this, it is striking that Chrysostom remains consistent with his interpretation of Acts 6. The *diakonoi* in Phil. 1.1 should not be pressed to mean deacons in the later sense. Chrysostom is not tempted to any kind of actualisation: the texts of the apostolic age should be read 'in terms of' the apostolic age, and not in the light of later developments.

Conclusion

No straightforward conclusion should be drawn from this limited investigation. Other Christian writers should be added, and other texts (such as 1 Tim. 4.14) and their interpretation. Also not negligible would be a further consideration about the Fathers' views on ministry, and the way they find them confirmed in the earliest Christian tradition.

It might be illuminating to add a quotation from Chrysostom, taken from the 11th homily on 1 Timothy (about 1 Tim. 3.8):

Discoursing of Bishops, and having described their character, and the qualities which they ought to possess, and having passed over the order of Presbyters, he proceeds to that of Deacons. The reason of this omission was that between Presbyters and Bishops there was no great difference. Both had undertaken the office of Teachers and Presidents in the Church, and what he has said concerning Bishops is applicable to Presbyters. For they are only superior in having the power of ordination, and seem to have no other advantage over Presbyters.³¹

If it might be argued that Chrysostom's position seems slightly different from our interpretation above,³² it should be taken into account that the homilies reflect different situations.³³ Above all it appears that

³⁰ See a parallel interpretation in Theodoret of Cyrrhus *Interpretatio Epistulae ad Philippenses* (PG 82.560). Theodoret is an author who deserves further investigation.

³¹ Translation from *Saint Chrysostom. Homilies on Galatians, Ephesians . . . Timothy* (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, i.13; Edinburgh 1889 = 1979), 441.

³² Remarkably, Chrysostom continues by stressing the fact that from the deacons the same requirements are made!

³³ Cf. W. Mayer, *The Provenance of the Homilies of St John Chrysostom: Towards a New Assessment of Where He Preached What*, diss. Queensland 1996; Ead., 'John Chrysostom: Extraordinary Preacher, Ordinary Audience', in M. Cunningham and P. Allen (eds.), *Preacher and Audience: Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics* (Leiden 1998) 105–37.

Chrysostom's main concern about ministry is always at hand: those who lead the community (however you call them) should be teachers and guides, as the famous preacher convincingly argues in his *De Sacerdotio*.³⁴ But it does not mean that he or his contemporaries were unaware of the consequences of the transition from the apostolic to the post-apostolic age. It has been the purpose of this contribution to show that this 'historical' awareness of the Fathers with regard to the Apostolic Age is more important than it seems at first sight.

³⁴ Cf. a.o. H. Dörries, 'Erneuerung des kirchlichen Amtes im vierten Jahrhundert: Die Schrift 'De Sacerdotio' des Johannes Chrysostomos und ihre Vorlage die 'Oratio de fuga sua' des Gregor von Nazianz', in *Bleibendes im Wandel der Kirchengeschichte* (Tübingen 1973) 1-46.

URBS BEATA JERUSALEM:
SAINT AUGUSTIN SUR JÉRUSALEM

Antoon A. R. Bastiaensen

Le psaume 132 (133 dans le psautier hébreu) est un *canticum graduum*, destiné à être chanté par les pèlerins juifs en route vers Jérusalem et le Temple de Dieu. Dans ce ‘cantique des montées’ s’exprime la joie qui règne dans le cœur de tous ceux qui, ensemble, sont en marche vers la ville sainte. Le psaume glorifie donc les liens fraternels entre les pèlerins. Tout court qu’il est, il a fait fortune, surtout le premier verset: ‘Voyez! Qu’il est bon, qu’il est doux d’habiter en frères tous ensemble!’ . Ce verset, dans la version des Septante: Ἴδὸν δὴ τί καλὸν ἢ τί τεργνὸν ἀλλ’ ἢ τὸ κατοικεῖν ἀδελφοὺς ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό; et dans la traduction latine: *Ecce quam bonum et quam iucundum habitare fratres in unum*, a charmé aussi les chrétiens grecs et latins: *ista . . . verba psalterii, iste dulcis sonus, ista suavis melodia*, ainsi Augustin, ému, dans son commentaire du psaume 132.¹ Les commentateurs chrétiens aussi voyaient le psaume, dans sa qualité de chant de pèlerins, en rapport avec la ville de Jérusalem. Rien d’étonnant donc qu’il était souvent cité en référence aux renseignements des Actes des Apôtres sur l’église primitive de Jérusalem, où les chrétiens n’avaient qu’un cœur et qu’une âme et, dans un esprit de communion fraternelle, mettaient tout en commun.²

Augustin aussi, dans un passage de son commentaire du psaume 132,³ se réfère à la description des Actes. Ce verset psalmique sur les frères qui veulent être ensemble était, dit-il, le son d’une trompette de l’Esprit Saint. Il n’a pas été entendu dans le pays des juifs, mais bien au dehors, selon le mot du prophète Isaïe que ceux qui

¹ *Psal.* 132,2 (CCSL 40,1927).

² *Act.* 2,44–46; 4,32–35.

³ Ce commentaire, daté probablement de 407, a été l’objet de plusieurs études: celles de L. Verheijen, rassemblées dans *Nouvelle approche de la Règle de saint Augustin*, I, Bégrolles en Mauges 1980; II, Louvain 1988; voir aussi A. Solignac, «Le monachisme et son rôle dans l’Église d’après l’*Enarratio in Psalmum 132*», dans *Homo Spiritalis. Festgabe für Luc Verheijen OSA zu seinem 70. Geburtstag*, éd. par C. Mayer et K. H. Chelius, Würzburg 1987, 327–339.

n'avaient pas aperçu ont vu et que ceux qui n'avaient pas entendu dire ont appris,⁴ c'est-à-dire nous, les chrétiens. Mais ne nous trompons pas. Tous les juifs ne se sont pas perdus. Pensez aux apôtres, aux fils des prophètes, aux cinq cents qui ont vu le Seigneur après sa résurrection, aux cent vingt qui étaient ensemble après la résurrection et l'ascension et sur qui descendit l'Esprit Saint; pensez à ceux qui vendaient leurs biens et en déposaient le prix aux pieds des apôtres, qui n'avaient plus rien en propre, mais possédaient tout en commun, et ainsi n'avaient qu'un cœur et qu'une âme. Ce sont eux, habitants de la Jérusalem terrestre, qui, les premiers, ont entendu le mot du psaume: *Ecce quam bonum et quam iucundum habitare fratres in unum*. Nous l'avons entendu aussi, mais après eux; nous sommes les *posterii*, les descendants, à qui aussi il a été donné d'entendre cette *caritatis exultatio*, ce chant d'allégresse de la charité.

Dans les pages suivantes nous nous proposons de passer en revue quelques idées d'Augustin sur la ville et l'église de la Jérusalem terrestre et sur la Jérusalem d'en haut, la cité céleste.

1. *Le sort de la ville de Jérusalem*

Augustin parle à plusieurs fois du sort de la ville de Jérusalem, surtout dans ses commentaires des psaumes. Ainsi dans son explication des psaumes 125 (126) et 149, où il envisage la Jérusalem céleste en opposition à la Jérusalem terrestre, ville déchue, dont la fonction avait été d'être préfiguration: une fois venu ce qui était nouveau et permanent, ce qui était vieux et transitoire est passé.⁵ Augustin, ici, passe sous silence la part de culpabilité que les habitants ont prise à la déchéance de leur ville. Mais en d'autres textes il les rend responsables. Ainsi dans son commentaire du psaume 73(74), où il déclare que, lorsque Tite investit Jérusalem, des milliers de pèlerins se trouvaient dans la ville pour la célébration de la pâque juive et périrent avec les habitants. C'était, dit-il, leur propre faute, car les juifs avaient tué le Christ. 'Où ils ont tué le Christ, ils ont été tués eux-mêmes, . . . dans le même temps de fête . . . ; juste au moment où périssait la ville des juifs, ils célébraient la pâque et des milliers du peuple étaient présents pour la célébration; à ce moment et en

⁴ Is. 52,15.

⁵ *Psal.* 125,1; 149,5 (CCSL 40,1844 et 2181-2182).

cet endroit Dieu les a punis: des milliers et des milliers périrent et la ville fut détruite'.⁶ Dans son commentaire de la première Épître de Jean il dit: 'On sait que tous les meurtriers (*interfectores*) du Christ, c'est-à-dire les juifs, ont été expulsés de cette ville; là où demeuraient des adversaires furieux du Christ (*saevientes in Christum*), habitent maintenant des adorateurs du Christ; c'est pourquoi les juifs haïssent Jérusalem, parce que les chrétiens y sont'.⁷ Une information semblable est donnée dans le commentaire du psaume 124(125): 'Tous ceux qui habitaient dans cette Jérusalem terrestre ont été expulsés par la guerre et par la destruction de la ville: cherchez un juif dans la ville de Jérusalem, vous n'en trouverez pas'.⁸

Ces textes d'Augustin reflètent l'opinion commune des chrétiens que la Jérusalem juive avait perdu sa raison d'être et était définitivement morte. L'Ancienne Alliance avait fait place à l'Alliance que Dieu avait conclue avec le nouvel Israël, l'église chrétienne. Les juifs récalcitrants avaient causé leur propre perte et la destruction de Jérusalem. Pour les chrétiens, l'incrédulité juive, la *iudaica perfidia*, était voisine de mauvaise foi: ils ne s'expliquaient pas que les juifs se refusaient à reconnaître ce qui, à leurs yeux, était une vérité d'évidence.

Il reste pourtant un passage curieux dans un des sermons d'Augustin. Il exhorte ses auditeurs à la conversion et à la vigilance en leur représentant le danger de catastrophes imprévues: 'Nous avons la nouvelle de graves tremblements de terre dans les régions de l'orient; ... à Jérusalem juifs, païens et catéchumènes, tous ont été baptisés; on dit qu'ils étaient bien sept mille; le signe du Christ (c'est-à-dire la croix) se montrait sur les vêtements des juifs baptisés'.⁹ La chronique de Marcellinus Comes donne le même renseignement, à part la division des habitants en trois catégories et le détail piquant de juifs, portant la croix sur leurs vêtements.¹⁰ Dans la version d'Augustin la fantaisie est de la partie, mais, prise en soi, elle est en contradiction avec ses propos sur l'absence de juifs parmi les habitants de Jérusalem. Nous ferons bien de ne pas attacher trop d'importance à l'inconséquence. Du reste, l'affirmation qu'il n'y avait plus de juifs

⁶ *Psal.* 73,3 (CCSL 39,1007).

⁷ *Ep. Io.* 2,3 (SC 75,158).

⁸ *Psal.* 124,3 (CCSL 40,1837); à comparer *Psal.* 62,18 (CCSL 39,805).

⁹ *Serm.* 19,6 (CCSL 41,258).

¹⁰ *Chron.* an. 419 (éd. Th. Mommsen, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi 11, Berlin 1894, 74).

à Jérusalem ne correspondait pas à la réalité. En effet, après l'écrasement de l'insurrection de Simon Bar-Kochba en 135 les juifs avaient été expulsés de Jérusalem et dispersés aux quatre vents, mais bientôt on trouva un *modus vivendi* qui leur permettait un accès discret à la ville.¹¹ Au quatrième siècle Grégoire de Nazianze, dans un de ses discours, faisait allusion à la présence juive dans la ville.¹² Augustin, manquant d'informations précises, se laissait guider par la tradition anti-judaïque, quitte à profiter aussi de 'renseignements' plus ou moins fortuits.

2. *L'église de Jérusalem prototype et modèle des communautés chrétiennes*

Pour la pensée chrétienne Jérusalem était à jamais la ville élue, la ville de Melchisédec, roi de Salem/Jérusalem, la ville de David et de Salomon, la ville du Temple, la ville qu'aimait Jésus-Christ. C'était aussi la ville d'où, remplis de l'Esprit Saint, partirent les apôtres et les premiers fidèles, pour porter le feu et la lumière en tout lieu.¹³ Jérusalem est l'origine du salut, et Augustin ne cesse d'affirmer, comme une sorte de contrepoids contre le jugement négatif sur l'attitude du peuple juif, que cette origine était juive, centrée sur la communauté de Jérusalem composée d'apôtres, de disciples et de milliers d'autres juifs qui croyaient sur leur parole.¹⁴ On comprend qu'Augustin s'indigne des donatistes, qui disaient: 'Nous ne sommes pas en communion avec cette ville où a été tué notre roi, où a été tué notre Seigneur'. Il commente: 'Ils haïssent la ville dans laquelle a été tué le Seigneur... Lui pourtant, il a aimé cette ville et s'est ému sur elle'.¹⁵ La discussion concernait le fait, souligné par Augustin, que la

¹¹ Cfr. M. Simon, *Verus Israël. Étude sur les relations entre chrétiens et juifs dans l'empire romain (135-425)*, Paris 1964², 127-130.

¹² *Oratio* 6,18 (PG 35,745).

¹³ *Psal.* 30,2, *Serm.* 3,9 (CCSL 38,219); *Serm.* 116,6,6 (PL 38,660).

¹⁴ Voir les passages cités à note 13 et *Psal.* 93,8 (CCSL 39,1310); *Psal.* 101, *Serm.* 1,15; *Psal.* 132,2 (CCSL 40,1436; 1927); *Serm.* 77,3,4 (PL 38,484-485); *Catech.* 23,42 (CCSL 46,166-167); *Epist.* 186,8,31 (CSEL 57,69-70).

¹⁵ *Ep. Io.* 2,3 (SC 75,157-159); voir aussi *Petil.* 2,104,239 (CSEL 52,152-155) et *Ep. ad cath.* 10,25-26 (ibid. 259-261). L'attitude 'ambiguë' d'Augustin vis-à-vis des juifs est décrite avec délicatesse par F. van der Meer, *Saint Augustin pasteur d'âmes I-II*, Colmar et Paris 1955, I 139-141 (traduit du néerlandais, *Augustinus de zielzorg. Een studie over de praktijk van een kerkvader*, Utrecht et Bruxelles 1947, 77-78). Un jugement nuancé, qui cherche à corriger les opinions censées trop dures, est donné par Th. Raveaux, «Adversus Iudaeos—Antisemitismus bei Augustinus?», dans *Signum Pietatis. Festgabe Cornelius Petrus Mayer*, éd. par A. Zumkeller, Würzburg 1989, 37-51.

foi chrétienne, selon les instructions du Christ, s'était répandue de Jérusalem dans le monde entier, et que, par conséquent, les adhérents de cette foi devaient honorer Jérusalem partout et qu'il ne leur était pas permis de fonder des communautés géographiquement limitées, comme les donatistes avaient fait. Le souvenir de Jérusalem, ville aimée de Jésus, devenait ainsi un argument dans une discussion dogmatique avec des dissidents.

Mais l'attention des auteurs chrétiens se concentrait surtout sur le caractère de la communauté de Jérusalem. Elle se distinguait par l'harmonie parfaite de ses membres qui possédaient tout en commun et n'avaient qu'un cœur et qu'une âme. Cette unité admirable de l'église primitive de Jérusalem était proposée en modèle de conduite pour les autres églises, mais elle servait aussi d'argument dans les discussions dogmatiques sur les relations intratrinitaires. C'est sur cet emploi théologique que nous nous arrêterons en premier lieu.

Depuis le troisième siècle une tradition s'était formée sur ce point.¹⁶ Dans sa réponse à Celse Origène disait, à propos du Dieu des chrétiens, que le Père et le Fils étaient un, et que cette unité se reflétait dans l'attitude de l'église de Jérusalem où tous ceux qui croyaient 'n'avaient qu'un cœur et qu'une âme'.¹⁷ Au commencement du quatrième siècle Eusèbe de Césarée affirmait que, si les fidèles de Jérusalem avaient tout en commun, à plus forte raison le Père et le Fils, origine et prototype de toute l'humanité, possèdent tout en commun.¹⁸ En occident Hilaire, dans sa discussion avec les ariens, voyait dans une même perspective l'unité physique du Père et du Fils et l'unité morale de l'église de Jérusalem.¹⁹ Ambroise défend contre les ariens l'égalité du Père et du Fils en proclamant: 'Si les fidèles n'ont qu'un cœur et qu'une âme, . . . si homme et femme sont une seule chair, . . . si nous, les humains, sont un dans notre nature humaine, . . . alors, le Père et le Fils, ayant la même nature et la même volonté, ne seraient-ils pas un dans leur divinité?'.²⁰ Augustin présente plusieurs fois une argumentation semblable. Dans son commentaire de l'évangile de Jean il conclut: 'Si la charité pouvait faire une âme de tant

¹⁶ Sur ce sujet de théologie historique on peut consulter M.-F. Berrouard, «La première communauté de Jérusalem comme image de l'unité de la Trinité. Une des exégèses d'Act 4,32a», dans Mayer et Chelius (n. 3) 207-224.

¹⁷ *Cels.* 8,12 (GCS 3,299).

¹⁸ *Marcell.* 2,2,18,38 (GCS 14,38).

¹⁹ *Trin.* 1,28 (CCSL 62,25-26); 8,5.7 (CCSL 62A,318-319).

²⁰ *Fid.* 1,2,17-18 (OOSA 15,62).

d'âmes et un cœur de tant de cœurs, quelle ne sera pas, puisque Dieu est supérieur à l'homme, la charité entre le Père et le Fils?'.²¹ Et ailleurs dans le même ouvrage: 'À Jérusalem il y avait tant de milliers de personnes, et ils n'avaient qu'un cœur, tant de milliers de personnes, et ils n'avaient qu'une âme, à savoir en Dieu. Combien plus Dieu lui-même est un?'.²² Dans sa correspondance la même comparaison apparaît.²³ Dans la plupart des cas le raisonnement se dirige contre l'arianisme et porte sur la foi en un seul Dieu en trois Personnes.²⁴

Mais ce qui frappe surtout, c'est la conviction que l'église de Jérusalem, par la communion fraternelle de ses membres, était un modèle pour la conduite des autres chrétientés. Cette conviction date des premiers temps. La *Didachè* et l'*Epistula Barnabae* déjà prescrivent au chrétien de partager tout avec son frère et de n'avoir rien en propre.²⁵ Clément d'Alexandrie loue également ce 'communisme' chrétien.²⁶ Origène renvoie à l'exemple de l'église de Jérusalem pour recommander l'unanimité et la lutte contre la discorde.²⁷ De la même manière il inculque le commandement d'aimer le prochain comme soi-même, de vendre ses biens et d'en donner le prix aux pauvres.²⁸ En occident Cyprien a accueilli le passage d'Actes 4,32 dans sa collection de textes bibliques comme attestation du commandement de la charité.²⁹ Il y renvoie aussi dans son traité sur la bienfaisance et l'aumône et dans sa correspondance pour recommander la charité et l'unanimité au sein des communautés.³⁰ Ambroise dans son interprétation allégorique de la Bible vise de préférence la maturité spirituelle du chrétien individuel. L'église de Jérusalem, à ses yeux, préfigure la tranquillité d'âme et l'harmonie intérieure. Il explique le verset psalmique 47(48),5: 'Les rois de la terre se sont rassemblés

²¹ *Eu. Io.* 14,9 (CCSL 36,147-148); même raisonnement en 18,4 (ibid. 181-182).

²² *Eu. Io.* 39,5 (CCSL 36,347-348).

²³ *Ep.* 238,2,13 (CSEL 57,542-543).

²⁴ *Ep.* 170,5 (CSEL 44,625-626); *Ep.* 238,2,16 (CSEL 57,545-546). Voir aussi *Serm.* 229G (= Morin Guelferb. 11),5(6) (éd. G. Morin, *Miscellanea Agostiniana* 1; Rome 1930, 477-478) et *Coll. Max.* 12 (PL 42,715).

²⁵ *Did.* 4,8 (éd. F. X. Funk, Tubingue 1901, 12); *Barn.* 19,8 (ibid. 92).

²⁶ *Quis dives salvetur* 31,6 (éd. P. M. Barnard, *Texts and Studies* 5,2; Cambridge 1897 = Nendeln 1967, 24).

²⁷ *Hom. in Ezech.* 9,1 (SC 352,296); voir aussi *Comm. ser. in Mt.* 35 (GCS 38,68).

²⁸ *Comm. in Mt.* 15,15 (GCS 40,392).

²⁹ *Test.* 3,3 (CCSL 3,91).

³⁰ *Eleem.* 25 (CCSL 3A,71); *Ep.* 11,3,1 (CCSL 3B,59).

et se sont réunis (*transierunt in unum*)' en ce sens que 'ces rois sont ceux qui dominent la chair et n'ont qu'un cœur et qu'une âme, comme nous lisons à propos de la multitude des croyants; ils se sont réunis, non pas en un lieu, mais en un sentiment et en un programme de vie'.³¹ Et de la bien-aimée du Cantique des Cantiques, représentée comme colombe, il donne cette interprétation: 'Elle est l'âme parfaite, pure et spirituelle, qui n'est pas troublée par les passions corporelles, . . . qui est l'image de la concorde et de la paix, comme l'Écriture nous raconte de la multitude des fidèles qui n'avait qu'une âme et qu'un cœur'.³²

Parmi les latins personne n'a exploité comme Augustin le thème de l'église de Jérusalem. Comme nous avons vu au début de cette étude il y renvoie dans son commentaire du psaume 132(133). Dans ce commentaire il voit la pratique des fidèles de Jérusalem se continuer dans la forme de vie des moines dans leurs monastères. Il explique les emprunts grecs *monachi* et *monasteria*, dérivés de *monos*, 'seul', 'unique', en ce sens que ceux qui vivent ensemble dans un monastère sont comme une seule personne, tout à fait comme les habitants de Jérusalem, 'qui n'avaient qu'un cœur et qu'une âme'.³³ La vie religieuse apparaît chez Augustin couramment en relation avec la conduite de l'église de Jérusalem.³⁴ Parfois la mention sert un but apologétique. Dans sa polémique avec le manichéen Fauste Augustin souligne que les manichéens n'ont pas le monopole de l'ascèse: 'Nous avons tant de communautés, où les frères n'ont rien en propre mais tout en commun, . . . par le feu de la charité ils refondent (*conflant*) les choses temporelles et les transforment en une âme et un cœur attachés à Dieu'.³⁵ Dans un passage de *De civitate Dei* il oppose à la sobriété traditionnelle des anciens romains la pratique moderne des moines qui renoncent à leurs possessions et vivent en communauté de biens.³⁶ Un autre contexte est celui de la prédication. Dans un

³¹ *Psal.* 47,7 (OOSA 8,232).

³² *Is.* 7,59 (OOSA 3,100).

³³ *Psal.* 132,2–3.6 (CCSL 40,1927–1928 et 1931–1932; voir aussi *Psal.* 132,12 (ibid. 1934), sur les vrais religieux, qui vivent ensemble, non pas en apparence, mais en réalité.

³⁴ Une longue liste de textes d'Augustin sur ce sujet est présentée en traduction néerlandaise par T. J. van Bavel, *Ooit een land van kloosters. Teksten van Augustinus over het kloosterleven*, Heverlee-Louvain 1999. Il fait observer (270) que des textes bibliques cités par Augustin, les deux passages des Actes sont de loin les plus fréquents.

³⁵ *Faust.* 5,9 (CSEL 25,281).

³⁶ *Civ.* 5,18,2–3 (CCSL 47,153–154).

long sermon le jour de l'an Augustin combat toute sorte d'influences païennes, parmi lesquelles l'adoration des anges comme Michel et Gabriel. Les anges eux-mêmes refusent cette adoration, ainsi le prédicateur, qui poursuit avec une argumentation curieuse: si l'on veut honorer avec des sacrifices des hommes angéliques, qui vivent comme les premiers chrétiens de Jérusalem—c'est-à-dire les moines—, ils refusent ces sacrifices et disent qu'il ne faut sacrifier qu'à Dieu seul: si des hommes angéliques réagissent ainsi, à plus forte raison les anges eux-mêmes.³⁷ Et plus d'une fois il met en rapport les passages des Actes et la vie monastique telle qu'elle s'était développée avant et durant son épiscopat.³⁸

Enfin et surtout, la pratique de l'église de Jérusalem est devenue pour Augustin une règle de vie très concrète. Sa conversion avait été aussi une conversion à la vie ascétique, mais dans sa forme cénotique, en société, non pas comme ermite dans le désert. Après son retour en Afrique il avait vendu ses biens et avec un groupe de compagnons, parmi lesquels son ami Alypius, il s'était établi à Thagaste et s'y était adonné à la pratique de l'ascèse. Ordonné prêtre à Hippone il vivait avec des frères laïcs en une communauté religieuse. Devenu évêque il transforma la maison épiscopale en une demeure commune où il vivait avec les autres clercs d'Hippone en une forme de vie monastique. Encore simple prêtre il avait rédigé pour les frères laïcs un *Praeceptum* qui recueillait les éléments de son enseignement oral aux frères. Le *Praeceptum* s'inspirait de la rédaction, de la main d'Alypius, d'un *Ordo monasterii* pour la communauté de Thagaste qu'il avait lui-même fondée. La combinaison des deux textes, approuvée aussi par Alypius, est la première rédaction de la 'règle de saint Augustin'.³⁹ Une rédaction 'féminine' était destinée aux communautés de moniales. Une autre rédaction servait, avec les changements nécessaires, pour la communauté des clercs dans la maison épiscopale d'Hippone. Le texte fondateur pour tous ces monastères était celui des Actes: 'il n'y avait dans la multitude des croyants qu'un cœur et qu'une âme'. Une infraction à la règle de la communauté des biens porta l'évêque vers la fin de l'année 425 à rendre compte,

³⁷ *Serm. Dolbeau* 4,48 (éd. F. Dolbeau, Paris 1996, 127-128).

³⁸ Ainsi *Psal.* 80,21 (CCSL 39,1133); *Mon.* 21,25 (CSEL 41,570).

³⁹ L. Verheijen, *La Règle de saint Augustin* I. *Tradition manuscrite*. II. *Recherches historiques*, Paris 1967: voir II, 208.

devant une assemblée nombreuse, de la conduite des clercs de la maison épiscopale: 'Vous savez tous . . . que nous vivons dans notre maison . . . de manière à imiter autant que possible les saints dont il est dit dans les Actes des Apôtres: «Nul ne disait sien ce qui lui appartenait, mais entre eux tout était commun»'.⁴⁰ Grâce aux recherches de Verheijen nous disposons d'une bonne édition du *Praeceptum*, la règle originelle, écrite pour les frères laïcs d'Hippone.⁴¹ Le début est éloquent: 'Nous ordonnons que vous, qui vivez dans le monastère, observiez les points suivants. En premier lieu, puisque c'est pour cela que vous vous êtes rassemblés, d'être unanimes et de n'avoir qu'une âme et qu'un cœur envers Dieu. Vous ne devez pas dire vôtre ce qui vous appartient, mais entre vous tout doit être commun. Votre supérieur doit distribuer à chacun vivres et vêtements . . . suivant ses besoins. Car ainsi vous lisez dans les Actes des Apôtres: «Ils avaient tout en commun et à chacun était distribué suivant ses besoins»'.⁴² Il est évident que pour Augustin la pratique de l'ascèse ne coïncide pas avec la vie érémitique, mais avec une vie en société, se réglant sur l'exemple de l'église de Jérusalem, où 'les croyants n'avaient qu'une âme et qu'un cœur et possédaient tout en commun'.

3. *La cité céleste*

La réflexion théologique de l'église ancienne sur la Jérusalem céleste a trouvé son expression naturelle dans le rituel liturgique de la dédicace d'une église. Éloquent entre tous est, chez les latins, l'hymne de l'office *Urbs beata Jerusalem*,⁴³ écrit vers 800 en septénaires trochaïques, forme prosodique de grande allure, chérie des poètes chrétiens:

⁴⁰ *Serm.* 355,2 (Stromata Patristica et Mediaevalia 1; Utrecht et Bruxelles 1950, 124).

⁴¹ Verheijen (n. 39) I, 417-437. À comparer aussi Van Bavel (n. 34), 6, 10, 13, 211.

⁴² Les premiers rédacteurs d'une règle monastique avaient été les orientaux Basile de Césarée et Horsiesius de Tabenne en Égypte, qui avaient aussi relevé l'exemple de l'église de Jérusalem (cfr. Solignac [n. 3], 333). Augustin a peut-être pris connaissance de ces deux règles par les traductions de respectivement Jérôme et Rufin d'Aquilée.

⁴³ Pour la rédaction originelle on se référera au texte annoté de l'édition de A. Lentini, *Te decet hymnus. L'innario della «Liturgia horarum»*, Cité du Vatican 1984, 251.

Urbs beata Ierusalem,/dicta pacis visio,
 Quae construitur in caelis/vivis ex lapidibus,
 Et angelis coornata/ut sponsata comite,
 Nova veniens e caelo,/nuptiali thalamo
 Praeparata, ut intacta/copuletur Domino.

Bienheureuse la ville de Jérusalem,/qui s'appelle 'vision de la paix',
 Qui est construite au ciel/avec des pierres vivantes,
 Qui est escortée d'anges/comme une jeune mariée de ses compagnes,
 Et qui vient du ciel, régénérée,/pour la chambre nuptiale
 Parée, pour que, intacte,/elle soit unie au Seigneur.

Le texte renferme quatre idées. Le nom hébraïque de Jérusalem est expliqué comme Jeru-schalem, 'vision de paix'. La ville se construit ici-bas avec des pierres vivantes. Mais, en même temps, elle descend du ciel, purifiée. Ainsi elle s'unit, immaculée, au Christ son époux. Ces thèmes sont empruntés à la Bible de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament, qui est remplie de prédictions et d'images de la cité céleste. Les livres prophétiques et sapientiaux représentent Israël comme à jamais l'épouse bien-aimée de Dieu. Dans les visions du Second Isaïe est annoncé le temps de la restauration de la ville de Jérusalem. L'ange Gabriel prédit à Marie que son fils Jésus régnera sur la maison de Jacob pour les siècles et que son règne n'aura pas de fin. L'Épître aux Éphésiens parle du dessein éternel de Dieu et nomme les fidèles une construction qui grandit en un temple saint dans le Seigneur. Les grands thèmes de l'Épître aux Hébreux et de l'Apocalypse sont la nouvelle et meilleure alliance, l'établissement définitif du royaume céleste, l'apparition de la cité sainte, la Jérusalem nouvelle, qui descend du ciel de chez Dieu, parée comme une jeune mariée pour son époux.

Ces textes et leurs commentaires apparaissent d'innombrables fois dans les écrits chrétiens. Un relevé exhaustif étant impossible citons quelques grands auteurs. Pour Origène⁴⁴ la Jérusalem céleste est dès maintenant la ville de Dieu sur la terre. Celui qui ne vit pas selon la chair, mais selon l'Esprit est une pierre vivante dans la construction de cette ville. Le procès s'opère dans l'âme du croyant: peu à peu s'achève en lui la descente d'en haut de la Jérusalem céleste.

⁴⁴ La pensée d'Origène sur la Jérusalem céleste est très bien présentée dans la dissertation de F. Ledegang, *Mysterium ecclesiae. Beelden voor de kerk en haar leden bij Origenes I-II*, Nimègue 1992. Je renvoie à I, 322.348-360.

La fin viendra quand la création raisonnable entière sera unie au Christ pour être à jamais son épouse bien-aimée. L'interprétation du nom de Jérusalem comme Jeru-schalem ἵερασις τῆς εἰρήνης *visio pacis*, 'vision de paix', présentée déjà par Philon⁴⁵ et Clément d'Alexandrie,⁴⁶ évoque pour Origène le mot de Paul sur Jésus qui a fait la paix par le sang de sa croix (Col. 1,20). La construction de la Jérusalem nouvelle s'achève dans l'établissement de la paix parfaite dans la cité céleste, où Dieu sera 'tout en tous' (1 Cor. 15,28). Deux particularités sont à noter. Origène souligne que la fondation de Jérusalem était la ruine de sa devancière, Jésus, avec ses habitants, les Jésuséens; ceux-ci, interprétés spirituellement, sont les puissances mauvaises que le fidèle doit combattre et défaire. Plus importante encore est l'opposition Jérusalem—Babel/Babylone. À Jérusalem, la cité des saints, s'oppose Babel/Babylone, la cité des impies. Babylone est le symbole du mal, d'abord à cause de l'orgueil de ses habitants qui, selon le récit de la Genèse, bâtissaient une ville avec une tour qui devait s'élever jusqu'au ciel, orgueil que Dieu punissait en confondant leur langage (d'où le nom de Babel, σύγχυσις *confusio* 'confusion'), ensuite à cause de la ruine de Jérusalem causée par le roi de Babylone et de l'exil du peuple juif à Babylone (4 [2] Regum 24–25), enfin, à cause de la description, dans l'Apocalypse (17–18), de Babylone, la cité du mal, qui finira par périr.

Origène a fait école, en occident aussi. Nous nous occuperons quelques instants de la pensée de deux témoins de la tradition occidentale, Hilaire et Ambroise, pour nous concentrer ensuite sur les idées d'Augustin. Chez Hilaire l'accent porte sur la Jérusalem céleste, le corps du Christ, qui est l'église du temps présent s'efforçant d'atteindre sa destinée, c'est-à-dire l'accomplissement au ciel. La construction de cette ville dure jusqu'à la fin des temps. La construction une fois achevée, la Jérusalem céleste sera la ville de la paix et la demeure de toute la parenté de Dieu et de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ.⁴⁷ L'adversaire de cette ville sainte est Babel/Babylone, la ville du mal et de la confusion des langues.⁴⁸ Pour Ambroise, fasciné par l'image

⁴⁵ *De somniis* 2,250 (éd. P. Savinel, Les œuvres de Philon d'Alexandrie 19; Paris 1962, 224).

⁴⁶ *Stromateis* 1,5,29,4 (SC 30,66).

⁴⁷ *Psal.* 64,2 (CSEL 22,234); 67,30 (ibid. 306); 121,2–5 (ibid. 571–573); 2,26 (ibid. 56–57); 145,7 (ibid. 858).

⁴⁸ *Psal.* 136,5 (CSEL 22,726–727).

de Jérusalem, ville céleste, l'église est cette ville, la résidence du nouveau peuple qui se pare des vêtements de la Loi et des Prophètes, qui avaient été la parure du peuple ancien.⁴⁹ La représentation est tantôt celle d'une ville achevée, tantôt celle d'une ville en construction. Achevée, elle est l'épouse bien-aimée du Cantique (8,4[5]), admirée par ses enfants, les filles de Jérusalem, qui sont les âmes des justes de l'Ancien Testament et les puissances célestes: les deux catégories paraissent tantôt ensemble, tantôt séparées.⁵⁰ Parfois la construction de la ville est mise en relief par la mention des voyageurs en route: aux puissances célestes s'ajoutent les humains qui sont appelés, tant ceux qui ont déjà atteint la perfection que ceux qui y tendent.⁵¹ Séjournant sur la terre, la Jérusalem céleste est une maison spirituelle, la mère de tous, l'épouse du Christ, resplendissante, sainte, immaculée, sans tache ni ride.⁵² Et, chantant les louanges de la virginité, Ambroise, à côté d'autres réminiscences bibliques, allègue le mot sur la Jérusalem céleste, ville sainte 'où rien de souillé ne s'introduit'.⁵³ Il connaît aussi l'interprétation du nom de Jérusalem comme 'vision de paix': la paix et le repos sont les marques de la Jérusalem céleste.⁵⁴ Et nous trouvons chez lui, comme chez Origène et Hilaire, l'opposition entre Jérusalem et Babel/Babylone: cette dernière porte le nom de *confusio*, 'confusion', et les Babyloniens sont les infidèles, qui n'ont pas accès aux mystères de la foi.⁵⁵

Pour Augustin le thème de Jérusalem, ville sainte, est inépuisable. Dans un passage de son modèle de catéchèse *De catechizandis rudibus* il présente un résumé de sa pensée. Le règne terrestre, la Jérusalem juive, était la préfiguration du règne céleste, la Jérusalem d'en haut, la ville glorieuse de Dieu, dont le nom hébraïque 'Jerusalem' signifie 'vision de paix'. Citoyens de cette ville sont les hommes sanctifiés, du passé, du présent et de l'avenir, et les esprits sanctifiés, les anges qui ne se sont pas élevés contre Dieu. Roi de cette ville est Jésus-Christ, Verbe de Dieu, prince des anges, et, dans sa condition humaine, prince des hommes: ils régneront tous ensemble avec Lui

⁴⁹ *Psal.* 118 13,15 (OOSA 10,72).

⁵⁰ *Psal.* 118 19,27; 22,38 (OOSA 10,306 et 422).

⁵¹ *Fug.* 5,31 (OOSA 4,104).

⁵² *Luc.* 2,88 (OOSA 11,226-228); *Luc.* 7,99 (OOSA 12,166-168).

⁵³ *Virgin.* 5,28 (OOSA 14,1,219-220).

⁵⁴ *Ep.* 18(70),13 (OOSA 19,186).

⁵⁵ *Psal.* 1,22 (OOSA 7,22) et *Psal.* 118 2,27-28 (OOSA 9,114-116).

dans une paix éternelle.⁵⁶ Nous reconnaissons les thèmes familiers: la construction dans le siècle présent, coïncidant avec la construction de la ville céleste, qui signifie et réalise la vision de la paix. Augustin a en plus, comme Ambroise, la double citoyenneté, des anges et des humains. En nombre d'autres textes ce complexe de thèmes revient. En *De Genesi ad litteram* la ville de Jérusalem est notre mère au ciel, vision de paix, tant que nous sommes sur la terre objet de notre désir et de notre espoir, dès maintenant réalité pour les anges, nos futurs concitoyens.⁵⁷ Commentant le psaume 9 (9-10), le prédicateur voit la Jérusalem terrestre comme la préfiguration de l'église au ciel; cette église est le séjour de ceux qui jouissent en paix de la vie des anges; nous autres mortels résidons également dans cette église, si, dans l'attente de notre établissement définitif, nous louons convenablement dès cette vie le Seigneur de l'église.⁵⁸ Un autre commentaire rappelle Origène par une double opposition entre l'ancienne et la nouvelle Jérusalem. Nés dans le péché à la suite de la faute d'Adam nous appartenons à l'ancienne ville, mais en tant que membres futurs du peuple de Dieu à la nouvelle ville. L'ancienne ville est la ville des Jébuséens qui doit être détruite. Elle est surtout Babylone, la ville du mal, issue de Caïn, opposée à Jérusalem, la ville du bien, issue d'Abel. À présent les deux communautés sont entremêlées, mais le jour viendra où les bales seront séparées du blé.⁵⁹ Dans un passage d'un autre commentaire nous trouvons la même opposition des deux villes: Jérusalem, la 'vision de la paix' contre Babylone, la ville de la 'confusion'; Jérusalem est la communauté des bons anges et des vrais fidèles, Babylone des mauvais anges et des infidèles.⁶⁰ Ailleurs Augustin souligne que la Jérusalem céleste héberge nos concitoyens, les anges; nous sommes encore dans un pays lointain, mais nous aspirons à la rencontre dans la sainte cité.⁶¹ Le commentaire de l'avant-dernier psaume résume éloquemment les idées familières: 'Cette Jérusalem céleste, notre mère, nous a enfantés; elle est l'église des saints; elle nous a nourris; en partie elle est

⁵⁶ *Catech.* 20,36 (CCSL 46,160).

⁵⁷ *Litt.* 12,28 (CSEL 28,1,423); à rapprocher aussi *Psal.* 134,26 (CCSL 40,1956-1957).

⁵⁸ *Psal.* 9,12 (CCSL 38,64).

⁵⁹ *Psal.* 61,7-8 (CCSL 39,778-780).

⁶⁰ *Psal.* 64,2 (CCSL 39,823-824); à rapprocher aussi l'argumentation serrée de *Psal.* 136,1 (CCSL 40,1964).

⁶¹ *Psal.* 121,2; 125,1 (CCSL 40,1802 et 1844).

encore à l'étranger, dans notre monde, en partie elle est à la maison, au ciel; pour autant qu'elle est au ciel elle est le bonheur des anges; pour autant qu'elle est dans notre monde, elle est l'espoir des justes'.⁶²

Nous constatons que le thème 'Jérusalem' apparaît maintes fois chez Augustin sous tous ses aspects. À une exception près, comme avait déjà noté Congar.⁶³ À l'opposé d'Ambroise, Augustin ne semble jamais représenter la ville céleste comme l'épouse bien-aimée du Seigneur. Je ne vois pas d'autre explication à cette absence que la réserve générale, difficilement explicable, d'Augustin à l'égard du Cantique des Cantiques.⁶⁴ D'autre part, il donne beaucoup de relief à deux motifs traditionnels. Le premier est celui des deux villes, Jérusalem et Babylone, traité longuement dans le *magnum opus* de la Cité de Dieu.⁶⁵ L'autre concerne la double citoyenneté de la ville céleste, qui connaît deux catégories d'habitants, celle des anges restés fidèles et celle des hommes appelés à la béatitude éternelle. De ces derniers les uns sont arrivés au terme de leur voyage, les autres sont encore en route. Un jour les deux groupes ne feront qu'un et conjointement avec les anges seront en compagnie de leur Seigneur Jésus-Christ, quand il se soumettra à Dieu et Dieu sera tout en tous.

⁶² *Psal.* 149,5 (CCSL 40,2182); à comparer aussi l'exposé dans le 'catéchisme' d'Augustin, *Enchir.* 15,56 (CCSL 46,79-80).

⁶³ Y. Congar, «Église et cité de Dieu chez quelques auteurs cisterciens à l'époque des croisades», dans *Mélanges Étienne Gilson*, Toronto et Paris 1959, 178-179.

⁶⁴ Voir Anne-Marie La Bonnardière, «Le Cantique des Cantiques dans l'œuvre de saint Augustin», *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 1 1955 225-237; voir 227. À comparer aussi les études récentes de F. B. A. Asiedu, «The Song of Songs and the Ascent of the Soul. Ambrose, Augustine, and the Language of Mysticism», *VC* 55 2001 299-317; voir 306ss. et de A. Genovese MSC, 'Note sull'uso del Cantico dei Cantici in Sant'Agostino', *Augustinianum* 41 2001 201-212; 'Evoluzione e precisazione nell'uso agostiniano del Cantico dei Cantici', *ibid.*, 509-516; *S. Agostino e il Cantico dei Cantici. Tra esegesi e teologia* (Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 80), Rome 2002.

⁶⁵ Cfr. J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon: a study into Augustine's 'City of God' and the sources of his doctrine of the two cities* (Supplements to *VC* 14), Leiden 1991 (traduit du néerlandais, *Jerusalem en Babylon. Een onderzoek van Augustinus' De stad van God en de bronnen van zijn leer der twee steden (rijken)*, La Haye 1986).

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