FRANÇOIS BOVON

The Emergence of Christianity

Edited by
LUKE DRAKE

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
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Collected Studies III

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Luke Drake

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Preface

The Emergence of Christianity comprises a set of articles written mostly in the last few years, and is the third volume of collected essays in this series (see also *Studies in Early Christianity* [WUNT 161] and *New Testament and Christian Apocrypha* [WUNT 237]).

I am grateful to Luke Drake, who took care of this volume, and express to him my gratitude.

Morges, Switzerland
August 2013

François Bovon

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List of Abbreviations

ABRL	The Anchor Bible Reference Library
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
ANF	*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
BCPE	*Bulletin du Centre Protestant d'Études*
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensium
BGBE	Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese
BHG	*Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*
BHTh	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
Bib	*Biblica*
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche
CAT	Commentaire de l'Ancien Testament
CC	Corpus Christianorum
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis
CCSA	Corpus Christianorum, Series Apocryphorum
CCSG	Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
CNT	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
EKK	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
ETL	*Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*
ETR	*Études théologiques et religieuses*
EvTh	*Evangelische Theologie*
EWNT	*Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*
FF	Foundations and Facets
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
FZPhTh	*Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte
GLB	De Gruyter Lehrbuch
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HThNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies

HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
IC	Initiations au christianisme ancien
ICC	International critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments
Int	*Interpretation*
JAC	*Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LD	Lectio Divina
MSSNTS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NPNF	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers
NRT	*Nouvelle Revue Theologique*
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
PG	Patrologia Graeca
PL	Patrologia Latina
PO	Patrologia Orientalis
PTMS	Princeton Theological Monograph Series
RAC	*Reallexicon für Antike und Christentum*
RB	*Revue biblique*
RechSR	*Recherches de science religieuse*
RGG	*Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*
RTP	*Revue de théologie et de philosophie*
SAC	Studies in Antiquity and Christianity
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
SHR	Studies in the history of religions
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
Theol	*Theology*
ThSt	Theologische Studien
TS	Texts and studies
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
TWNT	Theologisches Wörterbuch Neues Testament
TZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
UTB	Uni-Taschenbücher
VTS	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WdF	Wege der Forschung
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZKG	*Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*
ZTK	*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*

1. The Emergence of Christianity[1]

The topic I have been asked to treat – the origin of Christianity – is laden with difficulties. It has to be considered from a historical perspective, but I am a Christian theologian who is more oriented toward textual analysis than historical reconstructions. Methodological care must be taken, but I prefer spontaneous understanding to methodological preliminaries. The choice of terms is also problematic: shall I speak of "the Church," the "Christian religion," "Christianity," or "Christian faith?" Terms such as "culture" and "civilization" are likewise disputed.[2] Even the concept of "the beginning" has been challenged: the metaphor of a "birth" implies an autonomous being, either as the child or the sibling of Judaism, while the term "origin" unduly evokes romantic notions of pure origins.[3] Nor is the term "religion" without problems, since it has a modern story and does not apply perfectly to ancient piety and cult practices. I have thus chosen to use the term "emergence" to treat my topic because I am convinced that something new emerged in the first century CE: first in Palestine, then in Syria and the Roman and Persian Empires. I have decided also to respect – at least initially – the theological distinction between faith and religion.[4] I do not however consider faith to be an abstract concept, for faith always was and still is expressed in a social context. The early Christian faith coincided with an early Christian movement, a Jewish αἵρεσις, according to the use of this word in the work of the historians Josephus and Luke.[5]

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[1] Paper presented in the Program Unit on "Construction of Christian Identities" at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting at San Antonio, TX in November 2004.

[2] Pierre Thévenaz distinguishes between the French and the German use of these terms in *L'homme et sa raison* (2 vols.; Être et penser 46–47; Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1956) 2:49, n. 1b.

[3] See Burton L. Mack, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988); Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990) 1–35; Karen King, *What is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003) 11–12, 220–21, and passim; Ron Cameron and Merrill P. Miller, *Redescribing Christian Origins* (SBL, Symposium 28; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004) 1–30 and 497–516.

[4] See Karl Barth, *Parole de Dieu et parole humaine* (trans. Pierre Maury and Alexandre Lavanchy; Paris: Je sers, 1933) 103–10.

[5] See for example Josephus, *B. J.* 2.162; *A. J.* 13.171, 288 and 293; Acts 5:17; 15:5; 26:5.

My contribution to the discussion here is divided into five parts with the following subtitles: 1. Before the Christian Faith: Jesus; 2. Before the Church: The Christian Faith; 3. Before Christianity: The Church; 4. Gospel and Culture; 5. Jerusalem and Rome.[6]

I. Before the Christian Faith: Jesus

Even if Jesus had no desire to create Christianity – even if he did not establish a Church as the Vatican, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the World Council of Churches in Geneva understand it – he created a movement of faith, a company of disciples called to become the Christian Church. We know the double difficulty of reaching the historical Jesus: on one side our personal opinions, creeds, and biases; on the other the precarious and enigmatic character of ancient sources. Concerning these sources, I regret that the will to integrate non-canonical sources during the third quest for the historical Jesus remains, with the exception of the *Gospel of Peter* and the *Gospel of Thomas*, only wishful thinking. There is still great ignorance about documents such as the Jewish Christian gospels, the *Questions of Bartholomew,* and the *Fragment Oxyrhynchus 840.*[7]

Jesus was part of the reform movement of Judaism, attested by several baptismal groups, Bannus, John the Baptist, and the community that produced the Dead Sea Scrolls.[8] The reform he proposed should not be described however as a call to repentance. This is the point of departure between Jesus and his teacher, John. Jesus was the prophet of the kingdom of God, and his message underscored the divine gift.[9] The offer of this gift implied a triple critique in line with the prophets of old: a critique of the understanding of the Law, of ritual practice, and of the Temple system.[10]

Jesus gathered around him a group of men and women who represented the restoration of Israel.[11] Turning to God, trusting in Jesus, and sharing willingly were the requirements for admission. If the imminent coming of the kingdom

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[6] See the bibliography at the end of this paper.

[7] Scholars can use the large collections by Mario Erbetta, *Gli apocrifi del Nuovo Testamento* (4 vols.; Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1966–1981); and François Bovon, Pierre Geoltrain, and Jean-Daniel Kaestli eds., *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens* (2 vols.; La Pléiade 442 and 516; Paris: Gallimard, 1997–2005).

[8] See Joseph Thomas, *Le mouvement baptiste en Palestine et Syrie (150 av. J.-C.–300 ap. J.-C.)* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1935); Joan E. Taylor, *The Immerser: John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

[9] See Norman Perrin, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1963).

[10] See Matt 5:21–22; Mark 2:18 – 3:6; John 2:20.

[11] See John P. Meier, "The Circle of the Twelve: Did It Exist during Jesus' Public Ministry?" *JBL* 116 (1997) 635–72.

brought rejoicing to the poor it was because God was about to reestablish his righteousness through the gift of equity.[12] Jesus was believed to be the elected servant of the Lord, the finger through which this new reality was going to happen, a son of man according to the prophetic meaning found in the book of Ezekiel.[13] Jesus understood his mission as part of God's plan. We can say that his ministry had an implicit Christological ambition.[14] There is continuity between the preacher of God's kingdom and the one preached by the first Christian witnesses as the Messiah and Son of God. The difference in vocabulary should not obscure the similar structure that exists between the *Evangelium Christi* and the *Evangelium de Christo*.[15]

In order to realize his program, Jesus did not borrow from the international culture of his time. He called upon neither philosophical elements nor the visual arts. This attitude should not be interpreted, however, as opposition to any culture. Rather, Jesus dug deeply into his Jewish heritage. The importance of Jesus with respect to culture lies in his use of language. He dared to depart from the formulations of the Mosaic law, expressing his message in free speeches. His cache of metaphors, his respect for alliterations, his use of rhymes (one of the first examples of such in the history of Jewish literature), his symmetrical and antithetical *parallelismus membrorum*, rhythmic prayers, and his short stories, songs, and hymns (see Mark 14: 26//Matt 26:30) are the best witnesses of Jesus' understanding of literature and culture.[16]

Jesus handed over his gospel without writing a word. He manifested his identity through hiding it. He directed attention toward death in order to reveal life. He saw the correspondence between social reversal and rhetorical paradoxes, declaring children to be wise and scholars to be stupid.[17] Jesus' cultural input was that he was not interested in trying to shape it.

Thus what came first was not the Christian faith, but Jesus' ministry and passion.

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[12] See Jacques Dupont, *Études sur les évangiles synoptiques* (2 vols.; BETL 70 A-B; Leuven: Leuven University Press and Peeters, 1985) 2:971–75.

[13] The prophet is regularly referred to by God as υἱός ἀνθρώπου, "son of man," as in for example Ezek 2:3. I realize that this form does not include the definite article as is the case in the Gospels.

[14] See Luke 11:20, an important saying that brings together the coming of the kingdom and the Christological "I."

[15] See Michel Bouttier, "Evangelium Christi. Evangelium de Christo," *RTP* 3 (1979) 123–39; see also Michel Bouttier, "La monnaie de l'Évangile," *ETR* 59 (1984) 29–40.

[16] See Joachim Jeremias, *Neutestamentliche Theologie, I, Die Verkündigung Jesu* (2d ed.; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1973).

[17] See Luke 10:21; François Bovon, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, *2. Teilband, Lk 9,51–14,35* (EKK III/2; Zürich: Benzinger and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1996) 64–79.

II. Before the Church: The Christian Faith

Historians cannot verify or describe an event that is beyond control.[18] Yet something happened three days after Jesus' crucifixion.[19] What is certain is the transformation of the disciples, and what can be ascertained is the faith of the apostles. From that moment forward some of the men and women who were associated with Jesus constituted a community with a specific activity *ad extra* and *ad intra.* Both in continuity and discontinuity with Jesus preaching the kingdom of God, these people believed in and proclaimed Jesus, the prophet and crucified servant of the Lord, as the Messiah and risen Son of God. I consider 1 Thess 4:14, a traditional formula quoted by Paul, as the earliest Christian expression: "We believe that Jesus died and rose again."[20]

Here one must correct Luke's views of the origins of the Church, particularly one limitation and one bias. The evangelist and historian chose to narrate the history of the early Christian mission within the Roman Empire.[21] The Twelve, the Seven, Peter, and Paul are the heroes of that successful evangelization, a religious movement that spread from the East to the West. What is strange is the absence of any mention of a Christian mission to the East, outside the Roman Empire: this is the limitation of his viewpoint.[22] His bias is that while friction and conflict characterize human reality, they do not in Luke-Acts reach the inner circle of the Christian community: Luke can tolerate tensions, but a harmonious solution is always found and every crisis reaches a happy end.[23]

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[18] See the several papers by Willi Marxsen, Ulrich Wilckens, Gerhard Delling and Hans-Georg Geyer, *Die Bedeutung der Auferstehungsbotschaft für den Glauben an Jesus Christus* (Schriftenreihe des Theologischen Ausschusses der Evangelischen Kirche der Union; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1966).

[19] See Marcel Simon, *La civilisation de l'antiquité et le christianisme* (Les grandes civilisations; Paris: Arthaud, 1972) 23: "Quoi qu'il pense de la réalité objective des faits, apparitions du Ressuscité et tombeau vide, l'historien moderne doit noter que quelque chose s'est passé, qui conditionne toute l'évolution ultérieure du christianisme."

[20] See Traugott Holtz, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher* (3d ed; EKK XIII; Zürich: Benzinger and Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchener, 1998) 189–94.

[21] See Marianne Bonz, *The Past as Legacy: Luke-Acts and Ancient Epic* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000).

[22] On Eastern Syria, a part of the ancient world neglected by Luke, see as a first reading Robert Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom* (rev. ed.; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2004). Other than one or two instances, Egypt is also neglected; see Birger A. Pearson, *Gnosticism and Christianity in Roman and Coptic Egypt* (SAC; New York: T & T Clark International, 2004).

[23] On the tensions underlying *Luke-Acts*, see Mitzi J. Smith-Sprall's Harvard dissertation, "The Function of the Jews, Charismatic Others, and Women in Narrative Instabilities in the Acts of the Apostles" (2005).

Today we must account for a plurality of early Christian groups.[24] The first Christians, being Jews, knew a plurality of synagogues.[25] In Jerusalem alone we know of several Jewish houses of prayer, which were often national,[26] and in Rome there exist numerous Jewish cemeteries and catacombs.[27] The variety of Christian documents within the New Testament bears witness to the diversity of early Christian groups. It also bears witness to the priority of faith over Church. The many non-canonical documents allow us to recognize other communities who could not, or did not wish to, join the greater Church movement. Serapion of Antioch's story about the *Gospel of Peter* helps us understand this point, for it reveals the connection between the Gospel and its readers, a Christian community in the Antiochian suburb of Rhossos. It also reveals that an overlap existed between one community, the mainline Christian community of Antioch, and a marginal group of so-called docetists at Rhossos.[28]

The presence of the *Gospel of John* in the canon is also the result of an effort to bring about unity of faith where there was division. The acceptance of this Gospel was a debated question, for this could not be done without also accepting the people who were its readers. If the sources allow this reconstruction, then Caius and the so-called *Alogoi* were as opposed to those who read this Gospel as they were to the book itself.[29] Finally, the *Gospel of John* and the right wing

[24] The first scholar who developed this position with some strength was Ernst Käsemann, in a conference presented in Montreal on July 16, 1963, at the fourth world meeting of the ecumenical conference Faith and Order; see Ernst Kasemann, "Einheit und Vielfalt in der neutestamentlichen Lehre von der Kirche," *Ökumenische Rundschau* 13 (1964) 58–63; reprinted in Ernst Käsemann, *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen* (2 vols.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960–1964) 2:262–67.

[25] See Wolfgang Schrage, "συναγωγή κτλ.," *TWNT*, VII (1964) 810–26; Peter Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten* (WUNT 2.18; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989) 26–28.

[26] See Louis-Hugues Vincent, "Découverte de la synagogue des Affranchis à Jérusalem," *RB* 30 (1921) 247–77; Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem zur Zeit Jesu. Eine kulturgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur neutestamentlichen Zeitgeschichte* (3d ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969, 75–76; Matthew J. Martin, "Interpreting the Theodotos Inscription: Some Reflections on a First Century Jerusalem Synagogue Inscription and E. P. Sanders' 'Common Judaism'" *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 39 (2002) 160–81.

[27] See Romano Penna, "Les Juifs à Rome au temps de l'apôtre Paul," *NTS* 28 (1982) 321–47; J. Stevenson, *The Catacombs: Rediscovered Monuments of Early Christianity* (Ancient Peoples and Places; London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), passim; Filippo Coarelli with the collaboration of Luisanna Usai, *Guida archeologica di Roma* (Milano: Mondadori, 1974), passim; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten*, 26–28.

[28] See Éric Junod, "Eusèbe de Césarée, Sérapion d'Antioche et l'Évangile de Pierre. D'un Évangile à un Pseudépigraphe," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 24 (1988) 3–16.

[29] See Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989) 104–05.

of the Johannine community were accepted by the early *catholica* because these readers shared a common faith in the incarnation of the preexistent Son.[30]

The point is this: what came first was not an institution (i.e. the Church) but a common Christian faith.

III. Before Christianity: The Church

A critical analysis of our sources reveals at least five different early Christian groups. A serious reading of the Pauline epistles and the book of Acts allows us – even compels us – to distinguish the community of the Twelve in Jerusalem under the leadership of Peter and perhaps the two sons of Zebedee, from the group of the Seven, the Christian Hellenists.[31] Language differences were one cause of distinction, but not the only one: doctrinal differences were also at stake. I attach considerable importance to the fact that Luke explicitly states that *only* the Hellenists – that is, *not* the apostles – were persecuted in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1).

The old tradition preserved in Acts 11:19ff. that contradicts Luke's redaction, according to which Peter was the first missionary to the nations, is just as important.[32] According to that passage, it was the Hellenists and their first converts who took the risk of proclaiming the gospel to the pagans.[33] The tension over the incorporation of Gentiles into the community was the first and major apple of

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[30] See Jean Zumstein, "La communauté johannique et son histoire," in Jean-Daniel Kaestli, Jean-Michel Poffet, and Jean Zumstein (eds.), *La communauté johannique et son histoire. La trajectoire de l'Évangile de Jean aux deux premiers siècles* (Le monde de la Bible; Genève: Labor et Fides, 1990) 359–74. More recently, in his *Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), Charles E. Hill criticizes what he calls the scholarly myths of gnostic Johannophilia and orthodox Johannophobia.

[31] See Martin Hengel, "Zwischen Jesus und Paulus, Die 'Hellenisten,' die 'Sieben' und Stephanus (Apg 6,1–15; 7,54–8,3)," *ZTK* 72 (1975) 151–206. The other three discernible groups are the Johannine community, the community of Jesus' family (with James), and the Q community.

[32] See François Bovon, "Tradition et rédaction en Actes 10,1–11,18," *TZ* 26 (1970) 22–45, esp. 22–24. In Acts 11:20 it is preferable to read Ἕλληνας, "Greeks," and not Ἑλληνιστάς, "Hellenists"; see Ernst Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (3d ed.; KEK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959) 309 n. 5.

[33] I am more impressed by Adolf Harnack's arguments in his *Beiträge zur Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (7 vols.; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1906–1916; 3:131–58, particularly 135–39) than by those of Haenchen (*Die Apostelgeschichte*, 312–16), who insists excessively on the redactional character of this passage; see also Rudolf Bultmann, "Zur Frage nach den Quellen der Apostelgeschichte" in A. J. B. Higgins (ed.), *New Testament Essays: Studies in Memory of T. W. Manson* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959) 68–80; reprinted in Rudolf Bultmann, *Exegetica. Aufsätze zur Erforschung des Neuen Testaments* (ed. Erich Dinkler; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1967) 412–23; Jacques Dupont, *Les sources du Livre des Actes. État de la question,* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1960) 61–70; also note T. C. Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins: Stephen and the Hellenists in Lukan Apologetic Historiography* (London: T & T Clark International, 2004) 269–70, who goes even further than Haenchen.

discord between the two groups. Each of their positions on that matter was built upon a different understanding of the divine law in the new economy.[34]

A less visible point of tension – less visible because it is obscured by Luke and Paul – concerns those who were the first to receive an appearance of the risen Lord: was it Peter or was it Mary?[35] It may be that Mary of Magdala, as her story in John 20 suggests, was a member – perhaps even the leader – of another group, namely the Johannine circle. The existence of this group is highly probable and its location may have changed over time: from Bethany to Samaria, and from Samaria to Asia Minor, more precisely to Ephesus.[36] What is preserved in the New Testament is the early canon of that community, a community that, as 1 John 2:19 describes, split into two at the end of the first century CE. The primitive *Acts of John* and the *Apocryphon of John* may be part of the sacred literature of the left wing of the Johannine movement.[37]

According to several witnesses, James, the brother of the Lord, was also graced with an appearance of the risen Christ. This is mentioned as early as Paul; it is also mentioned in the *Gospel of the Hebrews*.[38] James became the leader of a kind of dynastic system of family members. His community in Jerusalem, with the presence of Jesus' mother and other brothers and sisters, became important.[39] According to Étienne Trocmé, Marc Philonenko, and Christian Grappe this community was deeply influenced by the movement of the Essenes, the sect that produced the Dead Sea Scrolls.[40] Thus they represent another type of Christian faith.

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[34] See Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 81–3.

[35] See Ann Graham Brock, *Mary Magdalene, the First Apostle: The Struggle for Authority* (HTS 51; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003) 19–104.

[36] See Oscar Cullmann, *Der johanneische Kreis. Sein Platz im Spätjudentum, in der Jüngerschaft Jesu und im Urchristentum. Zum Ursprung des Johannesevangeliums* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1975); François Bovon, "L'Évangile de Jean. accès à Dieu aux origines obscures du christianisme," *Diogène* 146 (1989) 37–49.

[37] See Éric Junod and Jean-Daniel Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis* (2 vols.; CCSA 1–2; Turnhout: Brepols, 1983); Pieter J. Lalleman, *The Acts of John: A Two-Stage Initiation into Johannine Gnosticism* (Studies on the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles 4; Leuven: Peeters, 1998): Michel Tardieu, *Écrits gnostiques. Codex de Berlin* (Sources gnostiques et manichéennes 1; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1984) 26–47, 83–166, and 239–345; and Karen King, *The Secret Revelation of John* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

[38] See 1 Cor 15:7; *Gospel of the Hebrews* as reported by Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 2; see Daniel A. Bertrand, "Fragments évangéliques," in Bovon and Geoltrain, eds., *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens,* 1:461–62.

[39] Among the recent books on James, see particularly Pierre Antoine Bernheim, *Jacques, frère de Jésus* (Paris: Noêsis, 1996); and John Painter, *Just James: The Brother of Jesus in History and Tradition* (2d ed.; Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004).

[40] See Étienne Trocmé, *L'enfance du christianisme* (Paris: Noêsis, 1997) 42–61; Marc Philonenko, *Le Notre Père. De la prière de Jésus à la prière des disciples* (Bibliothèque des histoires; Paris: Gallimard, 2001); Christian Grappe, *D'un temple à l'autre. Pierre et l'Église primi-*

Differing yet from this Jewish Christian community, another group of Jesus' followers was active in Galilee. I am speaking here of the readers of Q, the famous source known later by Matthew and Luke.[41] Finally, I would add still another group of early Christians: those who were responsible for the traditions preserved in the *Gospel of Thomas*. The mystery behind this community is interwoven with the mystery of the early Christian mission to the East, in particular to Eastern Syria.[42]

But despite the many differences and divisions that existed between these first Christian communities, there was found an equally great desire for unity and communion. Nearly all early Christian documents plead for the unity of the people of God. In the chapel of the World Council of Churches in Geneva there is a mosaic in the Byzantine style that depicts the risen Christ, accompanied by a verse from the *Gospel of John* written in Greek: "so that they will be one" (ἵνα ὦσιν ἕν, John 17:22). This modern hope for unity is of course expressed during a time when there are many divisions among the Churches. Similarly, John 17, Eph 2, Gal 2, and Acts 15 were written in order to honor the eschatological hope of unity among the reality of divisions.[43]

Just as these several communities chose different traditions concerning Jesus and read different Christian documents, so also they organized themselves according to several different models. In Jerusalem, the Church of the Twelve considered herself as the ideal group of representatives of Israel; in Antioch, the Church of the Hellenists chose the triad apostles-prophets-teachers;[44] others

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tive de Jérusalem (Études d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses 71; Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1992) 51–73.

[41] See James M. Robinson, Paul Hoffmann, John S. Kloppenborg, and Milton C. Moreland, *The Critical Edition of Q: Synopsis Including the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Mark and Thomas with English, German, and French Translations of Q and Thomas* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000); Arland D. Jacobson, *The First Gospel: An Introduction to Q* (FF; Sonoma: Polebridge, 1992); John. S. Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000); Christoph Heil, *Lukas und Q. Studien zur lukanischen Redaktion des Spruchevangeliums Q* (BZNW 111; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003).

[42] See Henri-Charles Puech, *En quête de la Gnose, II, Sur l'Evangile de Thomas* (Bibliothèque des sciences humaines; Paris: Gallimard, 1978); Marvin Meyer, *The Gospel of Thomas: The Hidden Sayings of Jesus. Translation, with Introduction, Critical Edition of the Coptic Text, and Notes. With an Interpretation by Harold Bloom* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992); Gregory J. Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered: Thomas and John in Controversy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995); Stephen J. Patterson, James M. Robinson, and Hans-Gebhard Bethge, *The Fifth Gospel: The Gospel of Thomas Comes of Age* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1998); Richard Valantasis, *The Gospel of Thomas* (New Testament Readings; London: Routledge, 2000); and Elaine H. Pagels, *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas* (New York: Random House, 2003).

[43] See James D. G. Gunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity* (2d ed.; London: SCM; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990); Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

[44] See 1 Cor 12:28; Acts 13:1.

used the Jewish system of elders;[45] still others, only the prophets.[46] But what constituted unity among these groups and what provided some satisfaction to their longing for unity was the idea that with Jesus a new period in history had begun: either a new covenant, or the last days, or the restoration of Israel, or the eschatological procession of the nations. In any case, a *deuterosis* – a second and last divine intervention – had taken place, comparable to the first covenant and the gift of the Torah.[47] These Christians had religious problems to solve: they had to face identity crises,[48] loosen ethnic tensions, and wage doctrinal wars over the resurrection, incarnation, and the person of God.[49] They were neither free, nor ready, nor equipped to participate in the philosophical and cultural conversation of their time.

To summarize: what came first was not a centralized Church organization, but a plurality of small congregations. What came first was the Christian Church, not Christian civilization.

IV. Gospel and Culture

There is one saying of Jesus and one Pauline sentence that express the critical and – at the same time – accommodating attitude of the first Christians, even in their variety of groups, towards the culture of their time. Here I am referring to the well-known saying of Jesus, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants" (Luke 10:21//Matt 1l:27),[50] and the Pauline sentence, "For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe" (1 Cor 1:21).[51]

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[45] See for example James 5:14; Günther Bornkamm, "πρέσβυς κτλ.," *TWNT*, VI (1959) 662–80.

[46] See David Edward Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983); M. Eugene Boring, *The Continuing Voice of Jesus: Christian Prophecy and the Gospel Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991).

[47] See François Bovon, "L'Écriture comme promesse et comme clôture," in Emmanuelle Steffek and Yvan Bourquin, eds., *Raconter, interpréter, annoncer. Parcours de Nouveau Testament. Mélanges Daniel Marguerat* (Le monde de La Bible 47; Genève: Labor et Fides, 2003) 15–26.

[48] See Denise K. Buell, "Rethinking the Relevance of Race for Early Christian Self-Definition," *HTR* 94 (2001) 449–76.

[49] See James M. Robinson, "Jesus from Easter to Valentinus (or to the Apostles Creed)," *JBL* 101 (1982) 5–37.

[50] See Ulrich Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, *2. Teilband, Mt 8–17* (EKK I/2; Zürich: Benzinger and Neukirchener-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1990) 196–224; and Bovon, *Evangelium nach Lukas, 2. Teilband Lk 9,51–14,35*, 64–79.

[51] See Wolfgang Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther, 1. Teilband, 1 Kor 1,1–6,11* (EKK VII/1; Zürich: Benzinger and Neukirchener-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1991) 165–203; Anthony Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 150–75.

Both sentences are polemical. They attack a particular type of humanism, a certain type of religion, a special genre of culture that misapprehends the divine and manipulates God. But neither Jesus nor Paul conceive of intelligence and faith as being irreconcilable. They are indeed on the alert: aware that any human phrase can become inhumane, any culture can become barbarous. But they do not fear culture itself. According to Jesus and Paul, deity conceals his wisdom from these wise men and intelligent women. For despite their wisdom these people missed the true wisdom: God himself and his messengers. Consequently, from this time forward true wisdom is the wisdom of the weak; it is the knowledge possessed by children; a wisdom that focuses on the oppressed Christ, hanged on a cross.[52]

This Christian message, necessarily different from the prevailing knowledge, could and did develop into a culture. The early Christians voted for the revelation, a theocentric reality, but accepted that it is transmitted through a human channel, a cultural tradition.[53] They chose the oral tradition, but finally accepted that it must be communicated in written form.[54] They preferred the proclamation, but realized that Christian knowledge must at some point be developed into the form of catechetical teaching. Franz Overbeck observes that the New Testament and other early Christian texts bear traces of this paradoxical attitude: the New Testament exists yet should not be necessary.

But insofar as it exists, it does not refuse the prerequisites of any speech expression nor the imperatives of any culture. We find therefore in these books apocalyptic traditions, liturgical sources, ethical compositions, and historical memories. These "traces" are the promise of a Christian civilization, although the first Christians would never have accepted that such a culture was a goal (*une fin en soi*). Rather, they sought to express a coherent faith and logical ethics and, because this was their objective, they did so in the most precise terms. Such expressions, however, existed completely in service to their content.

Perhaps a century after the beginning of Christianity this dialectical attitude found new expression in the *Epistle to Diognetus* 10:

> If you also long to have this faith, you must first acquire the knowledge of the Father … Once you have known him, with what sort of joy do you think you will be filled? Or how will you love the one who so loved you in advance? But when you have loved him you will become an imitator of his kindness … For whoever takes up the burden of his neighbor,

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[52] See François Bovon, *New Testament Traditions and Apocryphal Narratives* (trans. Jane Haapiseva-Hunter; PTMS 36; Allison Park: Pickwick Publications, 1995) 105–17.

[53] See Philippe H. Menoud, "Revelation and Tradition: The Influence of Paul's Conversion on His Theology," *Int* 7 (1953) 131–41; reedited in French in Philippe H. Menoud, *Jésus-Christ et La foi. Recherches néotestamentaires* (Bibliothèque théologique; Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1975) 30–39.

[54] See Franz Overbeck, *Über die Anfänge der patristischen Literatur* (Libelli 15; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966); and Lukas Vischer, "Die Rechtfertigung der Schriftstellerei in der Alten Kirche," *TZ* 12 (1956) 320–36.

whoever wants to use his own abundance to help someone in need, whoever provides for the destitute from the possessions he has received from God – himself becoming a god to those who receive them – this one is an imitator of God.[55]

My point is that even if it is a long way from the cross on Golgotha to the golden crosses of Christian art,[56] I believe there is continuity between the two. Along with the Christian Church there was room for Christian civilization.

V. Jerusalem and Rome

There is one aspect of recent scholarship that is greatly neglected: the bodily movements, the journeys and travels, of the first Christians. The metaphors of the house and the tree, and the building and the plantation, are not sufficient to describe the early Christian communities, because they do not allow any reflection or imaginative suggestion concerning the movement in space of the followers of Christ. What strikes me is the rich evocation of travels and the numerous different functions these journeys fulfilled. Let us enumerate a few of them here.[57]

There is of course the missionary travel heavily attested to in the *Acts of the Apostles.* But this same book indicates another reason for traveling: namely, to return to newly established congregations for pastoral visitation.[58] The Synoptic gospels also mention travel to flee persecution, a reality sadly confirmed by the

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[55] *Diogn*. 10.1–6 according to the translation by Bart D. Ehrman, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers* (2 vols.; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003) 2:153; see Rudolf Brändle, *Die Ethik der Schrift an Diognet. Eine Wiederaufnahme paulinischer und johanneischer Theologie am Ausgang des zweiten Jahrhunderts* (ATANT 64; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1975); Enrico Norelli, *A Diogneto. Introduzione, traduzione e note* (Letture cristiane del primo millennio 11; Milano: Paoline, 1991).

[56] See Jürgen Moltmann, *Der gekreuzigte Gott. Das Kreuz Christi als Grund und Kritik christlicher Theologie* (München, Kaiser, 1972) 34–38; Jean-Marc Prieur, ed., *La Croix. Représentations théologiques et symboliques* (Actes et recherches; Genève: Labor et Fides, 2004).

[57] On travels and travelers in antiquity, see Lionel Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994); Helen Parkins and Christopher Smith, eds., *Trade, Traders, and the Ancient City* (London: Routledge, 1998); Colin Adams and Ray Laurence, eds., *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 2001); Linda Ellis et al., eds., *Shifting Frontiers IV: Travel, Communication and Geography in Late Antiquity* (San Francisco: San Francisco State University, 2001); and Daniel Marguerat, *La première histoire du christianisme. Les Actes des apôtres* (2d ed.; LD 180; Paris: Éditions du Cerf; Genève: Labor et Fides, 2003) 341–74. I thank Brent Lendau for helping me locate some of these titles.

[58] See Jacques Dupont, "L'union entre les chrétiens dans les Actes des apôtres," *NRT* 91 (1979) 867–915; reprinted in Jacques Dupont, *Nouvelles études sur les Actes des apôtres* (LD 118; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1984) 296–318; Bovon, *New Testament Traditions and Apocryphal Narratives*, 53–56 and 92–95; and Marguerat, *La première histoire du christianisme*, 341–74.

Jerusalem Church's flight to Pella[59] during the Jewish war, the *Quo Vadis* in the ancient *Acts of Peter*,[60] and the cautious attitude of Cyprian in third-century Africa.[61] All of this is of course well known.

What is less well known is what I would call "care for communication." When Paul organizes the collection it is not only to support poor Christians, but also to maintain an indispensable connection. When Ignatius cares for the sending of messengers it is not only to let his doctrine of martyrdom or his new church order be known; it is also to establish and maintain communication.[62] A little later, when Abercius takes the trouble to travel as far as Mesopotamia, it is not to visit the land of Abraham but to examine whether or not communion with the Christian Church in that distant country is possible.[63]

This need for communication was not only a human need for social relationships; it was also – even primarily – in order to demonstrate the unity of the Church. Borrowing a category from the linguist Roman Jakobson, namely the phatic code (the word "Hello" over the phone helps to understand what it means),[64] I wonder if some early Christian letters that seem to have so little content should not be considered an expression of this phatic code: that is, they exist not so much for their content but just as a way of maintaining communication. Already in 1 Thess 2:14–16 Paul takes for granted that the Thessalonians know what happened to the Christian communities in Jerusalem and Judea.[65] To use a modern expression, the Christian news agency was not a secular or prosaic activity but belonged to the very center of early Christian worship.

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[59] See Eusebius of Caesarea, *Hist. eccl.* 3.5.3. This passage has received much scholarly attention. Recently a scholar expressed his doubt regarding the historicity of the event and considered it as the result of Eusebius' redactional activity: Jozef Verheyden, *De vlucht van de Christenen naar Pella. Onderzoek van het getuigenis van Eusebius en Epiphanius* (Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenshappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, Jg. 50, 1988, Nr. 127; Brussel: Paleis der Academiën, 1988); see the critical review by Jürgen Wehnert, "Die Auswanderung der Jerusalemer Christen nach Pella – historisches Faktum oder theologische Konstruktion? Kritische Bemerkungen," *ZKG* 102 (1991) 231–55.

[60] *Acts Pet.* 35; see Gérard Poupon, "Actes de Pierre," in Bovon and Geoltrain, eds., *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens,* 1:1108; Christine M. Thomas, *The* Acts of Peter, *Gospel Literature*, *and the Ancient Novel*: *Rewriting the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 37–38 and 58.

[61] See Pierre de Labriolle, *Histoire de la littérature latine chrétienne* (3d ed.; 2 vols.; Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1947) 1:203–05.

[62] See Ign. *Phld.* 10.1–2 and *Smyrn.* 11.2–3; François Bovon, *Studies in Early Christianity* (WUNT 161; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003) 6.

[63] See Georg Kretschmar, "Erfahrung der Kirche. Beobachtungen zur Aberkios-Inschrift" in *Communio Sanctorum. Mélanges Jean-Jacques von Allmen* (eds. Boris Bobrinskoy et al.; Genève: Labor et Fides, 1982) 73–85.

[64] See Michael Issacharoff, "Jakobson. Roman," in Michael Groden and Martin Kreiswirth, eds., *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994) 417–19.

[65] See Jacob Jervell, *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972) 19–39.

Finally, there is what I would call travel to the capital. All the canonical gospels mention Jesus' travel to Jerusalem. The book of Acts and other non-canonical Acts of apostles mention Rome as the final destination for the major apostles[66] (not to mention Ignatius' determination to reach the capital of the Roman Empire[67]). I do not believe that these journeys were undertaken at random. Leaving aside the case of Jesus, I will concentrate on Rome. The choice of the capital as the desired destination includes a cultural, a political, and a religious component. Rome was for an artist or an intellectual the place where social consecration could be attained. We might compare the situation to the end of the nineteenth century, when Paris was the most desirable destination for a young artist. By the same token, Apollonius of Tyana had the desire to travel to the West and be received in the capital of the Empire.[68] There is something of that same hope for recognition also in Paul's desire to go to Rome.

I wonder – and at this point this is only a hypothesis and not a thesis – if the first Christians did not desire to obtain a certain official recognition of their cult. They may have attempted this through three different ways: first, through the cultural movement of philosophical ideas; second, through the legal system of official trials, such as those for Paul and Ignatius; and third, through the ancient idea that gods can travel. We have to remember that the Fall of Jerusalem coincided with the destruction of the Temple, and that Titus' triumph was accompanied by the taking of the spoils of war from the Temple. Some of these spoils became housed in the newly built temple of the peace in Rome.

Here I am relying on the work of Alain Blomart a historian of ancient religions and the author of several articles on the *evocatio*, an important component of Roman religion.[69] Before engaging in battle the Romans would sacrifice to the gods of their opponents, begging them to abandon their protégés. If they were victorious in the battle they would sometimes, though not always, transfer the foreign gods to the capital: the travel of these foreign gods was the important matter.[70] Perhaps in the minds of some Christians the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple was an opportunity to declare in Rome that Christian worship was universal and should earn official recognition.

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[66] See Paul W. Walaskay, *"And so we came to Rome": The Political Perspective of St. Luke* (SNTSMS 49; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Marguerat, *La première histoire du christianisme*, 307–40.

[67] See Ign. *Rom*. 1.1–8.3.

[68] See Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll*. 4.47 and 7.8 ff.

[69] I have been influenced by Blomart's work and by our conversations; see Alain Blomart, "Die *evocatio* und der Transfer 'fremder' Götter von der Peripherie nach Rom," in Hubert Cancik and Jörg Rüpke, eds., *Römische Reichsreligion und Provinzialreligion* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997) 99–111.

[70] John S. Kloppenborg, who heard this paper, mentioned to me that he also had been interested in the *evocatio*. Since then he published "*Evocatio deorum* and the Date of Mark" *JBL* 124 (2005) 419–50.

All of this is very speculative, but what is not speculative is the importance of early Christian travel. The whole early history of the Christian movement can be summarized as a tension between stability and movement, between local churches and missionary activity, between stable ministers and itinerant prophets and evangelists.[71] The main purpose of these movements was either to advance the spreading of the word from place to place, even unto the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8) or to revisit a well known place in order to maintain the bond of love (to use Augustine's expression).

Conclusion

In this paper I have suggested a progression in the development of Christianity from Jesus to the new faith movement, and from the early churches to Christian civilization. This model implies continuity while allowing for substantial changes and transitions.

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[71] See the classical treatment of this distinction by Adolf Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (4th ed.; 2 vols.; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1924; reprinted Leipzig: Zentral-Antiquariat der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1965) 1:332–89. The first edition was published in 1902.

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2. The First Christologies: Exaltation and Incarnation, or From Easter to Christmas

Introduction

Wilhelm Bousset reckoned there was no continuity between Jesus' understanding of his own identity and the Christian worship of the Lord Jesus Christ.[1] Larry Hurtado has recently tried to prove the contrary.[2] Between the one at the end of the nineteenth century and the other at the dawn of the twenty-first, many scholars have striven to identify the contours of the Christology of the first Christian communities. In doing this, they have used a great variety of methods. Some, like Gerhard N. Sevenster and Marinus de Jonge, have disentangled the Christology from the various canonical accounts of Paul, John, Matthew or Mark.[3] Others, like Oscar Cullmann and Ferdinand Hahn, have based their work on Christological titles – Son of Man, Christ, Son of God, and so forth – contrasting pre-resurrection and post-resurrection usages.[4] Others, like Reginald Fuller and Eduard Schweizer, work out an historical and chronological evolution: to the Christology of the primitive Jerusalem community they have added those of the Hellenistic communities.[5] Yet others, such as Gregory Riley, influenced by sociology, have sought to identify doctrinal types supported by community models: the Christology of the Johannine community contrasted with the Pauline churches or the Thomas community.[6] In what follows I shall apply an historical and theological method which respects the genesis (i.e. the

[1] Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos. Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenaeus* (2d ed.; FRLANT 21; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1921).

[2] Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

[3] Gerhard N. Sevenster, "Christologie, I, Christologie des Urchristentums," *RGG* (3d ed.; 7 vols; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1957) 1:1745–1762; Marinus de Jonge, *Christology in Context: The Earliest Christian Response to Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988).

[4] Oscar Cullmann, *Christologie du Nouveau Testament* (Bibliothèque théologique; Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1966); Ferdinand Hahn, *Christologische Hoheitstitel. Ihre Geschichte im frühen Christentum* (FRLANT 83; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963).

[5] Reginald H. Fuller, *The Foundations of New Testament Christology* (Glasgow: Collins, 1979); Eduard Schweizer, *Jesus Christus im vielfältigen Zeugnis des Neuen Testaments* (2d ed.; München: Siebenstern Taschenbuch Verlag, 1970).

[6] Gregory J. Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered: Thomas and John in Controversy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995).

origin and first developments) and the structure of the Christology (the Father-Son relationship, the difference between pre- and post-resurrection, the time-factor) in the two best-known, and most easily accessible to the historian and theologian, primitive Christian communities: that of the Twelve in the Aramaic environment of Jerusalem, and that of the Seven in the Hellenistic-Jewish environment of Antioch. This selection should not be taken to imply that there were not, besides these, other communities and consequently other Christologies. There were in fact Christologies of the Johannine community and of the family of Jesus, of James the brother of the Lord in particular, but they are more difficult to discern and their influence remained limited to the beginnings.

According to the statement of Gerhard von Rad, the Scriptures of Israel, the Old Testament, were books open to the future.[7] Various forms of messianism appeared in uneasy concurrence. There are such texts even earlier than the Israelite monarchy, like Genesis 49, which describes the future or the end of time (Gen 49:1), flatters Judah, and announces a final Ruler, the mysterious Shiloh (Gen 49:10). The oracles of Balaam, Num 24:17 in particular, predict the coming of a King: "I see him, but not now: I behold him, but not nigh. A star shall rise from Jacob, a sceptre shall rise from Israel." With the kingship of David and the famous prophecy of Nathan (2 Sam 7 and 1 Chron 17) a divine promise is more and more strongly affirmed: God has established the House of David, and the Son of David will reign for ever. Both the liturgical tradition of the Psalms (Ps 89 and 132, for example), and the prophetic tradition (Isa 7:9, 11 for example) testify to the vigour and persistence of this tradition.[8]

Not only was the King anointed in Israel, but the priests also. Among the priests there developed also a sacerdotal messianism, which did not exclude the royal messianism. There thus appeared in Israel, especially after the exile, a double messianism, of which the vision of the two olive-trees was the special testimony. The prophet Zachariah saw in a night-vision a candlestick, and on either side, two olive-trees (Zech 4:3). Surprised, the prophet asked who these were, and learns that, "these are the two sons of oil who stand by the Lord of the whole earth: (Zech 4:14).[9]

These two lines, the kingly and the priestly, lived on into the time of Jesus. The *Psalms of Solomon*, a text (in my view) of Pharisaic orientation, shows a hope in a royal and Davidic Messiah. Here is an extract from Psalm 17: "See, Lord, and raise up for them their King, the Son of David, at the time you know, O God, to

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[7] Gerhard von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (2 vols.; München: C. Kaiser, 1958–1960) 2:329–346.

[8] See Joachim Becker, *Messiaserwartung im Alten Testament* (SBS 83; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1977); John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge, 1997) 77–90.

[9] On Zech 4, see Samuel Amsler, *Aggée, Zacharie 1–8* (2d ed.; CAT 11c; Genève: Labor et Fides, 1988) 87–95.

reign over your servant Israel. And gird him with strength" (*Pss. Sol.* 17.21–22). And further on: "Now shall he gather a holy people, whom he will govern in justice. He shall judge the tribes of a people sanctified by the Lord their God"[10] (*Pss. Sol.* 17.26). Some manuscripts from the Dead Sea, which I believe to be of Essene orientation, assert on the contrary a priestly Messiah alongside or even above the kingly Messiah. Here is a promise made in the *Community Rule* (1 QS 9.10–11): "They shall be governed by the first ordinances in which the members of the community shall begin to be instructed, until the coming of the Prophet and the Anointed Ones [i.e. the Messiahs] of Aaron and Israel."[11] Alongside the two Messiahs, there is to be observed here a third figure, that of a prophetic predecessor, whose coming was announced in Deuteronomy: Moses there predicts the coming of a Prophet like himself (Deut 18:15, 18).

Since all of this generated many different hopes, and even many different messianic figures, the Jews of the Persian, Greek, and Roman periods tried to remedy the proliferation. One may detect efforts to organise the figures: one consisted of an effort to put in sequence the prophetic forerunner, then the royal Messiah for the political organization, and finally the priestly Messiah for the religious life; or more simply, the royal Messiah embraced the functions of prophet, priest and king.

There are, unfortunately, as many portraits of Jesus as there are Bible students. There is however a tendency among critics, of whom I am one, which finds that the majority of the messianic titles in the Gospels – Lord, Christ, Son of God – belong to redactional passages which are not the earliest. If we take account also of the obvious imbalance between the frequent use of the title Messiah in the Acts and the Epistles, writings which reflect the life of the Christian communities after the resurrection of Jesus, and compare the occurrence of attestations in the Gospels, we shall readily admit that the Jesus of history did not claim to be Messiah. I would go so far as to say that he remained discrete, and even demolished some notions of a political, violent and vengeful Messiah. Following the analysis which I owe to Oscar Cullmann and above all to Maurice Goguel, the Jesus of history did not trust the triumphalist affirmation of Peter at Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8:29), and saw in it a satanic temptation (Mark 8:33).[12] At the time of the entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1–11), the companions of the Master celebrated the devout pilgrim and not the Messiah when they intoned Psalm 118:25–26,

[10] Pierre Prigent, "Psaumes de Salomon," in *La Bible. Écrits intertestamentaires* (eds. André Dupont-Sommer and Marc Philonenko; La Pléiade 337; Paris: Gallimard, 1987) 987–988.

[11] Ibid., 35.

[12] Cullmann, *Christologie du Nouveau Testament*, 105–108; see also Maurice Goguel, *Jésus* (2d ed.; Bibliothèque historique; Paris: Payot, 1950) 301–305, who writes the following on p. 302: "Marc (8,32^{b}–33) et Matthieu (16,22–23) placent ici une protestation de Pierre que Jésus repousse comme une tentation satanique."