



Tuomas Havukainen

The Quest for the Memory of Jesus:

A Viable Path or a Dead End?





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Keuruu, December 2017

Tuomas Havukainen

ABBREVIATIONS

ABD	David Noel Freedman (ed.), <i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> (New York: Doubleday, 1992)
AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
AYBRL	The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
BDAG	Walter Bauer, Frederick W. Danker, William F. Arndt, and F. William Gingrich, <i>A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 3rd edn, 2000)
<i>BbibRes</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium
BevT	Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation: A Journal of Contemporary Approaches</i>
BPC	Biblical Performance Criticism
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental (and African) Studies</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BZNW	Beihefte zur ZNW
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
ConBNT	Coniectanea biblica, New Testament
ETL	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
HdTh	Handbücher Theologie
HSCL	Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature
HSCP	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HvTSt</i>	<i>Hervormde Teologiese Studies</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JSHJ	<i>Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus</i>
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism: Supplement Series
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et orbis antiquus
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>

NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
<i>Numen</i>	<i>Numen: International Review for the History of Religions</i>
RBL	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
RBS	Resources for Biblical Study
RQ	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
RR	<i>Radical Religion</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLRBS	SBL Resources for Biblical Study
SBLSP	SBL Seminar Papers
SBLSS	SBL Semeia Studies
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SEÅ	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
StUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
TS	<i>Theological Studies</i>
TSAJ	Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
TZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WTJ	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE QUEST FOR THE HISTORICAL JESUS AS A RESEARCH PROBLEM

This dissertation addresses some of the central methodological questions currently debated in historical Jesus research. The application of social-scientific methods, such as social memory theory and the study of oral tradition, to the study of the historical Jesus has considerably changed the landscape of the field, resulting in the questioning of older ways of conducting research in light of new hermeneutical and methodological insights: instead of ‘the Quest for the historical Jesus’, one may now speak of ‘the Quest for the memory of Jesus’¹, namely, for the Jesus remembered and recorded in the written Jesus traditions by the early Christians.² In order to understand recent developments, it is necessary to first take a critical look at the notion of the Quest for the historical Jesus.

Historical Jesus research usually presupposes as its starting point the Enlightenment and the rise of the historical-critical study of the Bible.³ Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768), who distinguished between the preaching of Jesus and what the apostles later wrote about his words and deeds, is often considered the first scholar to take a critical interest in the historical Jesus and, more specifically, in the nature and transmission of the Jesus traditions recorded in the early Christian sources.⁴ While the field of historical Jesus research has

1 By ‘the memory of Jesus’, I refer in a general sense to how Jesus was remembered by early Christians.

2 See. e.g. Chris Keith, *Jesus’ Literacy: Scribal Culture and the Teacher from Galilee* (LNTS/JSNTSup, 413; London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2011), p. 50, who labels his viewpoint on Jesus research ‘the Jesus-Memory Approach’. See the discussion below in this chapter and especially in Chapter 3.

3 A different starting point can be argued for, as shown by Anthony Le Donne, ‘The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Revisionist History through the Lens of Jewish-Christian Relations’, *JSHS* 10 (2012), pp. 63-86, with his alternative beginnings (Origen, the rabbis, maybe Josephus); Le Donne, nevertheless, maintains the importance of the scholarship of the Enlightenment period (Spinoza, Lessing, Reimarus). However, commenting on Le Donne, Kari Syreeni, ‘The Identity of Jesus Scholar: Diverging Preunderstandings in Recent Jesus Research’, in S. Byrskog, T. Holmén & M. Kankaanniemi (eds.), *The Identity of Jesus: Nordic Voices* (WUNT, 2/373; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), pp. 1-16 (8 n. 28), asks, ‘If the scope is thus widened, why not begin with the Gospels?’

4 See Hermann Samuel Reimarus, ‘On the Intentions of Jesus and His Disciples’, in C. H. Talbert (ed.), *Reimarus: Fragments* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971); the citation in Gerd Theissen & Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (trans. John Bowden; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), pp. 2-3. Reimarus’ work began to be published only after his death (1774–1778) by G. E. Lessing.

undergone enormous phases of change and development since the 18th century, Reimarus and David Friedrich Strauss (1808–1874) maintain their importance in standard presentations of the research-historical narrative: they are identified as representatives of the First Quest for the historical Jesus, namely, the first research-historical school of thought in the field.⁵

The starting point of a scholarly narrative, such as ‘the First Quest’, as well as any representation of later developments, is always a matter of social construction.⁶ In terms of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, one may speak of the symbolic universe of a scholarly narrative within which the one telling the significant turns and elements of research history takes on the role of a specialist on the structure of the symbolic universe.⁷ While the social construction of a research history does not mean that no empirical and factual characteristics are communicated, it demonstrates that a research history always serves a social purpose. The sheer number of studies on the historical Jesus leaves the scholar no other option than to choose what one considers to be the most important studies; one forms a narrative in order to meet the challenge of his or her collective scholarly existence. In most cases, the basic division into three schools of thought – the First or Old Quest, the Second or New Quest, and the Third Quest – is considered a legitimate

5 For contemporary histories of historical Jesus scholarship, see e.g. Stephen Neill & N. T. Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861–1986* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2nd edn, 1988); N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), pp. 3-124; *idem*, *A Contemporary Quest for Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002); Clive Marsh, ‘Quests of the Historical Jesus in New Historicist Perspective’, *BibInt* 5 (1997), pp. 403-37; Ben Witherington III, *The Jesus Quest: The Third Search for the Jew of Nazareth* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2nd edn, 1997), pp. 9-13; Theissen & Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, pp. 2-13; Stanley E. Porter, *The Criteria of Authenticity in Historical-Jesus Research. Previous Discussion and New Proposals* (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 2000), pp. 28-62 (55-59), who does not deem a segmented outline justified; Tom Holmén, *Jesus & Jewish Covenant Thinking* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 8-9 n. 52, 346-47; Gerd Theissen & Dagmar Winter, *The Quest for the Plausible Jesus: The Question of Criteria* (trans. M. Eugene Boring; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), pp. 141-67; James D. G. Dunn, ‘Remembering Jesus: How the Quest of the Historical Jesus Lost Its Way?’, in T. Holmén & S. E. Porter (eds.), *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus* (4 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 1:183-205; Le Donne, ‘The Quest of the Historical Jesus’, pp. 63-86; Matti Kankaanniemi, ‘Will the Real Third Quest Please Stand Up?’, in S.-O. Back & M. Kankaanniemi (eds.), *Voces Clamantium in Deserto: Essays in Honor of Kari Syreeni* (Studier i exegetik och judaistik utgivna av Teologiska fakulteten vid Åbo Akademi, 11; Åbo: Painosalama, 2012), pp. 102-23; Walter P. Weaver, ‘In Quest of the Quest: Finding Jesus’, in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *Jesus Research: New Methodologies and Perceptions. The Second Princeton-Prague Symposium on Jesus Research* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), pp. 28-57; Syreeni, ‘The Identity’, pp. 1-16.

6 See Kankaanniemi, ‘Will the Real Third Quest’, pp. 102-23 (104-5, 109).

7 Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1966).

research-historical narrative.⁸

However, the legitimacy of a straightforward division of the research-historical developments in historical Jesus research into clearly distinguishable Quests can be questioned. It can be demonstrated with regard to the account of the standard story of historical Jesus research that one ought to speak of more general schools of thought with specific references to the methodological choices and differences between scholars, instead of arbitrarily attempting to place every Jesus scholar who ever existed into a Quest based on the era when they were active. The research-historical narrative of historical Jesus research is more diverse than is often assumed, although the standard story provides a meaningful framework for discussion.⁹

As presented by Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz,¹⁰ the standard story of historical Jesus research consists of three distinguishable Quests (or schools of thought), while also dividing the First or Old 'liberal' Quest into three stages: (1) Reimarus and Strauss gave rise to a critical historical inquiry of Jesus, the latter arguing that the idea of God-humanity is realized in the historical individual Jesus, and that 'myth' is the legitimate garb of this idea, universally applicable to humanity. (2) Heinrich Julius Holtzmann (1832–1910) and others, in the period of theological liberalism, emphasized literary-critical analysis and the primacy of Mark and the reconstructed Q source (hence, the so-called two-source theory) for the historical Jesus, and argued that Christian faith and dogma must be renewed

8 Even Le Donne, 'The Quest of the Historical Jesus', pp. 63–86, who argues for a significant broadening of the research-historical horizon in historical Jesus research, does not attempt to entirely do away with the 'Quests'.

9 It has been suggested that the history of historical Jesus research can be viewed in light of the concept of *paradigm shift*, coined by the philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn (1922–1996), as a deeply social enterprise in which scholars with common axioms form a paradigm and find it hard to communicate with those who do not share those axioms (*incommensurability*). In Kuhnian terms, a paradigm shift will only occur when anomalies are found and supported by a number of acknowledged scholars within that thought system. See Kankaanniemi, 'Will the Real Third Quest', pp. 102–23; Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962).

However, it is not clear to what degree the Kuhnian idea can be applied to the history of a social-scientific field, such as historical Jesus research, as it was first developed in the context of empirical sciences. Viewing the Quests for the historical Jesus as *paradigms* in Kuhnian terms may be helpful to a degree, but it may also give a false impression of a homogeneity of the scholarship conducted under the label of any given Quest. Kankaanniemi, 'Will the Real Third Quest', pp. 102–23, attempts to speak of the Quests as meaningful sociological constructions, which indicates that he does not employ the Kuhnian terminology uncritically.

10 Theissen & Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, pp. 2–13. Also, see e.g. Holmén, *Covenant Thinking*, p. 346, for different approaches to the Quests.

in light of the analysis. In this period, the importance of the two-source theory for historical Jesus research was established; the First Quest was essentially literary and source-critical in nature. (3) Around the beginning of the 20th century, the original or First Quest came to a collapse through the works of Albert Schweitzer (1875–1965), who argued that the ‘liberal pictures’ of Jesus reflected more the ethical ideals of their authors than the actual historical figure,¹¹ William Wrede (1859–1906), who claimed that the post-Easter faith in the messiahship of Jesus was projected in the unmessianic life of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark,¹² and Karl Ludwig Schmidt (1891–1956), who explicated that, as a whole, a life of Jesus or a chronological structure of the story of Jesus, could not be detected in the sense of a biography from the small units of the Jesus tradition.¹³

According to the standard story, the collapse of the First Quest was followed by an era which was in many cases characterized by ultimate skepticism toward the Jesus traditions’ ability to relate the historical Jesus and has often been labeled ‘the No Quest.’¹⁴ However, the title No Quest does not do justice to the period, as books about the historical Jesus were written after Schweitzer, not only by the early form critics Martin Dibelius (1883–1947) and Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976), who were skeptical about any continuity between the historical Jesus and the Jesus traditions of the Gospels, as well as other scholars during the Nazi period (both Jewish and anti-Semitic),¹⁵ but also by many English, French and American scholars.¹⁶ While the ideas of Dibelius and Bultmann deserve the space devoted to them due to their highly influential methodological viewpoints on the nature and transmission of the Jesus traditions, they should not be viewed as the sole

11 Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede* (trans. W. Montgomery; London: A. & C. Black, 1910 [1906]).

12 William Wrede, *The Messianic Secret* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1901 [1900]).

13 Karl Ludwig Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu: literarkritische Untersuchungen zur ältesten Jesusüberlieferung* (Berlin: Trowitzsch & Sohn, 1919). See ch. 2.1 below.

14 Cf. Theissen & Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, pp. 6-7.

15 On Bultmann’s influence and oversimplification of his legacy, see Le Donne, ‘The Quest of the Historical Jesus’, pp. 63-86 (83-84). Bultmann was a vocal critic of both the German Nazi party and the anti-semitic Jesus studies, emphasizing the Jewishness of Jesus in a time when it was not popular; this must be recognized in connection with Bultmann’s skepticism toward reconstructions of the historical Jesus.

16 E.g. J. Klausner, C. G. Montefiore, R. Eisler, Rudolf Otto, Shailer Mathews, Shirley Jackson Case, Henry Cadbury, F. C. Grant, John Knox, T. W. Manson, William Manson, C. H. Dodd, C. J. Cadoux, Alfred Loisy, Vincent Taylor, Maurice, Goguel, Charles Guignebert. See e.g. Le Donne, ‘The Quest of the Historical Jesus’, pp. 63-86 (84), who states that ‘...the paradigm of No Quest (or ‘no biography’) and New Quest is perhaps only helpful when thinking about the phases in German scholarship.’

representatives of Jesus scholarship in this period. It is, therefore, more reasonable to speak of the abandonment of a nineteenth-century agenda than of the No Quest.¹⁷ Also, it has been questioned whether Schweitzer intended the end of the quest in the first place.¹⁸

Especially within German scholarship from the 1950's onward, the rise of the so-called Second or New Quest shifted the emphasis to 'the return to the historical Jesus', namely, the question of whether 'the kerygmatic Christ had any support in the proclamation of the pre-Easter Jesus'. Methodologically, the New Quest adhered to the idea of 'a critically ensured minimum of "authentic" Jesus tradition', which could be arrived at via exclusion of everything that could be derived from both Judaism and early Christianity ('criterion of difference or dissimilarity').¹⁹ The New Quest was, according to the standard story, launched by one of Rudolf Bultmann's pupils, Ernst Käsemann (1906–1998) in his 1953 lecture at Marburg, 'The Problem of the Historical Jesus', published in 1954, and based on a combination of a history of religions and history of tradition approaches; the theological purpose of later representatives of dialectical theology within the New Quest was 'to bridge the gulf between revelation and history'.²⁰ In addition to Käsemann, for example, Günther Bornkamm (1905–1990)²¹ and James M. Robinson (1924–2016)²² are considered important representatives of the New Quest.²³ John P. Meier (b.1942), a major figure in the field, can also be viewed as a New Quest scholar, for instance, due to his heavy reliance on the criteria of

17 See Holmén, *Covenant Thinking*, pp. 346-47; Marsh, 'Quests of the Historical Jesus', pp. 403-37 (414); Porter, *The Criteria of Authenticity in Historical-Jesus Research*, pp. 47, 49, 60-62; Kankaanniemi, 'Will the Real Third Quest', p. 102-23 (108); Weaver, 'In Quest of the Quest', pp. 28-57, against the label No Quest.

18 Weaver, 'In Quest of the Quest', pp. 28-57 (53, n. 56), argues that 'Schweitzer did not intend to do so', but he rather brought the 'old quest' to 'a temporary close' to point out that Christian faith cannot be put 'in a bind by marrying it to history, which is always changing, uncertain, and marked by relativity', an idea rather fitting to the contemporary theological environment, and left it to others to bring 'order into the chaos of modern lives of Jesus'. The abandonment of the original quest must be seen in the background of the discussion on the form-critical works of Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann.

19 The notion of 'authentic Jesus tradition' that can be arrived at through the use of the authenticity criteria, which was especially important to the New Quest, has persisted until very recently.

20 Theissen & Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, pp. 7-9, 10, 12.

21 Günther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1960).

22 James M. Robinson, *A New Quest for the Historical Jesus* (London: SCM, 1959).

23 Wright, *Victory of God*, pp. 28-82, argues that, in the work of the Jesus Seminar scholars (e.g. Robert Funk, Burton Mack, John Dominic Crossan), the methods of the New Quest period still exist and, thus, labels such scholars as representatives of 'The New "New Quest"'.

authenticity as the driving methodological force of his project, although his five-volume study began to be published during the heyday of the so-called Third Quest in 1991²⁴ and often grants him a place within that category.²⁵

More recent Jesus scholarship, which took the original separation of the historical Jesus and his first followers' belief in Christ, reflected in the Jesus traditions, as an axiom, is often vaguely labeled the Third Quest.²⁶ Rather than taking the title as a reference to all Jesus scholarship since the 1980's or so, it can be viewed in line with the title's original coinage as 'a meaningful sociological construction' or 'a Kuhnian paradigm,' not to denote 'the right way' of doing serious scholarship, but to point out the differences between different kinds of scholarship.²⁷ Kankaanniemi proposes that, instead of viewing the Jesus Seminar (including scholars like Robert W. Funk and John Dominic Crossan) as part of the Third Quest, one should deem their work separately under the category 'the Jesus Seminar Quest' in order to distinguish their methodological axioms (especially, regarding the skepticism towards the canonical Gospels as historical sources) from those of such 'Third Questers' as James D. G. Dunn, E. P. Sanders, and N. T. Wright, who place critical yet optimistic trust in the canonical Gospels.²⁸ While clarifying the differences in outlook on source-material between the aforementioned 'Third Questers' and the Jesus Seminar, one must remain cautious about proposing a naïve two-path narrative of historical Jesus research. Syreeni

24 See John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus, I: The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), pp. 167-95; *idem*, *A Marginal Jew, II: Mentor, Message, and Miracles* (New York: Doubleday, 1994); *idem*, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus, III: Companions and Competitors* (New York: Doubleday, 2001); *idem*, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus, IV: Law and Love* (AYBRL; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009); *idem*, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus, V: Probing the Authenticity of the Parables* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016).

25 Cf. e.g. Witherington, *The Jesus Quest*, pp. 197-232, who views Meier a prime example of Third Quest scholarship; also, Wright, *A Contemporary Quest for Jesus*, pp. 30-31.

26 The title Third Quest was coined by N. T. Wright in Neill & Wright, *Interpretation*, p. 379ff in 1988; Theissen & Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, p. 10.

27 So Kankaanniemi, 'Will the Real Third Quest', pp. 102-23 (123). Though one needs to remain cautious of a straightforward application of the Kuhnian terminology to historical Jesus research. Cf. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.

28 Kankaanniemi, 'Will the Real Third Quest', pp. 102-23 (123). For the list of other scholars, placed in such a Third Quest paradigm, see Wright, *A Contemporary Quest for Jesus*, pp. 30-31: Caird, Brandon, Betz, Hengel, Vermes, Meyer, Chilton, Riches, Harvey, Lohfink, Borg, Sanders, Oakman, Theissen, Horsley, Freyne, Charlesworth, Witherington, Meier, de Jonge, Dodd, Yoder, Bowker, Derrett, Maccoby, Dunn, O'Neill, Farmer, Schüssler-Fiorenza, Bammel, Moule, Rivkin, Buchanan, Leivestad, Zeitlin, Stanton, Neusner, Raymond, Brown, Johnson, O'Collins, and Colin Brown.

reminds that ‘it is doubtful that all Jesus scholars are willing to categorize themselves as representatives of just one of two paths [Funk/Jesus Seminar or Wright/Third Quest].’²⁹

The three features of the Third Quest scholarship, suggested by Theissen and Merz,³⁰ further demonstrate the relative arbitrariness of neat divisions of historical Jesus research into clearly distinguishable Quests: (1) *The Jewishness of Jesus*. While it must be acknowledged that this is not an innovation of the Third Quest,³¹ the Third Quest is seen in opposition to the tendency of much of the earlier scholarship to distance Jesus from Judaism with the methodical failure of ‘criterion of double dissimilarity’, namely, the authenticity criterion which was commonly used to sever Jesus from both Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity.³² While Third Quest scholarship may not have introduced new methods as such, it produced several different portraits of a Jewish Jesus. The variety of views on how exactly the Jewishness of Jesus plays out is demonstrated, for example, in Witherington, whose categories are but one example of how the scholarly narrative can be constructed: Jesus as a Jewish Cynic (e.g. Burton Mack; John Dominic Crossan); Jesus as an eschatological figure (e.g. E. P. Sanders; here, for instance, Dale C. Allison could be added); Jesus as a ‘man of spirit’ (Marcus Borg, Geza Vermes, Graham H. Twelftree); Jesus as a prophet of social change (Gerd Theissen; Richard Horsley); Jesus as a sage of Jewish Wisdom (e.g. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza; Ben Witherington); Jesus as a marginal Jew or Jewish Messiah (John P. Meier; James D. G. Dunn, N. T. Wright, Markus Bockmuehl, Peter Stuhlmacher).³³ By including the Jesus Seminar (Funk, Mack, Crossan) in the Third Quest, Witherington becomes subject to the criticism that such inclusivism of multifaceted methodological starting points completely robs the Third Quest of

29 Syreeni, ‘The Identity’, pp. 1-16 (6-8). For instance, James D. G. Dunn does not fit neatly into the Third Quest, as his work differs methodologically from much of the previous scholarship. See the discussion below.

30 Theissen & Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, pp. 10-11.

31 See Holmén, *Covenant Thinking*, pp. 8-11, on Schweitzer, Wrede, the New Quest, and Jewish scholarship, which all recognized the Jewishness of Jesus. Also, Bultmann noted the Jewishness of Jesus contrarily to the German anti-semitic sentiments of the earlier half of the 20th century.

32 Holmén, *Covenant Thinking*, pp. 8-9, on Käsemann, *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen. Erster Band* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960). Also, see E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), pp. 27-47.

33 Witherington, *The Jesus Quest*, pp. 58-238. Like indicated above, John P. Meier can just as well be viewed as a New Quest scholar.

its meaning.³⁴ Regarding the Jewishness of Jesus within what is often considered Third Quest scholarship, Tom Holmén's work is also of importance; he argues that, while viewing himself a true Jew, the historical Jesus neither engaged nor was interested in Jewish covenant path searching or the path markers of first-century Judaism due to his message of the kingdom of God.³⁵

(2) *Attention to non-canonical sources.* In principle, there has been a consensus within much of historical Jesus research in recent decades that all historical sources should be used in reconstructing the historical Jesus or, at least, that no source can be abandoned before evaluating its historical value; this view, which follows the original usage of the label the Third Quest by N. T. Wright, holds that the canonical Gospels are of primary importance due to their historical value. However, there are other scholars of this period who emphasize the Jewishness of Jesus but prefer other sources over the canonical ones, for instance, John Dominic Crossan of the Jesus Seminar for whom the 'earliest stratum of the Gospel of Thomas' is central.³⁶ While some scholars placed within the Third Quest remain convinced of the value of the traditional methodological tools for studying the sources, such as the criteria of authenticity,³⁷ there are others who are more

34 So Porter, *The Criteria of Authenticity in Historical-Jesus Research*, p. 56; Kankaanniemi, 'Will the Real Third Quest?', pp. 102-23 (111).

35 Holmén, *Covenant Thinking*. Holmén and others propose a meaningful methodical starting point, namely, the continuum approach which asserts that the methods used in studying the historical Jesus should provide a picture of Jesus, which is not only at home in first-century Judaism but also explains the origin of the beliefs of the early church. This approach distances itself from earlier approaches which attempted to find a Jesus distinct from his Jewish and early Christian contexts; the continuum approach also clearly differs from the pictures of Jesus that are based on a heavy use of the criterion of dissimilarity (e.g. John P. Meier), as well as those that see Jesus in his Jewish context, while alienating him methodically from early Christian beliefs (e.g. Theissen & Winter, *The Plausible Jesus*). The continuum approach, albeit not yet a detailed set of tools, seems to be a plausible framework for studying the historical Jesus, as it avoids pictures of Jesus foreign to first-century Judaism and early Christianity. See e.g. Tom Holmén, 'Doubts About Double Dissimilarity', in Bruce D. Chilton & Craig A. Evans (eds.), *Authenticating the Words of Jesus* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 47-80; *idem*, 'An Introduction to the Continuum Approach', in Holmén (ed.), *Jesus from Judaism to Christianity: Continuum Approaches to the Historical Jesus* (LNTS; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2007), pp. 1-16; *idem*, 'Jesus in Continuum from Early Judaism to Early Christianity: Practical-Methodological Reflections on a Missed Perspective', in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *Jesus Research: New Methodologies and Perceptions. The Second Princeton-Prague Symposium on Jesus Research* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), pp. 201-12.

36 John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991). See e.g. Witherington, *The Jesus Quest*, pp. 42-57, on the reconstruction and use of sources by the members of the Jesus Seminar, e.g. Robert W. Funk, *Honest to Jesus: Jesus for a New Millennium* (San Francisco: Harper, 1996); Robert W. Funk & Roy D. Hoover (eds.), *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* (New York: Macmillan, 1993).

37 While Witherington, *The Jesus Quest*, considers John P. Meier an exemplary Third Quest scholar,

skeptical of these methods.³⁸

(3) *Interest in social history.* According to Theissen and Merz, Third Quest scholarship places great importance on explaining the life and fate of Jesus in light of the tensions characteristic of the Jewish context of the first century. The social continuity between the earliest pre-Easter followers of Jesus, in Theissen's words 'itinerant preachers,' and post-Easter Christianity is recognized and studied extensively.³⁹ It should be noted, however, that the social-scientific viewpoints were already taken seriously by some scholars in earlier periods, which undermines any rigid notion about a clearly distinct Third Quest. For example, Joachim Jeremias (1900–1979) applied social-scientific methods extensively in his study of the Jewish society of Jesus' time (or 'the Jewishness of Jesus') well before the title Third Quest was coined.⁴⁰ One may legitimately ask whether it is necessary to find a Quest into which each individual scholar can be placed.

In the most recent years, some of the long-standing axioms of the previous schools of thought in historical Jesus research have been questioned by what will hereafter be called the memory approach to historical Jesus research.⁴¹ Generally, the memory approach refers to the growing recent emphasis on the concepts of individual and social memory, as well as the oral transmission and performance of the Jesus traditions in early Christianity. Within this approach, the Jesus traditions are often viewed as a series of oral performances framed by the social memory of early Christian communities; this notion undermines the divorce of the historical

there are methodological grounds for viewing Maier's project in continuation with the New Quest, which further blurs the lines between the Quests. For Meier the criteria of authenticity are the foremost method in reconstructing the historical Jesus.

38 N. T. Wright is generally skeptical of using the criteria as guarantors of the authenticity of individual Jesus traditions, while he indicates that 'the criterion of double similarity/dissimilarity' can be applied positively. See Wright, *Victory of God*, pp. 132-33.

39 See e.g. Gerd Theissen, *Die Religion der ersten Christen. Eine Theorie des Urchristentums* (Gütersloh: Kaiser, 3rd rev edn, 2000); Theissen & Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, p. 10.

40 Kankaanniemi, 'Will the Real Third Quest', pp. 102-23 (108), argues that Jeremias can be seen 'probably more comfortably at home within the Third Quest'. See Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem zur Zeit Jesu: Kulturgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum neutestamentlichen Zeitgeschehen* (Leipzig/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 3rd edn, 1962).

41 I include in the memory approach the following scholars: James D. G. Dunn, Richard A. Horsley, Rafael Rodríguez, Chris Keith, Dale C. Allison, and Anthony Le Donne, as well as Samuel Byrskog and Richard Bauckham, whose works are focused on the question of eyewitness testimony and memory. Arguably, space permitting, other scholars could be included: Jens Schröter, Christine Jacobi, Alan Kirk, Bart Ehrman, etc. My presentation and analysis intends to be broader than that of e.g. Eric Eve, *Behind the Gospels: Understanding the oral tradition* (London: SPCK, 2013), pp. 108-34 (108), who lists J. D. G. Dunn, Richard Horsley, Jonathan Draper, and Rafael Rodríguez as different representatives of 'memory trend'. See Ch. 3 below.

Jesus from the early Jesus movement's notions about him, as recorded in the early Christian sources. Consequently, the memory approach questions the original separation of the historical Jesus and his first followers' belief in Christ, namely, the separation between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. For example, James D. G. Dunn, who is often viewed as a Third Quest scholar but is in this study considered part of the memory approach due to his distinct methodological choices, argues that the Jesus of history cannot be separated from the Christ of faith due to the historical memories about Jesus, as recorded in the Jesus traditions and transmitted by his first followers on whom he had an *impact*.⁴² Dunn's work can be viewed as reasserting the central idea of Martin Kähler (1835–1912) that there is no 'historical Jesus' apart from the Christ of faith provided by the Gospels.⁴³

In contrast with much of the scholarship conducted under the labels of the previous Quests, however they may be defined, the memory approach rejects some of the historically central literary methods of historical Jesus research. First, it maintains that one cannot access the historical Jesus via the study of the authenticity of the literary Jesus traditions by using the criteria of authenticity; the tendency of abandoning the criteria of authenticity altogether as verification of 'what comes from Jesus historically' goes hand in hand with the emphasis on memory. Rather than attempting to separate the 'authentic' Jesus traditions from the 'inauthentic' traditions, the Jesus traditions are construed as *instances of oral performances and memories or interpretations* of the historical Jesus recorded by his first followers.⁴⁴ Second, the notion of the Jesus traditions being construed not

42 See James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (Christianity in the Making 1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); *idem*, 'Remembering Jesus', pp. 183-205 (187): 'In direct contrast to this deeply rooted suspicion of faith as a barrier to and perversion of any historical perspective on Jesus [that Christian (post-Easter) faith pervades all our chief sources for the life and mission of Jesus; and that this faith prevents the present-day quester from seeing Jesus as he was, or even as he was seen by his disciples pre-Easter], my proposal is that *the quest should start from the recognition that Jesus evoked faith from the outset of his mission and that this faith is the surest indication of the historical reality and effect of his mission.*'

43 Cf. Martin Kähler, *Die sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche, biblische Jesus* (Leipzig, 1892); Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 126-27 (126 n. 99), asserts that this is the only point he adopts from Kähler. On this point, also see Syreeni, 'The Identity', p. 1-16 (12).

44 On this see, e.g. Rafael Rodríguez, 'Authenticating Criteria: The Use and Misuse of a Critical Method', *JSHJ* 7 (2009), pp. 152-67; Dale C. Allison, *Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History* (London: SPCK, 2010); Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, for the 'Jesus-memory approach' in contrast with the traditional 'criteria approach'; see also Chris Keith and Anthony Le Donne (eds.), *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity* (London: T & T Clark, 2012). Some challenges to this recent trend are presented e.g. in Tobias Hägerland, 'The Future of Criteria in Historical Jesus

merely as literary sources in the traditional sense leads the memory approach (or at least most scholars within it) to question the legitimacy of traditional source-theoretical hypotheses and, more precisely, the so-called Two-(or Four-)Source theory,⁴⁵ which has been one of the cornerstones of historical Jesus research for a long time. The relationships between the Synoptic Gospels are no longer necessarily explained through reference to the Evangelists' use of hypothetical literary sources, such as the Q, as the Jesus traditions are viewed as a result of a complex interplay between oral and textual communication in early Christianity.⁴⁶

Specifically, the memory approach is in conversation with early form criticism and its alternatives on the nature and transmission of the Jesus traditions and the historical Jesus.⁴⁷ Like the form critics Dibelius and Bultmann, who emphasized the anonymously transmitted flexible pre-gospel oral tradition, for

Research', *JSHJ* 13 (2015), pp. 43-65. Also, see the answers to these and other criticisms in Chris Keith, 'The Narratives of the Gospels and the Historical Jesus: Current Debates, Prior Debates and the Goal of Historical Jesus Research', *JSNT* 38 (2016), pp. 426-55. See the discussion in Ch. 3 below.

45 By which I refer to the standard source critical theory according to which Matthew and Luke used, besides Mark, another common *literary* source, the Q. The Q partially explains the material, which Matthew and Luke have in common, yet is not found in Mark. Accordingly, both authors used their own specific sources (L, M) in addition to Mark and Q (hence, the four-source hypothesis). See e.g. John S. Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000); *idem*, *Q, the Earliest Gospel: An Introduction to the Original Stories and Sayings of Jesus* (London: Westminster John Knox, 2008); Paul Hoffmann, John S. Kloppenborg, and James M. Robinson (eds.), *The Critical Edition of the Q* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000); Christopher Heil, *Das Spruchevangelium Q und der historische Jesus* (Stuttgarter Biblische Aufsatzbände, 58; Stuttgart: Verlag Katolisches Bibelwerk, 2014). The existence of Q has been questioned recently by e.g. Michael Goulder, 'Is Q a Juggernaut?', *JBL* 115 (1996), pp. 667-81; Mark S. Goodacre, 'Fatigue in the Synoptics', *NTS* 44 (1998), pp. 45-58; *idem*, 'A Monopoly on Marcan Priority? Fallacies at the Heart of Q', *SBLSP* (2000), pp. 538-622; *idem*, *The Case against Q: Studies in Marcan Priority and the Synoptic Problem* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 2002); Jeffrey Peterson & John C. Poirier (eds.), *Marcan Priority without Q: Explorations in the Farrer Hypothesis* (LNTS; London: T & T Clark, 2015).

46 See e.g. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 210-38, on different Gospel accounts not primarily as results of the Evangelists' use of literary sources but as literary accounts of oral retellings of oral Jesus traditions; Rafael Rodríguez, *Structuring Early Christian Memory: Jesus in Tradition, Performance and Text* (LNTS/JSNTSup, 407; London: T & T Clark, 2010), pp. 25-26, 35-37, on the written Gospels as 'oral-derived texts' and instances of the Jesus tradition, not as editions or versions of one another. In contrast, see Allison, *Constructing*, who does not give up the two-source theory but rather uses the theory extensively in his analysis of the Jesus traditions. See the discussion in Ch. 3.

47 I include the views of Rainer Riesefeld and, especially, Birger Gerhardsson ('formal controlled tradition', ch. 2.2), Erhardt Güttgemanns and, more importantly, Werner H. Kelber ('radical discontinuity between orality and textuality', ch. 2.3), and Kenneth E. Bailey ('informal controlled oral tradition', ch. 2.4) among the main alternatives for the early form-critical views of Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann (ch. 2.1) on the nature and transmission of the Jesus traditions in early Christianity.

example, Dunn, Horsley, and Rodríguez within the memory approach place great emphasis on the study of the Jesus traditions in light of oral tradition and studies on orality, while also being critical of form criticism. Also, the memory approach closely relates to the distinct alternatives for the views of Dibelius and Bultmann by Birger Gerhardsson and Werner H. Kelber, who both take the role of the pre-Gospel oral tradition at face value; while Gerhardsson argues for a rigid transmission of the oral Jesus tradition based on *memorization*, an important concept which is recognized within the memory approach, Kelber emphasizes early Christian orality and the nature of the Jesus traditions in a way that comes close to the memory approach's emphasis on the Jesus traditions as instances of early Christian social memory.⁴⁸

The aforementioned rejection or neglect of the traditional literary and source-critical methods by the memory approach also creates a meaningful discussion between the memory approach and form criticism and its alternatives. On the one hand, the form criticism of Dibelius and Bultmann did not focus on literary or source criticism, but had its main emphasis on the flexible pre-Gospel oral Jesus traditions, which were, according to their view, anonymously transmitted in early Christian communities and could be linked with specific *Sitze im Leben* ('settings in life') in those communities. The form-critical notion of a perfect correlation between a Jesus tradition and its *Sitz im Leben* comes close to a presentist view of social memory theory, which is widely discussed within the memory approach.⁴⁹ On the other hand, critical of form criticism, Gerhardsson's rabbinic model of memorization and transmission argued for the historical reliability of the Synoptic Jesus traditions in a relatively straightforward fashion with no specific regard for the criteria of authenticity or source-critical hypotheses.⁵⁰ While neither form criticism nor the rabbinic model are held tenable by the memory approach, both viewpoints serve as important starting points for the current discussion on the nature and transmission of the Jesus traditions in early Christianity and historical Jesus research.

Of form criticism's alternatives, Kelber, for whom the Q hypothesis was, at least, originally central, seems to accept a rather traditional source-critical starting

48 See ch. 2.2, 2.3; cf. esp. the view of Rafael Rodríguez, ch. 3.4 below.

49 See ch. 2.1; ch. 3.1 below.

50 See. ch. 2.2 below.

point, which is not foreign within the memory approach.⁵¹ Nevertheless, in his criticism of ‘print culture assumptions,’ including traditional literary methods, such as the criteria of authenticity, prevalent in much of historical Jesus research, Kelber gravitates toward a redefinition of the Jesus traditions in light of an oral hermeneutic, which makes his view a significant dialogue partner with the memory approach’s take on the historical Jesus.⁵² Also, Kenneth E. Bailey’s analogy of ‘informal controlled oral tradition’ between the Middle-Eastern village life of the nineteenth and early twentieth century and first-century Palestine attempts to bypass literary and source-critical questions related to historical Jesus research by focusing on the mechanisms of oral tradition; his view has been discussed by some within the memory approach.⁵³

As a result, within historical Jesus research, there is an ongoing debate on the processes of the transmission of the Jesus traditions and the continuity or discontinuity between the levels of (1) the historical Jesus to whom there is, according to the memory approach, no access, (2) the period of oral (and literary) Jesus traditions – or memories of Jesus, as many would phrase it – until the writing of the Gospels, and (3) the period of the written Gospels.⁵⁴ The amount of literature concerning the period of the oral transmission of the Jesus traditions and the role of memory in the process is ever-increasing.⁵⁵ Any meaningful

51 See ch. 2.3; cf. e.g. Richard A. Horsley, ch. 3.3 below.

52 See ch. 2.3 below.

53 See ch. 2.4; cf. esp. the view of Rafael Rodríguez, ch. 3.4.

54 See the classic distinction of three ‘stages,’ e.g. in Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, I, p. 167: Stage I, roughly 28–30 CE; Stage II, roughly 30–70 CE; Stage III, roughly 70–100 CE.

55 See e.g. Alan Kirk & Tom Thatcher (eds.), *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity* (SBLSS, 52; Atlanta: SBL, 2005); Werner H. Kelber & Samuel Byrskog (eds.), *Jesus in Memory: Traditions in Oral and Scribal Perspectives* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009); Rodríguez, *Structuring*; *idem*, *Oral Tradition and the New Testament: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2014); Richard A. Horsley, *Text and Tradition in Performance and Writing* (BPC, 9; Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2013); Sandra Hübenthal, *Das Markusevangelium als kollektives Gedächtnis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014); Michael F. Bird, *The Gospel of the Lord: How the Early Church Wrote the Story of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014); Ruben Zimmermann, *Puzzling the Parables of Jesus: Methods and Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015); Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus Before the Gospels: How the Earliest Christians Remembered, Changed, and Invented Their Stories of the Savior* (New York: HarperCollins, 2016); Samuel Byrskog, Raimo Hakola, Jutta Maria Jokiranta (eds.), *Social Memory and Social Identity in the Study of Early Judaism and Early Christianity* (NTOA, 116; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016); Alan Kirk, *Q in Matthew: Ancient Media, Memory, and Early Scribal Transmission of the Jesus Tradition* (LNTS/JSNTSup, 564; London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2016). Also, see James D. G. Dunn, *The Oral Gospel Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), which includes 15 of his essays and articles from the past decades. See Ch. 3 below.

representation of scholarly developments is always, of necessity, carefully defined and limited in its scope.

Due to these recent developments in historical Jesus research, it is reasonable to pose the question as to whether a new phase has begun, whether a coherent methodological shift has occurred. While skeptical of 'traditional' research-historical nomenclature, such as 'the Fourth Quest' as a continuation of the standard narrative due to the problematic nature of any neat division of the history of historical Jesus research into 'Quests', one may legitimately ask whether the memory approach to the Jesus traditions and its rejection of the traditional methods constitutes a constructive methodological alternative, namely, a way forward for historical Jesus research.⁵⁶ It seems clear that the memory approach finds it hard to communicate with much of previous scholarship. Is it time to abandon a literary approach to the Jesus traditions and focus one's efforts on studying the early Christian memories of Jesus? How should the methodological diversity within the memory approach be reckoned with? Is the memory approach a new beginning or a dead end for historical Jesus research?

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE DISSERTATION

The main purpose of this dissertation is to investigate whether the memory approach constitutes a methodologically coherent school of thought in historical

⁵⁶ Jonathan Bernier, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus after the Demise of Authenticity: Toward a Critical Realist Philosophy of History in Jesus Studies* (LNTS/JSNTSup, 540; London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2016), pp. 162, considers the question of quests a matter of continuity between Second Temple Judaism and Jesus and Jesus and Christianity; he suggests that, while '[t]he Third Quest sought to dispense with the myth of rupture between Judaism and Jesus, and for the most part, it succeeded in this aim,' '[t]he Fourth Quest... is focused upon dispensing with the myth of a rupture between Jesus and Christianity'.

However, the problematic nature of such Quest language becomes apparent when one considers that there are scholars usually placed within the Third Quest who address the very problem that, in Bernier's estimation, is to be the focus of the Fourth Quest, namely, 'dispensing with the myth of a rupture between Jesus and Christianity'. See e.g. Holmén, 'An Introduction to the Continuum Approach', pp. 1-16; *idem*, 'Jesus in Continuum from Early Judaism to Early Christianity', pp. 201-12, who argues for a continuum approach in order to avoid pictures of Jesus foreign to first-century Judaism and early Christianity.

Also, there are others suggesting that a Fourth Quest for the historical Jesus is necessary. See e.g. Ernst Baasland, 'Fourth Quest? What Did Jesus Really Want?', in T. Holmén & S. E. Porter (eds.), *Handbook*, pp. 1:31-56, who argues that a 'Fourth Quest' is needed, and that it should concentrate on 'Jesus' focus, his program and vision, which he accomplished in both words and deeds. I fail to see how historical Jesus research conducted with such a focus would distinguish itself enough from other schools of thought in order to deserve the new label 'Fourth Quest'.

Jesus research. In other words, this dissertation explores how the basic tenets of the memory approach differ from earlier scholarship and whether one may speak of a new beginning in the field of historical Jesus research. The focus of the dissertation is on research-historical developments. In order to meaningfully approach the question of the methodological school of thought in historical Jesus research, *the research-historical discussion is focused on the debate on the nature and the processes of the transmission of the Jesus traditions in early Christianity*, which is a central topic to both earlier historical Jesus research and the methodological formation of the memory approach.⁵⁷ Rather than attempting to discuss the whole history of historical Jesus research, in other words, all the ‘Quests’ for the historical Jesus with regard to this debate, the scope of this research is limited to a few significant viewpoints from approximately the last one hundred years, as this period is specifically relevant for the rise and development of the memory approach.

First, the survey of earlier research (Ch. 2) covers the views of the early form critics Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann (Ch. 2.1), as well as some of their most significant critics (Ch. 2.2–2.4). The basic tenets of Dibelius and Bultmann on the pre-Gospel oral Jesus traditions are a meaningful research-historical starting point, as their viewpoints, having been globally very influential for decades, elicit strong direct critical reactions from the main focus of this study, namely, the memory approach to the historical Jesus and the Jesus traditions.⁵⁸ Three alternative models for the form-critical viewpoints are presented and critiqued: the formal controlled tradition (Ch. 2.2: Harald Riesenfeld, Birger Gerhardsson), the radical discontinuity view (Ch. 2.3: Erhardt Güttgemanns, Werner H. Kelber), and the informal controlled tradition (Ch. 2.4: Kenneth E. Bailey).

Second, a whole chapter is devoted to the memory approach (Ch. 3), namely, the scholars who apply memory studies in one way or another to the study of the historical Jesus. The focus of this chapter is on the individual and social aspects

⁵⁷ These processes took place during the time span from Jesus’ public activity (AD 28–30) to the writing of the Gospels, which include, first and foremost, the four canonical Gospels (roughly from the 60’s onwards) and, secondly, the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Peter, and some other gospels, of which only some fragments survive (for example, preserved in Papias’ five-volume work *The Expositions of the Sayings of the Lord* from near the beginning of the second century). On Papias’ fragments, see Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 3rd edn, 2007), pp. 722–67.

⁵⁸ See e.g. Keith, *Jesus’ Literacy*, who argues strongly against the ‘criteria approach’ to the historical Jesus, which he claims to have derived its basic axioms from the early form critics.

of memory (Ch. 3.1); the bulk of the chapter consists of an analysis of the studies that apply the conceptual category of memory (Ch. 3.2: James D. G. Dunn; 3.6: Dale C. Allison), social memory theory (Ch. 3.3: Richard A. Horsley; 3.4: Rafael Rodríguez; 3.5: Chris Keith; 3.7: Anthony Le Donne), and various studies on orality and oral tradition (esp. Dunn, Horsley, Rodríguez) to the question of the transmission of the Jesus traditions. Also, the question of eyewitness testimony, the role of early Christian eyewitnesses, and the specific category of individual memory, eyewitness memory, is addressed in this chapter (Ch. 3.8: Samuel Byrskog, Richard Bauckham). The differences between the memory approach and the earlier scholarship are analyzed with regard to the models of transmission and the reconstructions of the media situation in the first-century context.⁵⁹

It is the purpose of this research-historical study to allow the different schools of thought and approaches to speak for themselves. First, the proponents of each approach are introduced with some necessary historical background. Second, the proponents' ideas are presented from the primary sources and subsequent accounts of them written by other scholars. Third, some critique and evaluation is provided on each individual view and each school of thought as a whole.⁶⁰ An in-depth analysis of the research-historical developments enables one to evaluate the contemporary state of historical Jesus research and to answer whether the memory approach constitutes a methodologically coherent school of thought in the field.

The main research questions of this dissertation are the following:

1. What is the significance of the early form-critical views and their alternatives on the question of the transmission of the Jesus traditions in early Christianity for historical Jesus research?
2. How does the memory approach attempt to distinguish itself from earlier scholarship, namely, form criticism and its alternatives, with regard

⁵⁹ By 'reconstructions of the media situation in the first-century context' I refer to the various scholarly reconstructions of, for instance, the levels of literacy and education, the relationship between orality and textuality, oral tradition and written texts, in the first-century context where the transmission of the Jesus traditions originally took place. Cf. e.g. Eve, *Behind*, pp. 1-14.

⁶⁰ I am aware of the difficulty of placing several individual scholars with distinctive ideas and viewpoints under one title. I intend to acknowledge the diversity within each school of thought while upholding certain (widely used) categories and general lines of thought in order to present a coherent account of the research-historical developments.

to the question of the transmission of the Jesus traditions and the task of reconstructing the historical Jesus?

3. Does the memory approach constitute a methodologically coherent school of thought in historical Jesus research?

Some of the subquestions that are discussed with regard to the memory approach are the following:

A. How are source-critical hypotheses, such as the Two-(or Four-)Source theory, viewed within the memory approach?

B. What is the role of the criteria of authenticity in studying the Jesus traditions within the memory approach?

C. Does the memory approach shed new light on the question about the distinction between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith?

D. Is the memory approach a new beginning or a dead end for historical Jesus research?

1.3 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This dissertation is not like many other theses as, instead of a cursory or introductory representation of the relevant research history, the bulk of the study is devoted to research-historical developments. Rather than directly applying any specific method or set of methods to the Jesus traditions⁶¹ in the primary early Christian sources, the dissertation critically discusses some of the historical-critical tools and methods that have been traditionally used and, more recently,

⁶¹ The plural form 'Jesus traditions' is employed to denote a middle ground between the idea of a single stream of 'tradition' from Jesus to the Gospels on one hand and the notion of specific 'trajectories' leading, for example, from Q to the Gospel of Thomas on the other. There are many identifiable paths of tradition in the Jesus traditions, but the concept of trajectory is theoretically problematic unless carefully defined. Especially Bultmann's notion of one specific 'Synoptic tradition' is also rejected on the grounds of the two-source theory, which includes at least two distinct streams (Mark and Q). A major concern for the present study is how the various paths of tradition are best described.

questioned in the study of the historical Jesus. This methodological focus is seen, for example, in the discussion on the memory approach which rejects the source-critical two-source theory and the criteria of authenticity. Also, this study evaluates the plausibility of the emphasis of the memory approach that the Jesus traditions should be construed, not primarily as literary sources, but *as memories* of Jesus or *instances of oral performances* of the Jesus traditions, but does not directly engage in a historical-critical analysis of those traditions.

The dissertation is based on a combination of paradigmatic and progressive understandings of scientific inquiry. There are distinguishable methodological shifts, which can be viewed in terms of the questioning and abandoning of certain shared axioms within the scholarly community. For instance, the turn from a classical form-critical understanding of the anonymous and flexible Jesus tradition (Dibelius, Bultmann) to a more controlled and inflexible idea of *memorization* and transmission (Gerhardsson) and, further, towards the memory approach's categorical inclusion of concepts like *orality* and *memory* (Dunn, Horsley, Rodríguez, Keith, Allison, Le Donne) and *eyewitness testimony* (Byrskog, Bauckham) to explain the processes of transmission, can be viewed as kinds of methodological shifts, while it should be recognized that new concepts and ideas are never universally adopted and accepted.⁶²

However, the cumulative and progressive nature of the scientific study is also recognized.⁶³ The different schools of thought are not always to be seen in complete opposition to each other, even when the central arguments of a previous 'school' are seriously questioned. More knowledge is gained about the topic under scrutiny through the introduction of new insights and methods by scholars who base their work, at least in part, on the work of their predecessors. For example, Birger Gerhardsson, who was very critical of the basic axioms of the form-critical understanding of the Jesus traditions by Dibelius and Bultmann, did not think

62 For example, Gerhardsson's ideas were not initially well received; also, there remains dissent from acceptance of the usefulness of the so-called 'memory studies' for studying the Jesus traditions and the historical Jesus.

63 Kankaanniemi, 'Will the Real Third Quest', pp. 102-23 (104): '[T]here is the idea of progression imbedded in the idea of science with an implicit axiom that we do know more about the subject than we did ten years ago. If none else, then at least some dysfunctional hypotheses have been excluded with all the money spent on the research projects. Very close to the idea of progression is the idealistic, yet not totally incorrect, understanding of scientific process as an accumulation of knowledge proceeding with time.' Also, see the referenced article for the defense of the progressive view of the accumulation of scientific knowledge: Alexander Bird, 'What is Scientific Progress?', *Nous* 41 (2007), pp. 92-117.

he was abandoning their insights altogether. Gerhardsson accepted the general pattern of the form-critical paradigm, namely, that the Synoptic tradition passed through a period of oral transmission.⁶⁴

While the social construction of the following research-historical account is acknowledged, the choice of the particular scholars and schools of thought is not intended to be arbitrary but to reflect an attempt towards an empirical and factual representation of the important research-historical turns and developments of distinct schools of thought.⁶⁵ Albeit much broader in scope, the account critically engages the basic chronology presented, for example, in Eric Eve,⁶⁶ starting from early German form criticism and working its way to the memory approach and the recent discussions on the role of memory therein. However, Eve's account is specifically focused on 'the oral tradition behind the Gospels' and is not engaged in historical Jesus research. In the conclusion of his study, Eve only outlines some rather vague guidelines for studying the historical Jesus.⁶⁷ Thus, a more specific set of guidelines for historical Jesus research is clearly on the agenda of this dissertation.

Regarding the starting point of his research-historical account, namely, the form-critical viewpoints of Dibelius and Bultmann, Eve states boldly, '[a]ny discussion of oral tradition has to begin with form criticism, for only by understanding form criticism's strengths and weaknesses can we appreciate what subsequent proposals are reacting to and how far they succeed in advancing our understanding.'⁶⁸ Such

64 See the discussion in ch. 2.2 below; e.g. Samuel Byrskog, 'Introduction', in Kelber and Byrskog (eds.), *Jesus in Memory: Traditions in Oral and Scribal Perspectives* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), pp. 1-20 (11).

65 Cf. Kankaanniemi, 'Will the Real Third Quest', pp. 102-23 (105-106, 109).

66 See Eve, *Behind*.

67 See Eve, *Behind*, pp. 13-14, on the consequences of Eve's account of the ancient media situation for the Jesus tradition; also, Eve, *Behind*, pp. 181-83, for the rather vague implications of Eve's account for the study of the historical Jesus. Eve employs the concept of memory (both individual and social memory) and concludes that, regardless of misremembering, distortions, reinterpretations, blending and confusion of separate incidents and even of the source of material, the historical Jesus is not 'forever lost to us' (p. 181). Eve (pp. 181-83) explicitly joins the scholars (Allison, Rodríguez), who believe that the use of the criteria of authenticity is fundamentally misconceived, and argues that recent memory studies suggest that '[a] sounder method might be to look for recurring features of the tradition, to start with the (perhaps rather hopeful) working assumption that the Gospel narratives have not totally distorted the memory of Jesus (and so can be used with caution to interpret the material they contain)...'

68 Eve, *Behind*, p. 15. See also Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 73-78. Christopher Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', in Kelber and Byrskog (eds.), *Jesus in Memory*, pp. 21-38, is also a telling critique of form criticism.

a strong statement is an exaggeration, since obviously a different starting point in the scholarly narrative could be chosen: for example, when discussing the oral tradition in relation to the Gospels, the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) is often credited as the first scholar to discuss an oral source behind the Gospels.⁶⁹ Basically, anyone at least from Reimarus onwards could be chosen as the starting point for the current study's research-historical account on the debate over the nature and transmission of the Jesus traditions, but spanning the research history all the way to the so-called First Quest or oral studies of the period would require a much more spacious treatment than is possible here.

All the same, bearing in mind the narrative of historical Jesus research, it is reasonable to also begin the present discussion with the 'No Quest' period scholars Dibelius and Bultmann, who paid much attention to what they construed as the pre-Gospel oral tradition, not only for the practical reason of space. Dibelius and Bultmann, who can be characterized as scholars with 'minimalist' or 'skeptical' viewpoints on the Jesus traditions and the historical Jesus,⁷⁰ have subsequently drawn much attention from the memory approach, which can be generally characterized as more of a 'maximalist' or 'optimistic' viewpoint of the historical Jesus.⁷¹ It has been pointed out that the form critics, specifically and more intensively than earlier scholarship, focused on the pre-Gospel oral tradition and the origin and sources of the Jesus tradition,⁷² which is a relevant

69 Herder is mentioned at the beginning of the accounts, for example, by Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 192-93; Birger Gerhardsson, 'The Secret of the Transmission of the Unwritten Jesus', *NTS* 51 (2005), pp. 1-18 (1).

70 Harvey K. McArthur, *In Search of the Historical Jesus* (New York: Scribner's, 1969), used exactly the categories of 'minimalist' and 'maximalist' in giving the two different stories of contemporary historical Jesus scholarship: first, along with Bultmann, there were the 'minimal lives' of Jesus arrived at with 'an anonymous oral tradition' approach by those who fell into the New Quest according to the standard meta-narrative (Günther Bornkamm, Reginald H. Fuller, Samuel Sandmel, pp. 161-93); secondly, there were the 'maximal lives' suggested by those who did not so much represent the New Quest of the standard meta-narrative (e.g. Vincent Taylor, Ethelbert Stauffer, pp. 194-206). T. W. Manson was viewed as a representative of 'substantial eyewitness material' approach to the Synoptic sources (pp. 23-32), while Birger Gerhardsson's view was labeled as 'professionally transmitted oral tradition' (pp. 33-40). See the discussion in Kankaanniemi, 'Will the Real Third Quest', pp. 102-23 (109-10).

71 See Ch. 3; e.g. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*; also Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, p. 33: 'contemporary media criticism is, in many ways, a reaction against twentieth-century form criticism'. By media criticism, Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, p. 22, refers to 'the analysis of the function and dynamics of various media of communication (speech, writing, ritual, etc.), and especially of the significance of shifts from one medium to another (e.g. from oral to written expression)'. The field of memory studies is clearly important for what Rodríguez considers media criticism. See Rodríguez, *Structuring*.

72 Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, p. 33.

focus with regard to the central concerns of the memory approach. Regardless of the skepticism imbedded in the *symbolic world*⁷³ of Dibelius and Bultmann, it was the *Jesus tradition* that they aimed to study *historically*.⁷⁴

Like any other scientific study, historical Jesus research is a field where one's cultural, social, religious, and scholarly identities play a significant role.⁷⁵ There is no 'natural' or 'pure' way of understanding, which would completely rid one from the theological, philosophical, cultural, and other attitudes present in his or her *symbolic world*.⁷⁶ While the principle of striving for 'objectivity' serves as a corrective and remains the goal, 'objectivity' is never fully achieved.⁷⁷ One must

73 For the concept *symbolic world*, see Kari Syreeni, 'Wonderlands: A Beginner's Guide to Three Worlds', *SEÅ* 64 (1999), pp. 33-46.

74 Cf. Theissen & Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, pp. 5-6: Dibelius and Bultmann were not only influenced by their predecessors and contemporaries like Wrede, Schmidt and Schweitzer but also drew from the dialectical theology and existentialist philosophy of the time (esp. Bultmann). Basically, dialectical theology insisted that God and the world only touch at the events of Jesus' cross and resurrection, in which God acts and which also forms the 'Christian kerygma'; this results in an uninterested, even skeptical, attitude towards the historical Jesus' deeds and teachings. The Christian existentialist viewpoint emphasized that human beings find 'authenticity' in answering to God's call in 'the kerygma of the cross and resurrection of Jesus'.

75 This aspect of the study of the historical Jesus has been recognized by many. See e.g. Holmén, *Covenant Thinking*, p. 8; Wright, *Victory of God*, pp. 117-21; Kankaanniemi, 'Will the Real Third Quest', pp. 102-23; Syreeni, 'The Identity', pp. 1-16 (15). Also, note the criticism by Syreeni (pp. 4-5), of James H. Charlesworth, who seems to use the label 'Jesus Research' to refer to the special, even superior, nature of recent (Third Quest?) scholarship, while deeming the earlier periods as inferior; it should be acknowledged that, despite the development of methods and new archaeological, sociological and other findings, recent scholarship stands on the shoulders of the previous generations of scholars.

76 While not discussed further in this study, the hermeneutical model of the three worlds articulated by Syreeni, 'Wonderlands: A Beginner's Guide to Three Worlds', pp. 33-46; *idem*, 'The Identity', pp. 1-16 (2 n. 6), is helpful at pointing out the interactions between the levels of *textual world*, *symbolic world*, and *real world* of the texts and their interpreters. The *textual world* refers to the textual reality which can be described and analyzed with linguistic, rhetorical and stylistic methods; the *symbolic world* entails the invisible social, psychological, and cognitive processes which are present both in everyday interaction and when producing and interpreting a text (or a research history, for that matter). The text has multiple contexts in which it is read during history. The *symbolic world* functions much like Berger and Luckmann's notion of the *symbolic universe*: the *real world* refers to the 'concrete world', which can be described and studied with natural scientific methods. See Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*. Even though these levels of reality inevitably interact with each other, one must make a conscious effort not to forget the otherness of the objects of study (e.g. historical sources, concepts etc.) by reducing them to the subject of the study (e.g. the historian's mindset, identity, favorite ideas).

77 Epistemologically, this study is grounded in a notion of complexity between 'data' and 'fact', namely, the dynamic structure of consciousness in Bernard Lonergan, 'Cognitional Structure', in *Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1988), pp. 205-21: when approaching data, the human mind works through a complex process of experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding. Also, see Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), p. 5ff.

In Lonerganian terms, Ben Meyer, *Reality and Illusion in New Testament Scholarship: A*

not lose sight of the epistemological starting point of any historical study: it can, at best, only point to probabilities.⁷⁸ If the current scholar's identity is somehow reflected in this study, it hopefully functions as 'a reliable source' rather than a hindrance when studying the research-historical developments of historical Jesus research.⁷⁹

Primer in Critical Realist Hermeneutics (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1994), p. 142, argues against both naïve realism and overemphasized subjectivity for a form of 'critical realism', which insists 'on the empirical (data), the intelligent (questioning and answering), the rational (the grasp of evidence as sufficient or insufficient, the personal act of commitment) as – all of them together – entering into true judgement'. The citation also in Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 110. In his *magnum opus* on the historical Jesus, Dunn (p. 111) adopts the basic thrust of Lonergan's epistemology: '[T]he data themselves are never "raw": they have already been "selected" by the historical process; they are "selected" again by the way they have been discovered and brought to present notice; they come with a context, or various contexts already predisposing interpretation; the interpreter's framework of understanding or particular thesis causes certain data to appear more significant than others...But all that being said, there is an otherness, an "over-against-us" character to the data, and also to the events to which they bear witness. And the task of seeking to describe and evaluate the data and to reach some sort of judgment regarding the facts...is not only viable, but in the case of the great event(s) of Jesus necessary.'

On 'critical realism', also see Ben Meyer, *Critical Realism in the New Testament* (Princeton Theological Monographs, 17; Allison Park: Pickwick, 1989); Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 110-11; N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 1992), pp. 31-46. For a recent attempt at appropriating critical realism for historical Jesus research, see Bernier, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*; on Wright's critical realism, see Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, 'Critical Realism in Context: N. T. Wright's Historical Method and Analytic Epistemology', *JSHJ* 13 (2015), pp. 276-306; Jonathan Bernier, 'A Response to Porter and Pitts' "Wright's Critical Realism in Context"', *JSHJ* 14 (2016), pp. 186-93; and the critical response to Bernier by S. E. Porter and A. W. Pitts, 'Has Jonathan Bernier Rescued Critical Realism?', *JSHJ* 14 (2016), pp. 241-47.

In contrast, see the hermeneutical discussion from the viewpoint of postmodern historiography in Anthony Le Donne, *The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Son of David* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2009), pp. 1-39. Specifically, Anthony Le Donne, *The Historical Jesus: What Can We Know and How Can We Know It?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), pp. 3-10 (5-7), 134: '[Within a postmodern paradigm] [t]he historian's job is to tell the stories of memory in a way that most plausibly accounts for the available mnemonic evidence... the historical Jesus is not veiled by the interpretations of him. He is most available for analysis when these interpretations are most pronounced. Therefore, the historical Jesus is clearly seen through lenses of editorial agenda, theological reflection, and intentional counter-memory.'

I find Dunn's understanding and application of 'critical realism' to the study of the historical Jesus to come very close to Anthony Le Donne's view of 'postmodern historiography'.

78 For an apt hermeneutical framework for historical criticism, see Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 99-136 (103-5); on probabilities, see e.g. Meier, *A Marginal Jew, I*, pp. 167-68.

79 See Syreeni, 'The Identity', pp. 1-16 (15): 'Preunderstanding is simply the prerequisite of understanding. In happy cases, a scholar's personal identity is a resource in finding aspects of the historical reality that mainstream scholarship tends to ignore.'

2 FORM CRITICISM AND ITS CRITICS

2.1 FORM CRITICISM

In order to understand the current state of historical Jesus research and, more specifically, what is in this study categorized as the memory approach to the study of the historical Jesus and the Jesus traditions, one needs to understand the views of the early form criticism of the twentieth century on the pre-Gospel oral Jesus tradition and its transmission.⁸⁰ While the abandonment of ‘the First Quest’ (hence, ‘the No Quest’ at least in German scholarship) can be seen in the background of the discussion of the works of both Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann, it is sufficient for the purposes of this study to acknowledge that the early form critics argued for a much more ‘minimalist’ view of the historical Jesus than several contemporary and subsequent scholars.⁸¹ After the beginning of the twentieth century, in the wake of Albert Schweitzer and William Wrede, the form criticism (*Formgeschichte*, ‘form history’) of the Gospels was first espoused by Karl Ludwig Schmidt⁸² and, most notably, Dibelius and Bultmann,⁸³ who aimed

80 In their studies of the Jesus traditions, the proponents of the memory approach react directly to some of the influential ideas of Dibelius and Bultmann. See e.g. Keith, *Jesus’ Literacy*; Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*.

81 See McArthur, *In Search of the Historical Jesus*, pp. 161-206, who used the categories of ‘minimal lives’ and ‘maximal lives’ to denote the two trends of the historical Jesus scholarship, placing Bultmann into the former. Of the contemporaries of Dibelius and Bultmann, one may place into the category of ‘maximalist’ view of the historical Jesus, for example, Vincent Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition: Eight Lectures* (London: Macmillan, 2nd edn, 1949); Thomas W. Manson, ‘The Quest of the Historical Jesus – Continued,’ in *Studies in the Gospels and Epistles* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1962).

82 Karl Ludwig Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu*. Schmidt’s initial work was never translated into English. For a thorough account and critique, see David R. Hall, *The Gospel Framework: Fiction or Fact?* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998). The three form critics were seen together at a very early stage, for example, by Henry J. Cadbury, ‘Between Jesus and the Gospels,’ *HTR* 16 (1923), pp. 81-92, who affirmed the basic tenets of the then-new method. Though it has been rightly noted that ‘Schmidt’s influence is greatly eclipsed’ by Dibelius and Bultmann (Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 33, 123), the term ‘separate oral units’ nevertheless stemmed from his argument, which proposed a radical ‘rejection of the outline’ of the Gospels. Schmidt argued for a Gospel tradition that consisted of fragments in free circulation; the Evangelists were responsible for the structure of the Gospels; as a whole, a life of Jesus or a chronological structure of the story of Jesus, could not be detected in the sense of biography; the Gospel tradition consisted of single stories, which Schmidt labeled *pericopae* (singular, *pericope*); these stories could only rarely be placed in spatial-temporal contexts. See Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, pp. 12-13; Eve, *Behind*, pp. 15-16; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 74.

83 See Martin Dibelius, *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums* (Tübingen: Mohr, 2nd rev. edn, 1933); *idem*, *From Tradition to Gospel* (trans. B. L. Woolf; Cambridge: James Clark, 2nd rev. edn, 1971);

to study the Jesus traditions historically in a context of skepticism toward the historical Jesus.⁸⁴ According to the basic assumption of form criticism, there was a discoverable link between the form of separate units of oral Jesus tradition and their social setting (*Sitz im Leben*, 'setting in life') in early Christianity. *Sitz im Leben* was used by form critics as a *sociological* concept which referred to 'typical uses to which the material was put by the community, such as preaching, teaching, apologetics, argumentation and polemics'.⁸⁵ The separate units of tradition could be 'classified according to their form'.⁸⁶ Form criticism aimed to elaborate the origin and history of the material by comparing the Gospel forms with Jewish and Hellenistic parallels and by attempting to deduce how the written Gospel form differed from the 'pure oral form'.⁸⁷ Despite 'a general family resemblance', Dibelius and Bultmann cannot be lumped together as a completely coherent group, as will become apparent in the following analysis.⁸⁸

2.1.1 MARTIN DIBELIUS

Despite Schmidt's obvious importance, Martin Dibelius (1883–1947) is usually considered the pioneer of the form-critical study of the Synoptic Gospels. Dibelius mentioned Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), Franz Overbeck (1837–1905), Georg Heinrici (1844–1915), and Hermann Gunkel (1862–1932) as some of the influences behind his work.⁸⁹ For Dibelius, Herder's notion of folk poetry was important, since it underscored 'das naivschöpferische Element in den biblischen Schriften'.⁹⁰ As time went on, some of those writings, especially the ones from the first century CE, began to be dealt with not as 'Literatur...', die vom Willen

Rudolf Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhöck & Ruprecht, 3rd edn, 1958); *idem*, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (trans. J. Marsh; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963). Schmidt's work had not yet been published, when Dibelius was writing the first edition of his seminal work *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums*.

84 Theissen & Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, pp. 5-6; also, McArthur, *In Search of the Historical Jesus*, pp. 161-206.

85 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 15-16.

86 Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, p. 10.

87 Eve, *Behind*, p. 16; on the Rabbinic and Hellenistic parallels see, e.g. Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 130–78. One of Bultmann's main concerns was to study the relationship of the primitive Palestinian and Hellenistic Christianity (see e.g. Bultmann, *Geschichte*, p. 5).

88 Samuel Byrskog, *Story as History – History as Story* (WUNT, 123; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), pp. 34-37 (34).

89 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 4-6.

90 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, p. 4. Dibelius, *From Tradition*, p. 5: 'the naïve and creative element in the biblical writings'.

der Schriftsteller geschaffen wird, sondern um Gestaltungen, die aus Dasein und Betätigung literaturfremder Kreise mit Notwendigkeit hervorgehen.⁹¹

Further, Overbeck's differentiation of primitive Christian literature from patristic literature, as well as Heinrici's definition of the Synoptic Gospels as *Sammelgut* ('collected material' as opposed to 'literature proper'), stimulated Dibelius' formulation of the form-critical method. In the field of Old Testament study, the work of Herrmann Gunkel had proved that it was indeed possible to analyze such a *Sammelgut* and trace it back to the minutest perceptible forms of tradition.⁹² Dibelius described Gunkel's method in the following way: '...indem aus der Form auf die ursprüngliche Bestimmung und praktische Verwendung des Stückes, auf seinen Sitz im Leben geschlossen wurde, gelangte man zu einer im eigentlichen Sinn formgeschichtlichen Behandlung der volkstümlichen Gattungen, die aus den Schriften des Alten Testaments erhoben werden konnten.'⁹³

Basically, Dibelius had a twofold objective. First, he sought to explain the origin of the Jesus tradition by penetrating into a period previous to the writing of the Gospels and their written sources. Secondly, he attempted to clarify the intention and interest of the earliest tradition. For what purpose did the first churches recount the stories about Jesus, pass them from mouth to mouth as independent narratives, or copy them? Further, the purpose was to ask why the churches would collect the sayings of Jesus, learn them by heart, and write them down.⁹⁴

According to Dibelius, the Evangelists were collectors and editors of the tradition rather than real authors of literature; the Gospels and any literary sources behind them were only *Kleinliteratur*, unliterary writing not intended for publication. The Jesus tradition was transmitted by anonymous individuals with

91 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 4–5. Dibelius, *From Tradition*, p. 5: '[not as] literature created by the mind of the author, but formulations which necessarily come from the presence and activity of a circle strange to literature.'

92 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, p. 5. For the roots of form criticism of the Synoptic Gospels in Old Testament scholarship and, especially the work of Herrmann Gunkel, see Martin J. Buss, *Biblical Form Criticism in Its Context* (JSOTSup, 274; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), ch. 12; Robert C. Culley, 'Oral Tradition and Biblical Studies,' in John Miles Foley (ed.), *Oral-Formulaic Theory* (New York/London: Garland, 1990), pp. 189-225 (189-200).

93 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, p. 5; *idem*, *From Tradition*, pp. 5–6: 'A method of handling popular categories in accordance with the history of their form (in proper sense of the term), i.e. in accordance with the way in which these categories could be distinguished in the writings of the Old Testament, was only reached when, from the form in which the detail was cast, a conclusion could be drawn as to the original purpose and the practical application of the detail, in a word, as to its "Sitz im Leben," or place in the stream of life.'

94 Dibelius, *From Tradition*, p. v.

no literary intent, who sometimes introduced creative changes into the traditions. These individuals did not make personal impressions on the tradition, which developed according to its own impersonal laws. These laws made it possible to determine each tradition's *Sitz im Leben*. The different forms were developed in accordance with the practical uses into which they were put. Dibelius modeled a growing tradition, which would be expanded, for example, by conglomeration, secular motifs and narrative techniques, and mythological material.⁹⁵

Dibelius was not satisfied with '[a]n analytical method which starts from the texts and goes back to the sources and isolated elements of tradition', but rather preferred 'a constructive method which attempts to include the conditions and activities of life' of the first Christian communities.⁹⁶ Dibelius asked how these conditions and activities correlated with the forms of the Gospel material. He took for granted that Jesus' words, actions and the narrative of his death would be first rehearsed in the circle of Jesus' disciples, who then propagated the traditions in different settings of preaching.⁹⁷

Preaching was the primary use of the tradition for Dibelius; it included all forms of Christian propaganda. The tradition was present in 'Missionspredigt, kultische und katechetische Predigt'.⁹⁸ Dibelius viewed the phrase 'eyewitnesses and ministers of the word' in the Lukan prologue (Lk. 1:2) as a reference to a single group of early Christian preachers,⁹⁹ whose preaching set in motion the growth of the tradition from which the Gospel material was later derived by the Evangelists.¹⁰⁰

It was not the task of the preachers to explain the life of Jesus ('das Leben Jesu erzählen') but to proclaim the salvation which had come about in Jesus Christ ('das in Jesus Christus erschienene Heil').¹⁰¹ Dibelius viewed the mission speeches

95 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 1-8; cf. Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, pp. 11-12; Eve, *Behind*, pp. 16-17, 20.

96 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, p. 10; *idem*, *From Tradition*, p. 10; cf. Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 5-6.

97 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 9-10.

98 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 9-16 (13-14).

99 Cf. Eve, *Behind*, p. 17. Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, p. 11, notes, nevertheless, that 'es kann aber auch nicht seine Meinung sein, daß beide Gruppen identisch waren, denn es hat natürlich in steigendem Maße Prediger gegeben, die keine Augenzeugenschaft für sich in Anspruch nehmen konnten. Aber für den Anfang scheint es ihm festzustehen, daß die, die es erlebt hatten, es auch verkündigten, als „Diener des Wortes“. Sie waren die Missionare, Prediger und Lehrer, die die Botschaft von Jesus Christus hinaustrugen, um die Welt zu gewinnen.'

100 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 9-14; *idem*, *From Tradition*, pp. 11-15.

101 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, p. 14.

in Acts as representatives of early Christian sermons which contained this very message, the early Christian Kerygma; repetition of exhortation to repentance and conversion was central to these sermons which were the author's way of emphasizing 'die Einheit der christlichen Predigt' over 'die Verschiedenheit'.¹⁰² Dibelius did not grant much historical value to the sermons in Acts, but rather emphasized the author's role in composing them after consciously accepting a scheme of early Christian sermon, which consisted of the Kerygma, that is, the preaching of Jesus Christ, scriptural proof from the OT, and the exhortation.¹⁰³

Dibelius argued, further, that Paul used technical terms for receiving and handing on of traditions; a clear example of this was 1 Cor. 15.3-5, in which Paul seemed to be transmitting a rather fixed formula he had received from elsewhere. The contents of this tradition varied within different churches (Palestinian Jewish, Hellenistic Jewish, Gentile), but without exception included the Passion account at the center of the Kerygma. Different laws would have applied to the handing on of narrative material and Jesus' sayings.¹⁰⁴

Dibelius carried out an analysis by which he was able to classify five different forms in the tradition: paradigms, tales (*Novellen*), legends, exhortations (*Paränese*), and myths. First, the paradigms were the most primitive form, which originally existed as independent, brief, and simple narratives and were formulated by the eyewitnesses of Jesus' ministry; they were relatively reliable historically. Nevertheless, the paradigms came into being for the purpose of preaching and, thus, did not convey 'neutral information'. Since the paradigms were formulated for preaching, they did not have deductible original pure form; they tended to expand in the course of the tradition. The paradigms always end in the high point of either a word or a deed of Jesus; they offer no biographical material. Only so much detail is provided as is necessary for the deed or word of Jesus. The actors in the paradigms function as impersonal types, whose words are only significant for preaching in order to convert and instruct..¹⁰⁵ Dibelius gave eight examples of the

102 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 15-16. Cf. the speeches by Peter and Paul in e.g. Acts 2; 3; 14.15-17; 17.22b-31.

103 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 15-16.

104 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 16-22. Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, p. 21, stresses the centrality of the Passion narrative for preaching: 'Wenn die Predigt Zeugnis vom Heil war, so konnte unter allen Erzählungsstoffen nur diesem einen, der Leidensgeschichte, tragende Bedeutung in der Verkündigung zukommen.'

105 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 34-66; *idem, From Tradition*, pp. 37-69. Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, pp. 63-87, labeled this form the *Pronouncement Story*.

paradigms, which for him represented ‘the type in noteworthy purity’¹⁰⁶ and ten stories which were of ‘a less pure type’¹⁰⁷.

Secondly, the tales consisted of the miracle stories that were transmitted primarily for the sake of the miracle they narrated.¹⁰⁸ As Dibelius put it, ‘Die Novellen handeln von Jesus dem Thaumaturgen... Was dort [in den Paradigmen] Gelegenheit ist, bei der Jesus Forderung und Verkündigung ausspricht, ist hier Selbstzweck, der im Mittelpunkt der Schilderung steht und alles beherrscht: das Wunder.’¹⁰⁹

The tales were individual stories that were complete in themselves; they were not didactic or conditioned by the praxis of preaching in any way, and also lacked the paradigmatic focus. Dibelius argued that a separate group of storytellers developed the tales, both as narratives for the sake of narrative art and as examples for Christian miracle-workers. While some of the tales may originally have circulated as paradigms and only later have become expanded narratives, other tales were affected by secular motifs: Dibelius referred to a tendency of folk tradition to adopt contemporary stories of miracle-workers to define well-known figures.¹¹⁰ Dibelius listed nine tales in Mark,¹¹¹ five longer miracle stories in John

106 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, p. 40; the expression is original in the English edition, Dibelius, *From Tradition*, p. 43. The healing of the paralytic (Mk 2.1ff.), the question of fasting (Mk 2.18ff.), the rubbing of the ears of corn (Mk 2.23ff.), the healing of the withered hand (Mk 3.1ff.), the relatives of Jesus (Mk 3.20ff., 30ff.), blessing the children (Mk 10.13ff.), the tribute money (Mk 12.13ff.), the anointing in Bethany (Mk 14.3ff.).

107 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, p. 40; the expressions about ‘purity’ of the forms are original in the English edition, Dibelius, *From Tradition*, p. 43. The healing in the synagogue (Mk 1.23ff.), the call of Levi (Mk 2.13ff.), Jesus in Nazareth (Mk 6.1ff.), the rich young man (Mk 10.17ff.), the sons of Zebedee (Mk 10.35ff.), the blind man of Jericho (Mk 10.46ff.), cleansing the temple (Mk 11.15ff.), the question of the Sadducees (Mk 12.18ff.), the inhospitable Samaritans (Lk. 9.51ff.), and the man with the dropsy (Lk. 14.1ff.).

108 Dibelius had established some of the miracle narratives as paradigms, since he believed they were not told for the sake of the miracle but rather underscored, in a paradigmatic manner, a saying of Jesus or a reaction to which the miracle led.

109 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, p. 76.

110 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 66-100; *idem*, *From Tradition*, pp. 70-103. On the historical reliability of the tales, Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, p. 99, comments: ‘Der farbige Realismus der Novellen entspricht nicht den Bedürfnissen der Predigt, sondern den Erwartungen von Menschen, die an ähnliche Geschichten von Wundertätern, Propheten, Lehrern gewöhnt waren. Darum ist diese Art als Ganzes minder geschichtlich als die paradigmatische. Immerhin lassen sich, wenn einer Novelle ein Paradigma zugrunde liegt, historische Grundlagen oder Ansatzpunkte vermuten. Und nur wenn eine nichtchristliche Geschichte als Urbild der christlichen Novelle glaubhaft gemacht werden kann, ist die Zuverlässigkeit der christlichen Erzählung von vornherein in Frage gestellt.’

111 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 67-68. The leper (Mk 1.40-45), the storm (Mk 4.35-41), the demons and the swine (Mk 5.1-20), the daughter of Jairus and the woman with the issue (Mk 5.21-43),

narrated in 'the tale style',¹¹² and one story in Luke.¹¹³

Thirdly, Dibelius classified as legends those narratives which neither represented a Christian edifying formulation like the paradigms nor had been developed according to the secular narrative motifs of the tales.¹¹⁴ The legends were described by Dibelius as 'fromme Erzählungen von einem heiligen Mann, an dessen Taten und Schicksalen man Interesse hat'.¹¹⁵ The legends found in the Gospel tradition intended to meet a twofold purpose: first, they narrated something of the virtues and fate of the people surrounding Jesus; secondly, they intended 'to know Jesus' in a similarly glorifying fashion.¹¹⁶ While Dibelius thought that the legends often contained 'ungeschichtlichen Mehrung des Wunderhaften' and were expanded by biographical analogies when defining the life of the hero, he did not deny the possibility of historicity of all legends; historical confirmation simply was not the interest of the narrators of the legends.¹¹⁷

Dibelius argued that, in addition to the three aforementioned narrative categories, there was paraenetic material, that is, the exhortations or sayings of Jesus that appear outside a narrative framework.¹¹⁸ These words of Jesus were,

the feeding of the five thousand (Mk 6.35-44), the walking on the sea (Mk 6.45-52), the man, deaf and dumb (Mk 7.32-37), the blind man of Bethsaida (Mk 8.22-26), the epileptic boy (Mk 9.14-29).

112 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 67-68. The marriage at Cana (Jn 2.1ff.), the son of the royal official (Jn 4.46ff.), the lame man at Bethzatha (Jn 5.1ff.), the man born blind (Jn 9.1ff.), the raising of Lazarus (Jn 11.1ff.).

113 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 67-68. The raising of the widow's son at Nain (Lk. 7.11ff.).

114 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 101-29; *idem*, *From Tradition*, pp. 104-32.

115 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, p. 101; *idem*, *From Tradition*, p. 104: 'religious narratives of a saintly man in whose works and fate interest is taken'.

116 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, p. 112. In the Gospels, examples of legends of the former kind (of the people surrounding Jesus) include, for example, Peter's walking on the Sea (Mt. 14.28-33), the incident of Nathanael (Jn 1.45-51), the story of Zacchaeus (Lk. 19.1-10), and the passage about Martha and Mary (Lk. 10.38-42); the legends of latter kind (of Jesus himself) include, in Dibelius' estimation, Jesus' birth narratives (as four independent legends), Jesus as twelve years old (Lk. 2.41ff.), and the narrative of the thankful Samaritan (Lk. 17.12-19). See Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 117-24.

117 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 105-6.

118 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 234-65; *idem*, *From Tradition*, pp. 233-65. On Dibelius' notion of paraenesis, see Wiard Popkes, 'Paraenesis in the New Testament', in James Starr & Troels Engberg-Pedersen (eds.), *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context* (BZNW, 125; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), pp. 13-46 (14-15). Popkes points out that Dibelius was a major contributor to the idea that paraenesis can be defined as a *genre* and a *literary form*, which makes it possible to speak of certain texts as paraenetic. Dibelius argued that paraenesis is a series of disconnected exhortations, which were composed and used like a 'treasure box'. The unifying formal element is the 'einheitliche Adressierung' ('uniform group of addressees'). However, Dibelius' view has been problematized in subsequent scholarship. The notion of paraenesis as a literary genre (a *Gattung*) is not maintainable due to (1) the absence of the term παραίνεσις in

accordingly, transmitted separately by a different law from that of the narrative material, which Mark included in his Gospel; there was an early tradition of Jesus' words circulating within the primitive circles of missionary activity.¹¹⁹ These words of Jesus were handed down by Christian teachers, and gradually gathered into collections, such as Q (the literary source said to have been used by Matthew and Luke in addition to Mark).¹²⁰

Dibelius used the paraenetic material found, for example, in Paul, James, 1 Peter, 1 Clement, the Didache, and the Shepherd of Hermas,¹²¹ to exemplify the primitive Christian teachers' habit of spreading the ethical teaching, while preserving and gathering, consciously or unconsciously, the Jesus tradition.¹²² The collections of the words of Jesus could be used as 'einen Schatz von Mahnungen und Belehrungen', directed towards 'die verschiedensten alltäglichen Verhältnisse'.¹²³ Dibelius argued that Jesus' words were originally gathered together for a hortatory end, to give the churches advice, help, and commandment 'mit den Worten des Meisters'.¹²⁴ All this material was viewed as being inspired by the Spirit or the risen Lord; thus the primitive Christians did not distinguish between the preaching of Jesus and the preaching *about* Jesus; the material consisted of both genuine words of Jesus and other Christian exhortation.¹²⁵

In addition, Dibelius argued for the existence and gradual increase of an early Christ mythology.¹²⁶ He first described the non-mythological nature of the oldest witnesses of the formation of the Gospel tradition, the paradigms, and

the works of the classical period (e.g. Hesiod, *Erga*), (2) the insufficiency of the proof-texts used (e.g. Ps-Isocrates, *To Demonicus*) and (3) the lack of comparable ancient literary productions. See Popkes, *Paraenesis*, pp. 13-46 (15, n. 10-12). Popkes, *Paraenesis*, pp. 13-46 (41, 42-43) concludes that too strict definitions should be avoided for paraenesis, yet proposes a definition for the New Testament usage (including e.g. Mt. 5-7 in the Jesus traditions): 'Paraenesis is [1] clear, concrete, benevolent guidance that [2] reminds of practices to be pursued or avoided in the Christian way of life, [3] expresses a shared, articulated world view, and [4] does not anticipate disagreement.'

119 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 234-39.

120 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, p. 237, 244-47.

121 Examples include Rom. 12.14; 13; Jas 5.12; *Did.* 1.3ff., etc. These exhortations were not explicitly attributed to Jesus as in the Gospels.

122 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 239-44.

123 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, p. 241; *idem*, *From Tradition*, p. 240: 'a storehouse of warnings and teachings directed... towards the most varied everyday relationships...' Cf. Popkes, 'Paraenesis in the New Testament', pp. 13-46, and the discussion above.

124 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, p. 247.

125 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, p. 242. This viewpoint was later embraced, for example, by Dennis Nineham, *The Gospel of St Mark* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963).

126 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 265-87; *idem*, *From Tradition*, pp. 266-86.

pointed out that the story of Jesus in itself did not have a mythological origin; within the tradition, the mythological formulation was not thoroughgoing.¹²⁷ However, the early Christian preachers and teachers, including Paul, created 'ein Christus-mythus', which rested to an extent upon the notion of dualism between the revelation of the Son of God and the human tradition of His earthly life.¹²⁸ Mark, who was the first to create a connected account of Jesus' entire ministry, expressed a Christ-mythology in passages like the Transfiguration of Jesus (Mk 9.2-13); he had at least a need of making room within the earthly life of Jesus for a mythology of Christ.¹²⁹ Dibelius sums up his view of the relationship of the tradition within the Gospel to the Christian mythology:

Also ist das Markus-Evangelium seinem letzten Gepräge nach gewiß ein mythisches Buch — aber was von der Prägung gilt, gilt nicht vom Material: die in dem Evangelium gesammelte Tradition ist nur zum kleinsten Teil, in den Epiphanie-Geschichten und in einigen Novellen, mythischen Charakters; in der Mehrzahl ihrer Stücke erscheint Jesus nicht als mythische Person.¹³⁰

Dibelius argued that Mark was the first collector of material who created a connected account of Jesus' entire ministry in the Greek language, while there may have been predecessors who collected sayings material. Dibelius viewed Mark as a relatively faithful user and reproducer of the tradition: while making way for the possibility of viewing Jesus as the Messiah, he indicated why Jesus was not recognized as such.¹³¹ Mark's Gospel thus constituted a book of secret epiphanies.¹³² The Passion story was an exception to the rule that the Jesus tradition originally circulated as isolated units; it functioned, in its own category, as an early connected account.¹³³

127 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 265-68.

128 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 265-68. Dibelius, *From Tradition*, p. xv, defines myth as 'a story which deals with a particular relation and action of a god'.

129 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 275-77.

130 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, p. 279.

131 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 225-26, referred to the idea of 'Das Messiasgeheimnis in der Evangelien' by Wrede.

132 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 219-34; *idem*, *From Tradition*, pp. 218-30. Eve, *Behind*, p. 20: 'unrecognized revelations of God at work in Jesus'.

133 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 178-218; *idem*, *From Tradition*, pp. 178-217; so already Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu*; cf. Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, p. 13.

While outlining the different forms of the tradition quite specifically, Dibelius was less explicit about his model of oral tradition and the relationship between oral and written stages. Dibelius' model was focused on the motifs and impersonal laws, which caused the different forms of tradition to be transmitted within early Christianity, where there was a strong eschatological expectation concerning the near future.¹³⁴ Dibelius referred to folklore, and especially Herder's understanding of it, to explain *what the different types or forms of the tradition were like*, but he paid less attention to the processes of folkloric transmission of traditions.¹³⁵ Regarding the laws which the different forms of tradition followed, Dibelius used the folkloric understanding of the community as the impersonal transmitter of the tradition; it was the entire community, or the rather vague groups of which that community consisted (preachers, teachers, storytellers), which collected, shaped and passed on the Jesus tradition, ruling out any individual influence on the tradition. Dibelius' work will be critiqued below after presenting the views of Rudolf Bultmann, the other major proponent of early form criticism.

2.1.2 RUDOLF BULTMANN

Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976) mentions William Wrede (1859–1906), Herrmann Gunkel and Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918) as some of his major influences.¹³⁶ Wellhausen, who is better known for his work on the Old Testament, had shown in his studies on the Synoptic Gospels that the tradition consisted of individual stories or groups of stories, which had been joined together in the Gospels by the editors. Bultmann valued Wellhausen's conclusion that it was not enough to assume that these editors used simply an oral tradition. It was necessary to discover what the original units of the Synoptic Gospels were, both sayings and stories, to try to establish what their historical setting was.¹³⁷

Bultmann shared many of his ideas with Dibelius. He believed that there was an analogy between the Synoptic tradition and folklore's theory of the formation of tradition by an anonymous community. The tradition had developed according to impersonal laws. The editors of the Gospels did not produce proper

134 Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 9-10, 241; *idem*, *From Tradition*, pp. 10-11.

135 For Herder's view, see Werner G. Kümmel, *The New Testament: The History of its Problems* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), pp. 79-83; also, Eve, *Behind*, p. 20.

136 Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 1-3; *idem*, *History*, pp. 1-3.

137 Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 2-3.

literature, but only *Kleinliteratur*. Bultmann also saw a correlation between the forms of the tradition and their sociological settings; *Sitz im Leben* was not an individual historical event, but a typical situation or occupation in the life of the community.¹³⁸

Despite the family resemblance, Bultmann's methodology differed from that of Dibelius. As opposed to Dibelius' 'constructive' method, Bultmann's approach was 'analytic' in that he preferred to start with analyzing the particular elements in the Gospel tradition, aiming to deduce life-settings from the analysis, rather than assuming the typical uses of the tradition a priori. Bultmann did recognize the inevitable circularity of the form-critical task: 'Aus den Formen der literarischen Überlieferung soll auf die Motive des Gemeinschaftslebens zurückgeschlossen werden, und aus dem Gemeinschaftsleben heraus sollen die Formen verständlich gemacht werden.'¹³⁹

More than Dibelius, Bultmann emphasized the necessity of making judgements about the historical authenticity of the material. Generally, his more thorough analysis of the pericopae, which aimed to assign each unit of the tradition to either a Palestinian or a Hellenistic setting within early Christianity, led to skeptical conclusions. While Dibelius had been relatively optimistic about the importance and historical reliability of certain elements in the pre-Synoptic tradition (for example, the paradigms), Bultmann argued that one can know practically nothing about the life and person of Jesus.¹⁴⁰ Of course, Dibelius' overall conclusion about the historical Jesus was not much more optimistic.¹⁴¹ This conclusion was understandable within the *symbolic world* of the time, influenced by the exegetical and theological-philosophical currents that had initially led to the collapse of the First Quest.¹⁴²

Bultmann classified the Gospel pericopae as apophthegms (*Apophthegmata*), dominical sayings (*Herrenworte*), similitudes (*Gleichnisse*), miracle stories

138 Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 1-8; *idem*, *History*, pp. 1-7.

139 Bultmann, *Geschichte*, p. 5; *idem*, *History*, p. 5: 'The forms of the literary tradition must be used to establish the influences operating in the life of the community, and the life of the community must be used to render the forms themselves intelligible.'

140 Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 5-7, with judgements about the material throughout the work.

141 See Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, p. 300: 'Von jenen erwähnten Ausnahmen abgesehen, verweigern unsere Texte die Antwort, wenn man sie nach dem Charakter, nach der „Persönlichkeit“, nach den Eigenschaften Jesu fragt.'

142 Cf. e.g. Theissen & Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, p. 6, on the dialectical and existentialist viewpoints, which influenced the early form critics' work along with the historical-critical viewpoints of, for instance, Wrede and Schweitzer.

(*Wundergeschichten*), and historical stories and legends (*Geschichtserzählung und Legende*). The apophthegms were Jesus' sayings that were set in a brief context. They corresponded to Dibelius' paradigms, but were not developed in preaching, but rather in argumentation, apologetics and polemics of the Palestinian church; debates with outsiders and settling of issues within the community were the contexts of origin. Bultmann argued that the apophthegms had a Palestinian origin, since they were formulated in the rabbinic style and did not include many Hellenistic ideas. Some of them may have included genuine sayings of Jesus, or at least may have demonstrated the overall sense of his sayings. The narrative settings had been created to clarify the views that the Christian community wanted to ascribe to Jesus. In accordance with his analytical method, he concluded all this from the content of the apophthegms. For example, it seemed implausible to Bultmann that, in Mk 2.23-28, the Pharisees would be in a cornfield on the Sabbath, waiting to catch the disciples of Jesus plucking ears of corn; they protest against the disciples ('the post-Easter community'), but Jesus nevertheless provides the vindication.¹⁴³

Bultmann divided other sayings of Jesus into subcategories, being more specific in his analysis of the sayings material than Dibelius.¹⁴⁴ The logia, which depict Jesus as the teacher of wisdom, were parallel to the similar sayings in the

143 Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 8-73; *idem*, *History*, pp. 11-69. Contrary to Bultmann's skeptical view, it has been argued by Sven-Olav Back, 'Jesus and the Sabbath', in T. Holmén & S. E. Porter (eds.), *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus* (4 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 3:2597-633 (2607-8), that the charge of the Pharisees against the disciples is historically plausible; plucking was commonly viewed as harvesting, and the prohibition of harvesting (Exod. 34.21) was observed by both the 'priestly' and 'non-priestly' schools of thought, including the Pharisees; the action of plucking of grain on the Sabbath was considered מְלָאכָה ('work') and a violation of both the Pharisaic and common Sabbath halakhah. Back, 'Jesus and the Sabbath', pp. 3:2597-633 (2618-20) points out some problems in Bultmann's idea that the *Sitz im Leben* of the 'controversy dialogues' such as Mk 2.18-20 and 2.23-26 was the apologetics and polemics of the primitive Palestinian church (cf. e.g. Bultmann, *History*, p. 50). For example, it is difficult to imagine a post-Easter community ('disciples') being attacked for not fasting and then defending itself with a reference to Jesus' physical presence (Mk 2.18-19a); the alternative, namely, that the community originally referred to Jesus' 'spiritual' or 'mystical' presence, but was later reinterpreted as being 'physical' (through the addition of 2.19b-20), is not any more likely. Further, regarding Mk 2.23-26, the criticism by the Pharisees does not require an origin in the post-Easter community, since it is entirely plausible to think that it is Jesus, the teacher held responsible for the actions of his disciples, who is being criticized, not the disciples. See also the dissertation, Sven-Olav Back, *Jesus of Nazareth and the Sabbath Commandment* (Åbo: Åbo Akademi University Press, 1995).

144 Throughout his work, Bultmann offers extensive lists of the sayings material in the Synoptic Gospels, as well as, what he thinks is the parallel material elsewhere in Jewish and other literature. See e.g. Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 73-179; *idem*, *History*, pp. 69-166.

proverbial literature of different peoples (esp. oriental literature), even though many of the Synoptic logia, attributed to Jesus, were reminiscent of traditional Jewish proverbs, in other words, Old Testament and Jewish *meshalim*.¹⁴⁵ Regarding the genuineness of the logia, Bultmann argued that there are several possibilities: Jesus may sometimes have taken a popular proverb and altered it (he could even sometimes have coined one himself); often times secular proverbs could have been turned into Jesus' sayings by the church when setting them into the context of the tradition. Sayings which were handed down for edification and warning could easily be treated as dominical. Some genuine ones could still be detected on the basis of features that went beyond popular wisdom to something new.¹⁴⁶

Bultmann suggested that many of the prophetic and apocalyptic logia were originally Jewish sayings, which had been espoused by the Christian tradition and attributed to Jesus. Only the sayings that implied imminent eschatological expectation could go back to Jesus,¹⁴⁷ though even some of them had been refashioned in the light of the community's experience. Like Dibelius, Bultmann saw no distinction between the church's attitude towards sayings of the earthly Jesus and sayings of the risen Lord, which were spoken from the mouths of the Christian prophets.¹⁴⁸ Further, the legal sayings and church rules comprised rules for church discipline in the Palestinian church. This material, like other sayings material, included, in Bultmann's view, genuine sayings of Jesus, Jewish sayings adapted to a Christian use, and new inventions attributed to Jesus. Bultmann thought that these sayings were collected and modified into a catechism at a late written stage of tradition; this catechism was then used by Mark as a source for such material.¹⁴⁹

Bultmann also analyzed the different kinds of figurative speech in the Jesus

145 Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 73-113; *idem*, *History*, pp. 69-108. Bultmann's lists mainly contain rabbinic parallels; thus Eve, *Behind*, p. 22, rightly notes that by 'Jewish' Bultmann seems to have meant 'rabbinic'.

146 Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 105-6. Bultmann considers a saying the more authentic the more it contains individual content and shows Jesus as the preacher of repentance and the coming kingdom.

147 This may be due to Bultmann's overall concern (present also in Dibelius) to discover a Jesus (an eschatological preacher of repentance) and a primitive church that are religiously superior to contemporary Judaism and Hellenistic paganism. On Bultmann's overall concern regarding the historical Jesus, see e.g. Theissen and Winter, *The Plausible Jesus*, pp. 19-26, 95-121, 132-36; cf. Eve, *Behind*, pp. 27-28.

148 Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 113-38; *idem*, *History*, pp. 108-30.

149 Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 138-61; see also the 'Ich-Worte' on pp. 161-76.

tradition, such as similitudes, metaphors and story parables. Among other things, he discussed the formal characteristics of the parables: narration is generally concise and often times fulfills what is called the law of stage duality (only two actors or groups of actors appear in the narrative). The contexts and applications linked with them in the Gospels were often less important; sometimes this kind of material had been allegorically expanded.¹⁵⁰

Regarding the narrative material, Bultmann first dealt with the miracle stories, which correspond to Dibelius' tales. The miracle stories were changed and developed in the course of the tradition; in some cases the miraculous element had enlarged. While historical events may be the basis of some of the healing stories, their narrative forms resulted from the development of the tradition. Bultmann did not exclude the possibility that the OT stories contributed to the miracle stories in the Jesus tradition; neither did he deny that the church may have originated some of the stories and projected them back onto the pre-Easter Jesus. Nevertheless, it was more probable that folk stories of miracles were introduced to the Jesus tradition; the Gospel miracle stories display stylistic similarity to the Jewish and Hellenistic parallels. Further, some of the miracle stories were probably ascribed to Jesus in the Palestinian church, as some of the apophthegms mention miracles; others must have been developed in a Hellenistic context, since they represented a Hellenistic 'divine-man' Christology. New ideas, editions (such as geographical references) and expansions were introduced to the stories within the Christian tradition.¹⁵¹

Bultmann categorized a large amount of the narrative material into historical stories and legends, viewing the latter much like Dibelius. Here, too, the question of origin was central: did the material have a Palestinian or Hellenistic origin? For example, the temptation story, recorded in Mk 1.12-13, is regarded as a Palestinian form, which encapsulates a Hellenistic idea of Son of God, while Peter's words in the confession narrative (Mk 8.27-30) could not have been formulated in any other place than the Palestinian church, where Peter was a respected leader.¹⁵² Like Schmidt and Dibelius, Bultmann treated the Passion Narrative as an early continuous narrative; he viewed the primitive version as somewhat less extensive

150 Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 179-223; *idem*, *History*, pp. 166-205; cf. Eve, *Behind*, p. 23.

151 Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 223-60; *idem*, *History*, pp. 209-44.

152 Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 260-82; *idem*, *History*, pp. 244-62.

than Dibelius.¹⁵³ Bultmann argued that dogmatic and apologetic ideas had affected the Easter stories,¹⁵⁴ and that the idea of virgin birth, a motif foreign to Judaism, was added in a Hellenistic setting.¹⁵⁵

Bultmann acknowledged the diversity of the narrative material; hence, no unified origin or tradition history could be traced from their form. Palestinian messianic expectations and Hellenistic motifs gave rise to some of the individual units; within the Christian tradition, there was a tendency to view the life of Jesus through the Christian faith and worship. Other tendencies which could be detected in the legendary material included, for example, individualization of characters by naming them, introduction of novelistic details, the law of repetition, and the use of the numbers two and three.¹⁵⁶

No clear boundary was drawn between the oral and written stages of the Jesus tradition by Bultmann, who basically held that the same laws would operate in both the oral tradition and the written tradition.¹⁵⁷ Bultmann argued that the Gospel of Mark was the result of the process, in which groups of sayings material, controversy and miracle narratives, parables, and other material had developed into written sources that could be used by Mark. In accordance with the form critics' low estimation of the primitive Christian literary capacities, Mark was not viewed as a master of his material; he nevertheless managed to create a 'book of secret epiphanies'¹⁵⁸ and put together the Hellenistic Kerygma about Christ, found, for example, in Phil. 2.6ff. and Rom. 3.24 within the Pauline corpus, and the Jesus traditions, originated in the Palestinian church.¹⁵⁹

2.1.3 CRITIQUE & EVALUATION

The presuppositions and the methodical choices of the two form critics have been broadly discussed in subsequent literature, with the degree of agreement varying

153 Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 282-308; *idem*, *History*, pp. 262-84. Bultmann, *History*, p. 279, states, 'there was a *primitive narrative* which told very briefly of the arrest, the condemnation by the Sanhedrin and Pilate, the journey to the cross, the crucifixion and death. This was developed at various stages, in part by earlier stories that were available and in part by forms that had newly appeared.'

154 Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 308-16; *idem*, *History*, pp. 284-91.

155 Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 316-28; *idem*, *History*, pp. 291-301.

156 Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 329-47; *idem*, *History*, pp. 302-17; Eve, *Behind*, p. 24.

157 Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 6-8, with judgements throughout the work.

158 Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 356-57, agrees with Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 225-26, on the nature of Mark's Gospel.

159 Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 348-92; *idem*, *History*, pp. 321-50.

from the adoption of form criticism to a complete rebuttal of it.¹⁶⁰ Some critique

160 See e.g. Henry J. Cadbury, 'Between Jesus and the Gospels', pp. 81-92; Erich Fascher, *Die Formgeschichtliche Methode: Eine Darstellung und Kritik. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des synoptischen Problems* (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1924); Ernest F. Scott, 'The New Criticism of the Gospels', *HTR* 19 (1926), pp. 143-63; Burton Scott Easton, *The Gospel before the Gospels* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1928); John J. Collins, 'Form Criticism and the Synoptic Gospels: A Summary Study and Criticism', *TS* 2 (1941), pp. 388-400; Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*; Wilfred L. Knox, *The Sources of the Synoptic Gospels* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953, 1957); Harald Riesenfeld, *The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings: A Study in the Limits of 'Formgeschichte'* (London: Mowbray, 1957); *idem*, *The Gospel Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970); Birger Gerhardsson, *Memory & Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Lund: Gleerup, 1961); *idem*, *Tradition & Transmission in Early Christianity* (Lund: Gleerup, 1964); *idem*, *The Reliability of the Gospel Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001); Edgar V. McKnight, *What is Form Criticism?* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969); Howard M. Teeple, 'The Oral Tradition that Never Existed', *JBL* 89 (1970), pp. 56-68; Morna Hooker, 'Christology and Methodology', *NTS* 17 (1970), pp. 480-87; *idem*, 'On Using the Wrong Tool', *Theology* 75 (1972), pp. 570-81; John C. Meagher, 'Die Form- und Redaktionsungeschickliche Methoden: The Principle of Clumsiness and the Gospel of Mark', *JAAR* 43 (1975), pp. 459-72; Graham N. Stanton, 'Form Criticism Revisited', in Morna Hooker & Colin Hickling (eds.), *What about the New Testament? Essays in Honour of Christopher Evans* (Festschrift C. Evans; London: SCM, 1975), pp. 13-27; Stephen H. Travis, 'Form Criticism', in I. Howard Marshall (ed.), *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1977), pp. 153-64; E. Earle Ellis, 'New Directions in Form Criticism', in E. Earle Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity: New Testament Essays* (WUNT, 18; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1978), pp. 237-53; *idem*, 'The Synoptic Gospels and History', in Bruce Chilton & Craig A. Evans (eds.), *Authenticating the Activities of Jesus* (NTTS, 28; Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 49-57; Erhardt Güttgemanns, *Candid Questions Concerning Gospel Form Criticism: A Methodological Sketch of the Fundamental Problematics of Form and Redaction Criticism* (trans. William G. Doty; Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1979); Walter Schmithals, 'Kritik der Formkritik', *ZTK* 77 (1980), pp. 149-85; Reiner Blank, *Analyse und Kritik der formgeschichtlichen Arbeiten von Martin Dibelius und Rudolf Bultmann* (Basel: Friedrich Reinhardt, 1981); Rainer Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer: Eine Untersuchung zum Ursprung der Evangelien-Überlieferung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1981); Werner H. Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1997), pp. 2-8; *idem*, 'The Case of the Gospels: Memory's Desire and the Limits of Historical Criticism', *Oral Tradition* 17 (2002), pp. 55-86; *idem*, 'Rethinking the Oral-Scribal Transmission/Performance of the Jesus Tradition', in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *Jesus Research: New Methodologies and Perceptions. The Second Princeton-Prague Symposium on Jesus Research* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), pp. 500-30 (502-9); E. P. Sanders & Margret Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels* (London: SCM, 1989), pp. 127-134; Robert C. Culley, 'Oral Tradition and Biblical Studies', in John Miles Foley (ed.), *Oral-Formulaic Theory* (New York: Garland, 1990), pp. 189-225; Vernon K. Robbins, 'Form Criticism: New Testament', *ABD* 2 (1992), pp. 841-44; Wright, *People of God*, pp. 418-27; Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 34-38; *idem*, 'Review of Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*', *JBL* 122 (2003), pp. 549-55; *idem*, 'A New Perspective on the Jesus Tradition: Reflections on James D. G. Dunn's *Jesus Remembered*', *JSNT* 26 (2004), pp. 459-71; *idem*, 'A Century with the Sitz im Leben. From Form-Critical Setting to Gospel Community and Beyond', *ZNW* 98 (2007), pp. 1-27; Darrell L. Bock, 'Form Criticism', in David Alan Black & David S. Dockery (eds.), *Interpreting the New Testament: Essays on Methods and Issues* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), pp. 106-27; Theissen and Winter, *The Plausible Jesus*, pp. 95-121; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 127-28, 192-95, 248-49; Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness*

and evaluation of the subsequent discussion is provided here on the different elements of the form-critical constructions of Dibelius and Bultmann about the nature and transmission of Jesus traditions, as well as their consequences for the task of studying the historical Jesus. The fuller information now available has questioned the plausibility of most aspects of their theories, while some of their ideas remain, if no more, as meaningful starting points for discussion.

First, the assumption of especially Bultmann that the tradition existed in detectable 'pure' or 'original' forms has been considered untenable; it is more reasonable to think that the traditions existed in multiple and modified forms from the start.¹⁶¹ It has been pointed out that not many Gospel pericopae actually illustrate 'the ideal types' of the forms, which indicates the necessity of 'a more nuanced approach to form.'¹⁶² While this criticism is broadly justified, some concern has been raised about the critics' tendency to somewhat undermine the Evangelists' redactional activity by viewing many of the parallel versions of traditions simply as 'oral variants'; it is reasonable to ask whether all literary work on the part of the Gospel authors can be viewed merely as reproduction of the version of oral tradition known to them.¹⁶³ Also, the rejection of the notion of

Testimony (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), pp. 241-49; *idem*, 'Gospel Traditions: Anonymous Community Traditions or Eyewitness Testimony', in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *Jesus Research: New Methodologies and Perceptions. The Second Princeton-Prague Symposium on Jesus Research* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), pp. 483-90; Terence C. Mournet, *Oral Tradition and Literary Dependency: Variability and Stability in the Synoptic Tradition and Q* (WUNT, 195; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005); *idem*, 'The Jesus Tradition as Oral Tradition', in Kelber and Byrskog (eds.), *Jesus in Memory: Traditions in Oral and Scribal Perspectives* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), pp. 39-61; Christopher Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', in Kelber and Byrskog (eds.), *Jesus in Memory*, pp. 21-38; Arland J. Hultgren, 'Form Criticism and Jesus Research', in T. Holmén & S. E. Porter (eds.), *Handbook*, pp. 1:649-71; Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 27-70 (30-35); *idem*, 'The Indebtedness of the Criteria Approach to Form Criticism and Recent Attempts to Rehabilitate the Search for an Authentic Jesus', in Chris Keith & Anthony Le Donne (eds.), *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity* (New York: T & T Clark, 2012), pp. 25-48; Eve, *Behind*, pp. 15-32; Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 33-34; Bird, *Gospel*, pp. 113-24.

161 Travis, 'Form Criticism', pp. 153-64 (158-59); Blank, *Analyse und Kritik*, p. 201; Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 29, 59, 62; Sanders & Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels*, p. 127; Gerhardsson, *The Reliability*, p. 83; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 128, 193-95, 201; Mournet, *Oral Tradition and Literary Dependency*, pp. 71-72; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 246; Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38 (33); Eve, *Behind*, p. 28; cf. Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 2-4, as well as comments throughout the text. Dibelius did note, however, different levels of 'purity', for instance, when categorizing the paradigms into 'the type in noteworthy purity' and 'a less pure type'. See Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, p. 40; *idem*, *From Tradition*, p. 43.

162 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 246. See Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 201, on the point made by Kelber, *Oral and Written*: 'if Jesus said something more than once there is no "original".'

163 Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38 (33-34); cf. Kelber, 'The Case of the Gospels', pp. 55-86 (64); Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 248-49; Mournet, *Oral Tradition and Literary Dependency*, pp. 71-

‘original form’, may not in all cases rule out the possibility of finding an *earlier form* of a Markan tradition.¹⁶⁴

Another major point of criticism is the strict correlation between a form and *Sitz im Leben* as suggested by Dibelius and Bultmann. There are no grounds to think that one tradition is only linked with one context; rather, the traditions could have had different functions in different contexts,¹⁶⁵ while diverse forms could be employed in the same context.¹⁶⁶ The one-to-one correlation between a form and *Sitz im Leben* has been shown to be a false assumption in the cases of oral poetry and oral tradition in general.¹⁶⁷

Dibelius’ constructive method which assumed the conditions and activities of the life of the first Christian communities (‘social settings’) has been criticized for being based on too little evidence. Against Dibelius’ notion that the primitive tradition was mainly formulated by means of preaching, it has been argued by Erhardt Güttgemanns, for example, that Dibelius relied too much on the value of Luke 1.1-4 as a historical source, his concept of preaching was too idealized to have the supposed sociological explanatory power, and the speeches of Acts, as Lukan constructions, cannot be used to support Dibelius’ viewpoint.¹⁶⁸ While Güttgemanns’ criticism of Dibelius’ rather idealistic notion of preaching as a ‘sociological setting’ is probably valid, the notion of impossibility of any sequence

72. Cf. the discussion below on the the memory approach (Ch. 3).

164 Tuckett, ‘Form Criticism’, pp. 21-38 (34, 216 n. 70). Tuckett, ‘Form Criticism’, pp. 21-38 (26, 211 n. 28), refers to the classic example about fasting in Mk 2.18-20, ‘where the saying in v. 20, apparently allowing a reintroduction of fasting after the “bridegroom” (=Jesus?) has gone away, seems to be a secondary addition to an earlier tradition reflected in vv. 18-19, where Jesus says that fasting is inappropriate in the new situation (by implication that of his ministry).’ On the view that Mk 2.18-20 reflects the *Sitz im Leben* of the post-Easter community, however, see the criticism in Back, ‘Jesus and the Sabbath’, pp. 3:2597-633 (2618-20), also referred to above.

165 Tuckett, ‘Form Criticism’, pp. 21-38 (35), points to the tradition of the Last Supper, which may have been used by early Christians in the context of the cult as a story repeated at the Eucharist (so Dibelius, *From Tradition*, p. 205; Bultmann, *History*, p. 265), but it was also used by Paul as a part of community paraenesis to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 11. See Theissen & Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, p. 109.

166 Stanton, ‘Form Criticism Revisited’, pp. 13-27 (23); Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, pp. 12-13; Theissen & Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, p. 109; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 246; Tuckett, ‘Form Criticism’, pp. 21-38 (35); Eve, *Behind*, p. 28.

167 On oral poetry, see Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance and Social Context* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 260; on oral tradition in general, Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), p. 101: oral traditions ‘often serve multiple purposes and uses’. The citation also in Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 246; Tuckett, ‘Form Criticism’, pp. 21-38 (35, 216 n. 78).

168 Eve, *Behind*, p. 21; Güttgemanns, *Candid Questions*, pp. 297-302; cf. Dibelius, *From Tradition*, pp. 10-17.

(or ‘a skeleton outline’) in the pre-Markan tradition apart from the Passion Narrative, has been brought to question by many.¹⁶⁹

Bultmann’s use of the *Sitz im Leben* also seems too vague. First, he did not specifically explain what *Sitz im Leben* he aimed to link to which of the forms, though his final summary on the development of the tradition may offer some clarification on what could have been demonstrated in the previous sections.¹⁷⁰ Secondly, Bultmann’s categories of life-settings (apologetic, polemic, paraenesis, church discipline and propaganda) do not bear any more of the sociological weight put on them than Dibelius’ notion of preaching; as such, they function as very general categories for early Christian communal life and do not *explicitly* correlate with the particular forms ascribed to them.¹⁷¹

Rather than demonstrating the correlation of the life-settings with the forms, both Dibelius and Bultmann overemphasized the distinction between Palestinian and Hellenistic settings.¹⁷² The simplified distinction is untenable, since it

169 On the notion that Mark’s framework actually conforms to the pattern found in Acts, particularly in Acts 10.37-43 in the speech of Peter in Cornelius’ house, see Charles Harold Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments. Three Lectures with and Appendix on Eschatology and History* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1936), pp. 17-35, 46-52; *idem*, *New Testament Studies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1953), pp. 1-11. For the defense and further articulation of Dodd’s position, see Riesenfeld, *The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings*, pp. 10-11; Robert W. Guelich, ‘The Gospel Genre’, in Peter Stuhlmacher (ed.), *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien. Vorträge vom Tübinger Symposium 1982* (WUNT, 28; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), pp. 183-219 (209-13); Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Leicester: Apollos, rev. edn., 1990), pp. 76-78); Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 284-88; contra Dennis E. Nineham, ‘The Order of Events in St. Mark’s Gospel – an Examination of Dr. Dodd’s Hypothesis’, in Dennis E. Nineham (ed.), *Studies in the Gospels. Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), pp. 223-39; *idem*, *The Gospel of St Mark*; Güttgemanns, *Candid Questions*; pace Tuckett, ‘Form Criticism’, pp. 21-38 (28-29). Tuckett, ‘Form Criticism’, pp. 21-38 (29, 213 n.40), entertains that some of the narrative elements (such as the *chreia*) may not be secondary and that his general view (i.e. the ordering of events in the written Gospels are results of later editing process during the writing the Gospels), ‘applies only to the ordered narratives of our present Gospels taken as wholes’. So also, Eve, *Behind*, p. 31: ‘It [the lack of essential chronological relation or organizing framework] is indeed suggested by a comparison of the Synoptic Gospels, where one Evangelist may use a pericope in a context quite different from that in which it appears in the work of another. It is also suggested by the structure of the Gospels, in which one incident often follows another without any essential connection or substantial narrative link.’

170 Eve, *Behind*, p. 25; cf. Bultmann, *History*, p. 368.

171 Eve, *Behind*, p. 25. In many respects sympathetic towards the form-critical categorization of the Jesus traditions, Manson, ‘The Quest of the Historical Jesus – Continued’, p. 5, nevertheless pointed out: ‘We can list these stories in the Gospels. We can label them...But a paragraph in Mark is not penny the better or the worse as historical evidence for being labeled, “Apothegm,” or “Pronouncement Story” or “Paradigm.”’ Reference in Bird, *Gospel*, p. 122.

172 Martin Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus: Studien zu ihrer Begegnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Palästinas bis zur Mitte des 2. Jh.s v. Chr* (WUNT, 10; Tübingen: Mohr, 2nd rev. edn, 1973); *idem*, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early*

underestimates the effect of Hellenism in the first-century Palestine.¹⁷³ Also, the Dead Sea Scrolls undermine the model of Palestinian implying ‘early’ versus Hellenistic implying ‘late’, since many ideas previously considered ‘Hellenistic’ have been shown from the Scrolls to be present within first-century Palestinian Judaism.¹⁷⁴ In particular, Bultmann’s idea of the apophthegms as ‘Palestinian’ fails to recognize the *chreiai*, which occur widely in the Greco-Roman literature and Hellenistic world and display very close parallels to such stories.¹⁷⁵ It now appears problematic to associate Palestinian with rabbinic, as Bultmann did, since the rabbinic material cannot do justice to the diversity of Palestinian Judaism.¹⁷⁶ Bultmann’s assignation of the majority of the miracle stories to a Hellenistic origin simply on account of their apparently Hellenistic form is also questioned.¹⁷⁷ Bultmann did not attempt to draw a social distinction between a rural Galilean setting and an urban Greco-Roman setting, which could possibly have been more fruitful than mere identification of different traditions as Palestinian or Hellenistic.¹⁷⁸

Likewise, the assumption of *homeostasis*¹⁷⁹, the anthropological idea of a perfect

Hellenistic Period (trans. John Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974); *idem, Juden, Griechen, und Barbaren* (Stuttgart: KBW, 1976); Gerhardsson, *The Origins of the Gospel Traditions* (London: SCM), pp. 13-14; Wright, *People of God*, pp. 420-21; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 247-48; Tuckett, ‘Form Criticism’, pp. 21-38 (29-31); Eve, *Behind*, pp. 25-26; cf. e.g. Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 130-78; Bultmann, *Geschichte*, p. 5, as well as judgements about the origin of traditions throughout the text.

173 See esp. Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus*, pp. 120-52, who argues that Hellenistic culture deeply affected Palestine and was accepted by a great number of Jews in the period after Alexander the Great’s victory at Issos in 333 BCE. See also Hengel, *Juden, Griechen, und Barbaren*.

174 Tuckett, ‘Form Criticism’, pp. 21-38 (30).

175 Tuckett, ‘Form Criticism’, pp. 21-38 (30, 214 n. 49); Sanders & Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels*, p. 137. Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 150-64, also mentioned the parallel between the Paradigm and chreia in the second German edition of his work, but nevertheless ignored it due to supposedly differing contents.

176 Cf. Birger Gerhardsson’s view below (Ch. 2.2.2), on the assumption that the basic pedagogical methods of the later rabbinic period would have existed among Palestinian Jews before 70 CE.

177 Eve, *Behind*, p. 26. The Gospel miracle stories owe, according to Eve, more to their use by the Evangelists than to their origin and tradition history.

178 Eve, *Behind*, p. 25.

179 The concept was initially used by Jack Goody & Ian Watt, ‘The Consequences of Literacy’, in J. Goody (ed.), *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 27-68, and has basically been understood as denoting that societies and groups performing oral traditions only preserve those parts of the tradition that are relevant to the present situation. Goody & Watt, ‘The Consequences’, pp. 27-68 (31), did nevertheless express some reservations by pointing out certain factors (such as formalized patterns of speech, recital under ritual condition, etc.) that ‘may shield at least part of the content of memory from the transmuting influence of the immediate pressures of the present’. See Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 132.

correspondence between the traditions and their use within the society that hands them on, was overemphasized by the form critics, who argued that there was no real interest in the past and the earthly Jesus within early Christianity: prophetic oracles would be merged with Jesus' original sayings (especially according to Bultmann) and main attention was directed towards the future (an emphasis of Dibelius).¹⁸⁰ Even though the form-critical notion must not be denied that 'Jesus traditions were used and developed by early Christians in ways that related to their own concerns',¹⁸¹ it has been shown that historical information, including archaic features, can be preserved in oral tradition without a clear function in the community.¹⁸² In fact, some of the preserved traditions do not reflect positively the views of the community. The reality that some traditions may be handed on by some in the community to communicate with others within the same community undermines the form-critical notion of the collective, which anonymously handed on the traditions; there may have been a situation where individual members of the community wanted to speak to the other members of the community.¹⁸³ It is problematic, especially in the work of Bultmann, that the Gospel controversy stories involving Jesus and his opponents are often taken to reflect similar controversies in early Christianity; the reasoning pushes the circularity (present in any historical investigation) too far, since the possibility of there being 'archaic features' in the controversy traditions is ruled out at the outset.¹⁸⁴

180 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 131-33; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 246; *idem*, 'Gospel Traditions: Anonymous Community Traditions or Eyewitness Testimony', pp. 483-99 (485-86); Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38 (34-35). Cf. Eve, *Behind*, p. 29, who, while noticing that early Christians were not completely uninterested in the earthly Jesus, is inclined to think that the form critics' characterization of the preserved Gospel material was generally correct in acknowledging that the material was such that 'would serve the practical interests of the Church'. Regarding Bultmann's skeptical decisions about the 'historicity' of the forms, Eve, *Behind*, p. 32, notes nevertheless: 'It is simply an assumption that proposing a present function for a piece of tradition automatically discredits its historicity, although it is an assumption Bultmann appears to have shared with Maurice Halbwachs.' See also Barry Schwartz, 'Christian Origins: Historical Truth and Social Memory', in A. Kirk & T. Thatcher (eds.), *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity* (SBLSS, 52; Atlanta: SBL, 2005), pp. 43-56 (47-51). Eve, *Behind*, pp. 29-30, does not deem form criticism's attempt to link form and social setting convincing.

181 Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38 (37).

182 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 246; *idem*, 'Gospel Traditions: Anonymous Community Traditions or Eyewitness Testimony', pp. 483-99 (485-86); Byrskog, 'A New Perspective on the Jesus Tradition', pp. 459-71 (468-70); Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38 (34-35); Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, pp. 121-22.

183 Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38 (35); Byrskog, 'A Century with the Sitz im Leben', pp. 1-27 (16).

184 Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38 (35). For example, Bultmann, *History*, pp. 12, 16, viewed

Furthermore, the form critics' notion of regular and identifiable development of the tradition (for Dibelius and Bultmann its expansion and elaboration, for Vincent Taylor its abbreviation and smoothing out) cannot be relied on.¹⁸⁵ Bultmann's idea that the ways the oral tradition developed can be derived from the written tradition was demonstrated unsuitable by E. P. Sanders, who himself subscribed to Bultmann's assumption that oral and written developments were comparable.¹⁸⁶ Sanders concluded from his study of the later manuscript tradition of the canonical Gospels and the non-canonical Gospel tradition:

There are no hard and fast laws of the development of the Synoptic tradition. On all counts the tradition developed in opposite directions. It became both longer and shorter, both more and less detailed, and both more and less Semitic...Dogmatic statements that a certain characteristic proves a certain passage to be earlier than another are never justified.¹⁸⁷

While demonstrating the weakness of the form critics' notion of 'laws of tradition', Sanders himself becomes subject to criticism for not paying attention to the differences between oral and literary stages of tradition. It can certainly be questioned whether his study applies to the nature of oral tradition as oral.¹⁸⁸

Bultmann's analysis was mainly focused on his observations regarding the tendencies within the written tradition, which he tried to justify by the idea that there was no significant difference between the oral and written stages of the tradition.¹⁸⁹ Without any distinction between the stages, Bultmann seems to have

the Sabbath controversy stories as early Christian attempts to justify their own practices, which is questionable due to the lack of evidence that the question of Sabbath observance was controversial within early Christianity. See e.g. Back, 'Jesus and the Sabbath', pp. 3:2597-633; Tuckett, 'Jesus and the Sabbath', in Tom Holmén (ed.), *Jesus in Continuum* (WUNT, 289; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), pp. 411-42.

185 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 247; Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38 (33); Eve, *Behind*, p. 28; cf. Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, pp. 119-26, 202-9.

186 E. P. Sanders, *The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition* (SNTSMS, 9; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); cf. e.g. Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 2-4.

187 Sanders, *The Tendencies*, p. 272. The citations are also found in Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38 (33, 215 n. 64).

188 See e.g. Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 7; Robbins, 'Form Criticism: New Testament', pp. 841-44 (842); Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 248; Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38 (33); cf. Sanders, *The Tendencies*, p. 8: 'the tendencies of the one are presumably the tendencies of the other'. This issue is a recurring theme in this study.

189 Eve, *Behind*, p. 26. How Matthew and Luke redacted Mark and Q was central to Bultmann's analysis.

treated orality as a kind of writing that consisted of layers that can be excavated; his analysis of the changes that the Evangelists made to their sources is plausible as much as the written form is concerned, but fails as a description of an oral process, which can be illustrated as a series of performances rather than an editing of a written text.¹⁹⁰

It has been argued that the form critics failed to demonstrate how the Jesus traditions could have been transmitted purely orally for decades; this led them to underestimate the literary capacities of early Christians, especially the Evangelists. While the world of early Christianity was predominantly oral, written texts were also used in relation to oral traditions.¹⁹¹ In an ancient context, writing was sometimes used as an aid for memorization of what was orally communicated.¹⁹² While the overall rate of literacy was probably very low (approximately only 10 per cent of the population or less) in Jewish Palestine,¹⁹³ there could have been individuals within the earliest Jesus movement from the classes that could read and write.¹⁹⁴ The question of whether or to what extent writing served as a control

190 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 194-95; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 248-49; Mournet, 'The Jesus Tradition as Oral Tradition', pp. 39-61 (43-46); Eve, *Behind*, pp. 26-27. However, one needs to be cautious about viewing all the parallel material in the Gospels simply as 'oral variants'. Cf. the comments above; Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38 (33-34).

191 Travis, 'Form Criticism', pp. 153-64 (159); Ellis, 'New Directions in Form Criticism', pp. 237-53 (242-47); *idem*, 'The Synoptic Gospels and History', pp. 49-57 (53-54); Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 248; Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38 (31, 214 n. 56); cf. also Eve, *Behind*, pp. 8-14.

192 Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 116; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 287-88. This is not to be taken as an underestimation of the role which memorization had among illiterate ancient people who were still, through oral communication and memorization, capable of familiarizing themselves with the content of written texts, such as the Hebrew Scriptures. See Eve, *Behind*, pp. 11-12.

193 For a low level literacy, see e.g. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 71-123 (123): 'Although almost all first-century Palestinian Jews were aware of texts and their power, and indeed organized their identity around (holy) texts, illiteracy was the rule of the day.' Also, Eve, *Behind*, pp. 10-11; cf. Alan Millard, *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus* (Biblical Seminar, 69; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), who argues for a widespread literacy. Larry W. Hurtado, 'Greco-Roman Textuality and the Gospel of Mark: A Critical Assessment of Werner Kelber's The Oral and the Written Gospel', *BBibRes* 7 (1997), pp. 91-106 (95-96, n. 13-15), suggests a widely-shared literacy as well as influence of the writing, reading, and hearing of texts within Jewish circles. However, see C. Keith, 'Early Christian Book Culture and the Emergence of the First Written Gospel', in Chris Keith & Dieter T. Roth (eds.), *Mark, Manuscripts, and Monotheism* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), pp. 22-39 (35-36 n. 60): 'If he [Hurtado] means that many Jews were literate, that is incorrect...Hurtado is correct about the cultural influence of texts, however, and here Stock's distinction between "textuality" and "literacy" is important.' On literacy, see further Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (TSAJ, 81; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001). On textuality/literacy, Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 7.

194 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 288; Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, pp. 497-98.

on the transmission of Jesus traditions remains debated.¹⁹⁵ However, by the point of the writing of Mark's Gospel it had definitely gradually become something more than what is indicated by the form-critical idea of mere collection and organizing of traditions by unliterary men.

Moreover, the comparability of the Jesus traditions with folklore traditions has been demonstrated to be a false assumption. It has been pointed out by several critics that the two kinds of material differ significantly from each other; it takes long periods of time, even generations, for folklore traditions to evolve, whereas the development of Jesus traditions must have happened roughly between 30 CE and 70 CE, namely, within about one generation.¹⁹⁶ Folklorists themselves no longer subscribe to the idea of 'romanticism', which assumed the folk as a collective creator of folk traditions.¹⁹⁷ The role of authoritative individuals in transmitting the tradition in cooperation with the community cannot be overlooked.¹⁹⁸

Herder's view of folklore, embraced by Dibelius, has been sharply criticized for being based, not on empirical studies, but rather on a 'romantic' view of history, which falsely 'equated life with orality, orality with the folk, and the folk with either the lower classes or the nation.'¹⁹⁹ Güttgemanns has argued that Herder took over the Grimm brothers' notion of the collective origin of fairy tales and used it to explain folk poetry as the product of living oral tradition.²⁰⁰ The underlying

195 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 8-14, takes a rather skeptical view, arguing that the notes taken by the few literate early Christian teachers and preachers 'remained little more than an aide-memoire' in the predominantly oral culture. If such earlier notes were available to Mark decades later, the whole period of oral transmission could be bypassed; there just is no way of verifying whether this happened. On the other hand, Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 289, while stressing the importance of memorization, entertains a more optimistic notion of literary notes: 'They [notebooks for the private use of Christian teachers] would simply have reinforced the capacity of oral transmission itself to preserve the traditions faithfully. They should not be imagined as proto-Gospels, though they may account for some of the so-called Q passages...'. Also, see Keith, 'Early Christian Book Culture', pp. 22-39 (31 n. 42, 37), who emphasizes the role of early Christian manuscripts in the maintenance and articulation of group identity.

196 Ellis, 'New Directions in Form Criticism', pp. 237-53 (244); *idem*, 'The Synoptic Gospels and History', pp. 49-57 (54-55); Sanders & Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels*, p. 129; Gerhardsson, *The Reliability*, p. 40; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 247; *idem*, 'Gospel Traditions: Anonymous Community Traditions or Eyewitness Testimony', pp. 483-99 (487-88); Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38 (32).

197 See e.g. Finnegan, *Oral Poetry*, pp. 30-41.

198 Blank, *Analyse und Kritik*, pp. 200-1; Byrskog, 'Review of Rudolf Bultmann', pp. 549-55 (554); Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 247; Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38 (36-37); Eve, *Behind*, p. 28; cf. the discussion on Dibelius and Bultmann above.

199 Güttgemanns, *Candid Questions*, p. 127; Ellis, 'The Synoptic Gospels and History', pp. 49-57 (54); Eve, *Behind*, p. 20; cf. also Culley, 'Oral Tradition and Biblical Studies', pp. 189-225 (191-94).

200 Güttgemanns, *Candid Questions*, pp. 184-93; Eve, *Behind*, pp. 20-21.

'romanticism' of collectivity in Dibelius' work, therefore, overemphasized the creativity of anonymous communities and refused to acknowledge the possibility of gifted lower-class individuals originating folk poetry.²⁰¹ Along with Dibelius, Bultmann did not ground his view of the transmission of tradition on a solid theory of oral tradition. Throughout his work, examples from folklore are mentioned, but no reference is made to the results of empirical studies; Bultmann also seems to have subscribed to a 'romantic' notion of folklore, which assumed an anonymous community formation of the tradition.²⁰²

Regardless of all the criticism leveled at Dibelius and Bultmann, some of their basic ideas have not been completely abandoned, even though they need some qualifications. In particular, the basic form-critical notion of the separability of the individual units of Jesus traditions is still widely accepted, even by many otherwise highly critical of the method.²⁰³ This notion has been qualified over the decades with different theories about how some individual units and pericopae were joined together prior to the writing of the Gospels.²⁰⁴ It is generally accepted as too simplistic to view the tradition as consisting of totally random individual units, only joined together for the first time by Mark (and then Matthew and Luke).²⁰⁵

It is further suggested that a linear development from strictly isolated

201 Güttgemanns, *Candid Questions*, pp. 184-93; Eve, *Behind*, pp. 20-21. Eve, *Behind*, p. 21, refers to Ruth Finnegan's critique of the 'romantic' view of folk tradition. See Finnegan, *Oral Poetry*, pp. 30-41.

202 Eve, *Behind*, p. 26.

203 E.g. Stanton, 'Form Criticism Revisited', pp. 13-27 (14); Sanders & Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels*, pp. 123-24; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 242-43; Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38 (28); cf. also Eve, *Behind*, pp. 30-32.

204 Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38 (28). Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38 (28, 213 n. 36), notes Mk 2:1-3:6 and Mk 4:1-34 as typical examples often mentioned in relation to the matter. The Q tradition in Mt. and Lk. is often taken as a major exception to this, since it is argued that Q indeed existed as a written document prior to Mt. and Lk. See e.g. Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q; idem, Q, the Earliest Gospel*; Hoffmann, Kloppenborg, and Robinson (eds.), *The Critical Edition of the Q*. For viewpoints that question the existence of Q, e.g. Goulder, 'Is Q a Juggernaut?', pp. 667-81; Goodacre, 'Fatigue in the Synoptics', pp. 45-58; *idem*, 'A Monopoly on Marcan Priority? Fallacies at the Heart of Q', pp. 538-622; *idem*, *The Case against Q; Peterson & Poirier (eds.), Marcan Priority without Q*.

205 Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38 (28); Gerd Theissen, *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992), p. 4: rather than simply being transmitted in isolation, the pericopes 'could be separated and reappear in new contexts'. Also Gerhardtsson, *The Reliability*, p. 48: 'The history of the origins of the synoptic tradition is not only the history of how the various parts arose and were assembled, but also the history of the interaction between the whole and the parts, between the total view and the concrete formation of the material, which certainly took place during the entire tradition formation process.'

individual units through collections of matching material to the full Gospels also needs to be qualified in light of the interaction between the tradents and an audience.²⁰⁶ It cannot be overlooked that the target audience of the tradition must have presupposed some prior knowledge about Jesus. Indeed, one part of the tradition may be uttered on any one occasion, but that does not mean ‘isolated’ transmission in the sense of the audience not having any idea of other parts of the Jesus tradition. Despite acknowledging a certain degree of isolation within the tradition, it is reasonable to ask what point there would have been to utter a miracle story or even a connected Passion account if Jesus had no prior significance for the audience.²⁰⁷ Further, if some prior interest in Jesus’ significance is granted for the target audience,²⁰⁸ the question arises whether the possibility of any prior expectation of a chronological sequence in the tradition by the audience can be ruled out.²⁰⁹ Of course, the existence of this kind of an interest or expectation as such would not say anything definite about the historicity of the tradition.

Another point where the form critics’ endeavor may not be totally invalidated relates to the analysis of the content of the ‘forms’ conducted by both Dibelius and Bultmann. Both have been criticized for failing to identify clear common formal features and generalized *Sitz im Leben* in much of the material, for example, in relation to the group of stories labeled ‘legends.’²¹⁰ Also, a lot of the categorization of Jesus’ sayings is done on the basis of the content, not form.²¹¹ This does not,

206 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 30-32; Mournet, *Oral Tradition and Literary Dependency*, pp. 72-73.

207 Eve, *Behind*, p. 32.

208 See e.g. Manson, ‘The Quest of the Historical Jesus – Continued’, p. 6: ‘It is at least conceivable that one of the chief motives for preserving the stories at all, and for selecting those that were embodied in the Gospels, was just plain admiration and love for their hero. It is conceivable that he was at least as interesting, *for his own sake*, to people in the first century as he is to historians in the twentieth.’ The reference in Bird, *Gospel*, p. 36.

209 Cf. Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Leicester: Apollos, rev. edn., 1990), pp. 77-78, who can be viewed as taking the idea of ‘prior significance’ further by arguing for the possibility of a pre-Markan historical sequence and pointing to *the church’s interest* in such a sequence: ‘There are no grounds, therefore, for maintaining that interest was lacking merely because such a sequence held no importance for the life and worship of the church. Would not the form of passion narrative have led people to expect some sequence in the remainder of the material? And would not catechetical instructions have fostered such an expectation? Since one third of Mark comprises the passion and resurrection narrative, is it not reasonable to suppose that the earlier material existed in some equally connected form?’

210 Tuckett, ‘Form Criticism’, pp. 21-38 (31); cf. Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, p. 101: ‘fromme Erzählungen von einem heiligen Mann, an dessen Taten und Schicksalen man Interesse hat’; e.g. Lk. 2.41-49; in Bultmann, ‘Geschichtserzählung und Legende’.

211 Tuckett, ‘Form Criticism’, pp. 21-38 (31); see also already Easton, *The Gospel before the Gospels*, p. 74, who points out that in some of Jesus’ sayings there is no *formal* difference but the

however, invalidate the analysis completely, because the form and its content inevitably overlap to an extent and no rigid distinction can be easily maintained between the two.²¹² Therefore, the study of the major types of the material, that is, ‘synchronic form criticism’, can be viewed as meaningful, even with the differing categories of ‘forms’ that have been identified by different scholars.²¹³

The criticisms of Dibelius’ and Bultmann’s attempts to link form with *Sitz im Leben* set aside, it is not impossible to deduce something about the sociological realities from the tradition as a whole, which indicates continuity to a certain degree with classical form-criticism.²¹⁴ Especially, Gerd Theissen’s studies have been leading the way in the sociological study of individual traditions in the Gospels. Theissen has proposed possible situations in early Christianity through an analysis, not so much of the literary forms, but of the ideological, geographical, and temporal perspectives that are suggested within individual traditions, as well as of the socio-political setting of the time.²¹⁵ Resulting from this, *Sitz im Leben* as a sociological concept denoting a generalized situation for similar texts, does not perfectly correspond to Theissen’s sociological analysis of individual traditions. Yet even if the terminology has been re-articulated and the analysis conducted differently, it has been shown that the sociological study of the traditions has an enduring value.

In sum, some of form criticism’s insights remain useful starting points for discussion with qualifications. This does not, however, change the reality that

categorization is based more on content.

212 Tuckett, ‘Form Criticism’, pp. 21-38 (31).

213 See e.g. Sanders & Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels*, pp. 146-86, who identify ‘chreia’, ‘miracle stories’ and ‘parables’ as illustrations of form-critical method; Wright, *People of God*, pp. 429-35, who mentions at least four categories of the material: ‘Prophetic Acts’, ‘Controversies’, ‘Parables’, and ‘Longer Units’. Eve, *Behind*, p. 31, views the form of the Paradigm as distinctive and imaginably a result of frequent oral use. He also identifies ‘Miracle Stories’, ‘Parables’ and ‘Similitudes’ as recognizable forms, though that ‘may owe as much to their content as to their tradition history’. Also, Eve, *Behind*, p. 31, is critical of the ‘sayings form’: ‘For use in argumentation, preaching, instruction or any other such scenario proposed by the form critics, isolated sayings, or even sayings collections, would need to be embedded in some wider discourse (as we indeed find paraenetic material to be when it is deployed in the New Testament epistles).’

214 Tuckett, ‘Form Criticism’, pp. 21-38 (35-36).

215 E.g. Gerd Theissen, *Soziologie der Jesusbewegung: Ein Beitrag zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Urchristentums* (Theologische Existenz Heute, 194; Munich: Kaiser, 1977); *idem*, *The Gospels in Context*; *idem*, *Die Religion der ersten Christen. Eine Theorie des Urchristentums*; *idem*, ‘Die politische Dimension des Wirkens Jesu’, in Bruce J. Malina & Gerd Theissen (eds.), *Jesus in neuen Kontexten* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2002), pp. 112-22. Sociological study of the Gospels and other New Testament writings has gained more and more scholarly attention in the last few decades.

Dibelius and Bultmann's models have become outdated; they do not offer a plausible method for explaining the transmission of Jesus traditions and the relationship between oral tradition and the Gospels within early Christianity. The early form criticism by Dibelius and Bultmann does not leave the scholar of the historical Jesus with much to work with. One of the most influential alternative viewpoints, namely, the so-called rabbinic model, is discussed next.

2.2 FORMAL CONTROLLED TRADITION²¹⁶

A significant counter proposal to Dibelius' and Bultmann's form-critical views came from two Swedish scholars, Harald Riesenfeld²¹⁷ (1913–2008) and his student Birger Gerhardsson²¹⁸ (1926–2013), who can be viewed as representatives of a contrary trend of scholarship during the so-called New Quest.²¹⁹ Deriving their basic influences from the work of Scandinavian Old Testament scholars,²²⁰ both scholars argued against early form criticism's basic tenet of flexible anonymous community tradition: the Jesus traditions were formally controlled and handed down in manners reminiscent of later rabbinic teaching and mnemonic techniques in the period of oral tradition. This was possible as even the Galilean village people were familiar with Scripture and the teaching methods of the time.²²¹ Neither Riesenfeld nor Gerhardsson placed much emphasis on literary

216 The main content of this chapter was published in T. Havukainen, 'Birger Gerhardsson on the Transmission of Jesus Traditions – How Did the Rabbinic Model Advance a Scholarly Discourse?', *Iesus Aboensis: Åbo Akademi Journal for Historical Jesus Research* 1 (2015), pp. 49-63.

217 Professor of NT exegetics in Uppsala 1953–1979. Harald Riesenfeld, *The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings: A Study in the Limits of 'Formgeschichte'* (London: Mowbray, 1957); *idem*, *The Gospel Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970).

218 Professor of exegetical theology in Lund University 1965–1992. Gerhardsson, *Memory & Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Lund: Gleerup, 1961); *idem*, *Tradition & Transmission in Early Christianity* (Lund: Gleerup, 1964). A combined edition of Gerhardsson's two works, referenced in this dissertation, was published in 1998 by Eerdmans (Grand Rapids).

219 Cf. McArthur, *In Search of the Historical Jesus*, pp. 23-40, who pointed out that besides the 'minimal lives' of Bultmann, Bornkamm and others, there were scholars like Manson and Gerhardsson, whose attitude towards the Jesus traditions was much more optimistic. See Kankaanniemi, 'Will the Real Third Quest', pp. 102-23 (109-10).

220 On the 'Uppsala School' in OT scholarship, including e.g. Gerhardsson's OT professor Ivan Engnell, G. W. Ahlström, H. S. Nyberg, Helmer Ringren, and Geo Widengren, see Geo Widengren, 'Tradition and Literature in Early Judaism and in the Early Church', *Numen* 10 (1963), pp. 42-83 (43-44); Gerhardsson, 'The Secret of the Transmission of the Unwritten Jesus Tradition', *NTS* 51 (2005), pp. 1-18 (1-2); Samuel Byrskog, 'Introduction', pp. 1-20 (4-5).

221 Riesenfeld, *The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings*; *idem*, *The Gospel Tradition*; Gerhardsson, *Memory*; *idem*, *Tradition*; contra e.g. Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 1-8; Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp.

or source criticism in their studies of the oral Jesus traditions. While offering a brief account of Riesenfeld's view, this chapter's main focus is on Gerhardsson's work, as he is especially a seminal figure in research history, his ideas regarding the Jesus traditions, transmission, and memory being widely discussed in recent scholarship.²²²

2.2.1 HARALD RIESENFELD

In contrast to Dibelius and Bultmann, Harald Riesenfeld argued on the basis of the book of Acts and certain New Testament Epistles that a *Sitz im Leben*, distinct from 'preaching' and other form-critical notions, must be sought for the Gospel tradition; for instance, the Epistles do not often quote the Jesus tradition in the same way as the Gospels do.²²³ Riesenfeld noticed the Greek equivalents of the rabbinic technical language of 'receiving' and 'handing on' tradition used in the New Testament (παραλαμβάνειν; παραδιδόναι), but against the form critics he argued that this language was not used of the transmission of vague folklore material. Instead, it described the 'rigidly controlled transmission of matter from one who has the mastery of it to another who has been specially chosen to learn it', namely, a fixed tradition, which was taught by the teacher and memorized by his students. The tradition was not transmitted by an anonymous community, but by particular qualified individuals, such as Paul and the 'eyewitnesses and ministers of the word' (Lk. 1.2). According to Riesenfeld, the rabbinic concept of oral Torah functioned as a close analogy to the social environment in which the tradition was

1-8. In the supplementary notes of the 1958 edition of his *Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, Bultmann reacted to Riesenfeld's then new position, deeming it 'nicht haltbar'; see Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition. Ergänzungsheft zur 3. durchgesehenen Auflage* (Göttingen: Vandenhöck & Ruprecht, 1958), p. 5. On Riesenfeld, see also Gerhard Delling, 'Geprägte Jesus-Tradition im Urchristentum', *Communio Viatorum* 1 (1961), pp. 59-71.

222 See e.g. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 197-98; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 249-52; Byrskog, 'Introduction', pp. 1-20; Matti Kankaanniemi, *The Guards of the Tomb (Matt 27:62-66 and 28:11-15): Matthew's Apologetic Legend Revisited* (Åbo: Åbo Akademi University Press, 2010), pp. 60-61; Eve, *Behind*, pp. 33-46; Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 34-36; also, other articles in Kelber and Byrskog (eds.), *Jesus in Memory*, which offer an interdisciplinary and in many ways sympathetic assessment of Gerhardsson's work. Gerhardsson's thesis has been further elaborated, especially, by Rainer Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*; *idem*, 'Jesus as Preacher and Teacher', in Wansbrough (ed.), *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition* (JSNTSup, 64; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), pp. 185-210; and Samuel Byrskog, *Jesus the Only Teacher: Didactic Authority and Transmission in Ancient Israel, Ancient Judaism and the Matthean Community* (ConBNT, 24; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1994); *idem*, *Story as History*.

223 Riesenfeld, *The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings*, pp. 10-16.

formed.²²⁴

Riesenfeld proposed community worship as the *Sitz im Leben* for the transmission of the Gospel tradition. The early Christian community would have treated the tradition as a holy ‘New Torah’, since it had originated from Jesus who had taught his disciples in the manner of a rabbi.²²⁵ The rabbinic teaching technique involved learning the material by heart, namely, memorizing it; the notion of the memorization of the material by the disciples was indicated by its memorable formulation in the Gospels. Riesenfeld applied the idea of memorization both to the words and deeds of Jesus, as Jesus would supposedly have discussed his deeds with his disciples. Regardless of the reality that the tradition was shaped by the community, it originated essentially from Jesus.²²⁶ Gerhardsson elaborated and developed the different aspects of Riesenfeld’s account much further.

2.2.2 BIRGER GERHARDSSON

Gerhardsson’s dissertation is of the greatest importance, although his subsequent articles further elucidated and somewhat qualified his viewpoints.²²⁷ Gerhardsson first presented the comparative material for his model of the transmission of traditions within early Christianity.²²⁸ He focused on the Jewish Torah of the Tannaitic (ca. 10–220 CE) and Amoraic periods (ca. 220–500 CE) and outlined a distinction between the transmission of the written and oral Torah, emphasizing the role of the latter.²²⁹ Gerhardsson deliberately chose this comparative material.²³⁰

224 Riesenfeld, *The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings*, pp. 17-20.

225 Riesenfeld, *The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings*, pp. 22-24.

226 Riesenfeld, *The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings*, pp. 24-27.

227 Gerhardsson, *Memory*; see also, *idem*, *Tradition*; *idem*, *The Origins of the Gospel Tradition* (London: SCM, 1979); *idem*, ‘Der Weg der Evangelientradition’, in Stuhlmacher (ed.), *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien. Vorträge vom Tübinger Symposium 1982* (WUNT, 28; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), pp. 79-102; *idem*, *The Gospel Tradition* (ConBNT, 15; Lund: Gleerup, 1986); *idem*, ‘Illuminating the Kingdom: Narrative Meshalim in the Synoptic Gospels’, in Wansbrough (ed.), *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition*, pp. 266-309; *idem*, ‘Secret’, pp. 1-18. Gerhardsson’s three articles (1979, 1983, 1986) were published in a combined English edition, Gerhardsson, *The Reliability of the Gospel Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001).

228 The scope of this dissertation does not allow a thorough presentation and analysis of Gerhardsson’s rabbinic source material; here the focus is on his basic analogy between the formal method of transmission, namely, memorization and replication of teaching, and early Christian transmission of ‘the Gospel tradition’.

229 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 19-189 (19-42).

230 See esp. Gerhardsson, *Memory*, p. 30; cf. Byrskog, ‘Introduction’, pp. 1-20 (6). Criticizing Gerhardsson of choosing the rabbinic material on grounds of an anachronistic supposition of its pre-70 origin is this unwarranted. See the discussion below.

He recognized that the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE and the Bar-Kokhba Revolt, ending in 135 CE, would have changed rabbinic views and actions; no significant new teaching techniques were introduced after 70 CE.²³¹ He also looked at the transmission techniques of the Hellenistic groups, due to the Hellenistic influences on Palestinian Judaism and the Jewish educational system.²³²

Gerhardsson understood the Torah as ‘the whole of the authoritative, sacred tradition (doctrine); not merely that which is codified in sacred Scripture, but also that which is carried forward in sacred oral tradition (מִשְׁנָה in a wide meaning),’ and used the term Torah ‘without qualification, as a collective designation for the Jews’ sacred authoritative tradition (doctrine) in its entirety.’²³³ On the one hand, the written Torah was not to be taken to denote merely the Pentateuch (with or without the Prophets and the Writings), but rather any authoritative transmission in written form. The oral Torah, מִשְׁנָה, on the other hand, referred to authoritative transmission in oral form and includes both ‘repetition’ and ‘that which is repeated.’²³⁴

Regarding the written Torah, Gerhardsson recognized the duality between a general tendency of the dynamic adaptation of the content of the text (e.g. targums and midrashic literature)²³⁵ in the different life situations of the Jewish people and a tendency to detailed, static reproduction of the text. Aware of the imaginative use of the texts in various contexts, Gerhardsson was focused on the most important contexts in which the text would have been reproduced in its traditional state.²³⁶ First, there was the professional context, where the Jewish scholars deliberately and methodically preserved the text free from distortion.²³⁷ Secondly, the Torah was passed on in the context of elementary education in which the accuracy of the text played an important role, even though the preservation was not the primary

231 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 77-78. For example, Gerhardsson (p. 77) argued that Rabbi Aqiba (ca. 40–137 CE) made important contributions ‘in connection with the re-editing of the traditional material in the oral Torah’ and ‘was the first to create a mishnah which could strictly be called published; but his mishnah did not ‘represent a total innovation in method for transmission, learning, and study’.

232 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 22-27, 86-89, 150.

233 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, p. 21. Italics original.

234 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 27-28. Gerhardsson (p. 27) pointed out the Tannaitic Rabbis’ tendency to use different terms for the study of the two disciplines: קרא for ‘to study the written Torah’ (or קרא את המקרא) and שנה for ‘to study the oral Torah’ (שנה את המשנה or).

235 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, p. 41: ‘[t]he tendency toward liberal (which is by no means the same as disrespectful) treatment of the Divine Word’...

236 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 40-42.

237 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 42, 43-55.

objective.²³⁸ Third, the correct reproduction of the text was of a great importance in the context of public worship, where the sacred texts were read (קרא) as sacred rites; though the primary purpose of liturgical reading was not the preservation of the text of the Torah, the regular reading of it as an unaltered entity functioned as an important context of preservation.²³⁹

Gerhardsson was primarily interested in the transmission of the oral Torah, which took place in different contexts within Judaism, the 'college' or 'school' (בית מדרש) being the most important one. While the sacred tradition was part of the daily lives of the Jews, the activity of methodical transmission and preservation of the oral Torah took place within the scholarly circles. By 'schools' Gerhardsson referred, not to buildings as such (though sometimes the 'schools' functioned in connection with the synagogues), but to the activity of programmatic and methodical transmission of the oral Torah by learned specialists, who also carried the sacred tradition to the communities in a disciplined fashion.²⁴⁰

It was argued by Gerhardsson that the transmission of the oral Torah was carried out in a fashion that was similar to the transmission of the written Torah. He pointed out, on the one hand, that the most important material in the oral Torah, (for example, *midrashic* focal texts, halakhah statements and haggadah passages), was formulated in a fixed way and could thus be labeled the oral text tradition. On the other hand, Gerhardsson paid attention to the 'complement of interpretative material', which was more dynamic and flexible: each item of oral text (e.g. a הלכה, which is a chapter or a tractate of הלכות) was accompanied by an interpretative exposition (תלמוד). Like in the case of the written Torah, the oral Torah was carried and handed on by the means of memorization; the teachers and pupils would have had access to the vast oral traditional material by the means of the memory, which functioned in the categories of the saying and narrative forms. While the oral Torah had an interpreting, particularizing, complementing, and sometimes modifying relation to the written Torah, the only major difference was that in the case of the former an oral text was learned by repetition and in the case

238 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 42, 56-66.

239 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 42, 67-70.

240 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 72-78. Gerhardsson (p. 73) listed the home (with its habits and customs of worship, and the character of its teaching), the synagogue and the Temple (with their public worship on feast-days, Sabbaths, and possibly, on certain ordinary weekdays), the places in which school teaching was carried on, and the court sessions, as the most important *centres* for the preservation of the Torah, stressing especially the role of schools.

of the latter a written text was learned from reading.²⁴¹

The distinction between the activities of memorization and interpretation by the teacher and his students in the Rabbinic schools was emphasized by Gerhardsson; they would never be confused, memorization always preceding interpretation. The basic method of transmission of the oral Torah was employed on all educational levels, and it consisted of two phases: the traditionist repeated the oral text for the students, and then required them to interpret it. Knowledge of the oral Torah was considered incomplete without interpretation, though on the lowest level of education this interpretation was often rudimentary.²⁴²

Gerhardsson devoted a considerable space for outlining how the mechanical Mishnah teaching was carried out and memorized. While he recognized that '[i]t is scarcely possible to reconstruct in detail the method used by the mishnah teachers,' a basic impression could be drawn from the source material: the teachers spelled out the oral texts numerous times for their pupils, 'with expressive articulation, careful pronunciation and faithful traditional cantillation,' and the pupils had to repeat it several times, in chorus and individually, after which the mistakes were corrected by the teacher.²⁴³ This basic impression can be further explicated by more specific details of the theory and practice of transmission: the general principle of 'learn first, and then understand' denotes conservation of the authentic words of the teacher, which is aimed at via condensation and abridgment,²⁴⁴ various mnemonic techniques,²⁴⁵ the help of written notes,²⁴⁶ techniques of repetition, and measures to maintain the vast received and learned oral text material.²⁴⁷

In the last chapter of his section on the transmission within Rabbinic Judaism, Gerhardsson divided the material of the oral Torah into the sayings tradition

241 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 79-83, 113-14; cf. Byrskog, 'Introduction,' pp. 1-20 (7).

242 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 93-112, 113-19.

243 Gerhardsson *Memory*, p. 115.

244 For example, Gerhardsson, *Memory*, p. 137, on the principle of דרך קצרה ('in the shortest way') as a common pedagogical tendency in Rabbinic Judaism. Condensation and abridgment included the attempt to summarize teachings epigrammatically, in synthetic summaries and inclusive fundamental statements, as well as the attempt to express oneself concisely and elliptically.

245 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, p. 153 contends: 'Elements of the tradition are grouped together with the help of a conscious mental connection, such as a definite catch-word. If the traditionist is sure of his catch-words he is able to call to mind entire blocks of material.'

246 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 157-63, pointed out that while Rabbinic students could use private notes to aid their memory, writing down the oral Torah was not approved officially; the written versions of the oral Torah were not considered authoritative.

247 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 168-70.

and the narrative tradition.²⁴⁸ Doctrinal material and additional inspired words and episodes concerning the deeds of the rabbis were typically introduced to the process of transmission. The students memorized brief halakhic statements with other new sayings; the fixing of the doctrinal statements in different forms at different stages of the process resulted in different forms of the same tradition. Haggadic material also came to include additional sayings, which the teachers wished their students to memorize. Sayings only spoken by the teacher on one occasion or in an everyday discussion, and even free and peripheral sayings, were sometimes incorporated into the tradition due to the students' reverence for their doctrinal authorities.²⁴⁹

Gerhardsson argued that the rabbinic narrative tradition was *tendentious* like any ancient tradition: it had an 'intention of preserving and spreading, in one way or the other, the many-faceted wisdom of the Torah in face of all the situations of life.'²⁵⁰ The eyewitness reports of the teachers' words and actions were important for the formulation of most of the narrative tradition (with the exception of the imaginative haggadah type of material); after witnessing his teacher's words and deeds, the student was able to illustrate the way the doctrinal authority would settle particular questions 'by repeating or applying a narrative tradition concerning the procedure of an earlier teacher.'²⁵¹ Thus, Gerhardsson accounted a process of transmission, which was based on solidity and flexibility, rigid memorization and dynamic adaptation to new questions and situations.

Gerhardsson employed the rabbinic methods, while trying to avoid imposing them inflexibly on early Christianity. He began by asking how the Jesus tradition was handed on after the apostolic period.²⁵² Both Papias and Irenaeus subscribed to the language of memorization and receiving of traditions. The early church held a traditional conception of the origins of the Gospels, which emphasized discipleship and memory: all four Gospels were derived from 'reliable traditionists who stand at one [Jesus' disciples] or two [the Apostles' disciples] removes from Jesus Christ.'²⁵³ The early writers were not very specific about the literary category (*Gattung*) of the Gospels, which were written down as an emergency measure,

248 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 171-89.

249 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 174-81.

250 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 181-82 (182).

251 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 183-84 (184).

252 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 194-207.

253 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, p. 194.

a reflection of the ancient skepticism toward the written word.²⁵⁴ Several factors indicate that, during the first period of the church (approx. until 250 CE), the Gospels were regarded as ‘Holy Word’ (ἱερός λόγος) or ‘oral (messianic) Torah’, which functioned mainly orally, rather than as ‘Holy Scriptures’ (ἱερὰ γραφαί).²⁵⁵ Gerhardsson argued that the majority of the disciples came ‘from that section of the people which looked to the learned Pharisees as its teachers and spiritual leaders’; in line with the Pharisaic distinction between oral and written Torah, the disciples began to compile collections of the Gospel material from oral tradition, also using written notes.²⁵⁶ Further, the doctrinal discussions at the time, for instance, in Irenaeus and Papias, showed that the Gospels were transmitted mainly orally and from memory, with a special notion of the individual traditionist from whom the traditions were derived.²⁵⁷

The Lukan author was central to Gerhardsson’s argument.²⁵⁸ He rejected ‘an extremely tenaciously-held misapprehension among exegetes’ (most notoriously by Dibelius and Bultmann) that an early Christian author must be *either* a purposeful theologian *or* a fairly reliable historian. Luke was a purposeful theologian with an apologetic interest of demonstrating the reliability of the tradition on the basis of the eyewitnesses; this did not undermine his faithfulness to the tradition and his relative reliability as a historian.²⁵⁹

According to Gerhardsson, Luke-Acts depict Jerusalem as the center for the

254 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 194-97.

255 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 197-207 (200). Gerhardsson suggested, first, that the Apostolic Fathers’ somewhat confusing way of using the Gospel material (as to, for example, the formulae of quotation, the source of references, the wording of the so-called quotations) showed that the Gospel (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον) was not regarded as *written* word of God in the same way as the OT. Secondly, he argued that, during the first two centuries, the NT text was not copied with the same precision as later, despite the care and respect shown for the tradition; certain types of textual variants, such as assimilations and harmonizations, could only be explained by the notion that the texts of the Gospels were not fixed *in the smallest detail*. Third, Gerhardsson indicated that the use of the codex form instead of the scroll, which was the supreme and undisputed vehicle of the written divine word in the Greco-Roman world and Judaism, suggested that the Gospel literature was oral in nature and based on notebooks.

256 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 201-2.

257 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, 202-7.

258 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 208-61.

259 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 208-13 (209); cf. e.g. Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 10-11; Bultmann, *Geschichte*, p. 52. Gerhardsson’s initial work may give the impression that the Lukan account is to be taken almost at face value; later he somewhat modified his position by deeming Luke’s presentation as ‘simplified and even tendentious’, yet maintaining the view that the Gospel traditions were reliably transmitted by people who were well informed about Jesus’ words and deeds. See e.g. Gerhardsson, *Reliability*, pp. 61-63.

teaching of the apostles.²⁶⁰ In Luke the twelve apostles are the witnesses to Jesus' earthly ministry and resurrection; this gives them the authority to witness and teach 'the word' in the name of their teacher Jesus, in a way reminiscent of the rabbinic disciples' way of speaking in the name of their masters.²⁶¹ In Luke's presentation, 'the word' functions as an analogy to the rabbinic oral Torah.²⁶² The speeches in Acts summarize the contents of 'the word',²⁶³ although Israel's Scriptures were also taken over by the church.²⁶⁴ In a rabbinic manner of study, the apostles engaged in 'the service of the word' (διακονία τοῦ λόγου), which included teaching and discussion to find its meaning.²⁶⁵ While there are similarities between Gerhardsson's study of Rabbinic Judaism and his presentation of Luke's view, the Christo-centric (rather than Torah-centric) nature of early Christianity is emphasized: the Lukan Jesus sets the example of midrashic exegesis,²⁶⁶ and the apostles carry on with Christological interpretation of Scriptures, using the message of Christ as a tool for examining Scriptures.²⁶⁷

Gerhardsson depicted Paul as a witness to the delivery of the Gospel tradition; the picture generally agrees with that of Luke-Acts.²⁶⁸ Gerhardsson shared with Harald Riesefeld the notion of Paul's use of technical language of transmission.²⁶⁹ Such language, occasionally used in the form of fixed formulas,²⁷⁰ would not have been employed when referring to hearing gossip or preaching.²⁷¹ Gerhardsson argued that Paul's preaching (*kerygma*), which he says to have received directly

260 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 214-20, also p. 334: 'An intensive work on the logos was also carried on in other churches, but the Jerusalem church was the centre of the early Christianity and the leaders of this congregation was considered as the highest doctrinal authority of the whole Church.' Gerhardsson, *Reliability*, p. 50, later somewhat modified this position.

261 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 220-25.

262 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 224-25: '[The word] encompasses not only the cardinal points in the history of salvation (the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ), but in fact everything which Christ both did and taught, and everything which happened to him, from the beginning of his public ministry: everything of which the Apostles are eyewitnesses.'

263 Cf. Acts 2.22-36; 3.12-26; 4.8-12; 5.29-32; 10.34-43.

264 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 225-34.

265 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 234-45.

266 E.g. Lk. 4.16f., 24.27, 32, 44-45.

267 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 227-34 (228-30).

268 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 262-323; cf. Byrskog, 'Introduction', pp. 1-20 (9); Eve, Behind, p. 37.

269 E.g. παραλαμβάνειν; παραδίδόναι; cf. Riesefeld, *The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings*, pp. 17-20; contra Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 16-22. Riesefeld argued that this language was not used of the transmission of vague folklore material.

270 E.g. 1 Cor. 11.23-25; 15.3-7.

271 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 13-14, 265-66, 281-83, 288-91. See e.g. 1 Cor. 11.2, 23-25; 15.1, 3-7; Gal. 1.9; 1 Thess. 2.13; 4.1; 2 Thess. 2.15; 3.6.

from the Lord (Gal. 1.11-12), was to be distinguished from Paul's teaching (*didache*): the former mainly concerned Paul's preaching of the law-free Gospel to the Gentiles, while the latter included what he received from the tradition and passed on in his teaching.²⁷² Paul's teaching originated from Jerusalem and was probably handed on to him by Peter during Paul's visit to the city (Gal. 1.18). Paul's seeking of recognition for his apostleship and Gospel from Jerusalem indicates that he respected the city as the doctrinal center of the original apostles (Gal. 2.1-2, 9).²⁷³ Paul nevertheless acted as an individual with authority to handle the Jesus tradition. For Paul it was due to his encounter with the risen Christ that he could view himself as a part of the chain of authoritative apostles.²⁷⁴ As a former Hillelite Pharisee, he transmitted and interpreted the tradition in the same way as the oral Torah.²⁷⁵ Gerhardsson argued that the evidence from Paul supports that authoritative individuals, not an anonymous collective, transmitted and interpreted the Gospel tradition, which in essence derived from Jesus himself.

In the final chapter of *Memory & Manuscript*, Gerhardsson outlined a brief sketch of the origins of the Gospel tradition on the basis of the previous chapters. He argued that the origins of the tradition lie, first, in Jesus of Nazareth, namely, his teaching, works, suffering, death, and his disciples' experiences of the empty tomb and, secondly, in the Torah, which Jesus as a historical figure held sacred and, through interpretation, wished to 'transform into the messianic Torah.'²⁷⁶ The tradition was transmitted and written down by Jesus' followers, who regarded him as more than an earthly teacher: the Messiah, Christ, the Son of Man, the Son of God, the Lord etc. Gerhardsson argued that such high views can be disconnected from neither the impression Jesus had made on his disciples nor from his own understanding of his ministry, position, and person; such a notion of authority would lead the earliest Christians to transmit the tradition accurately.²⁷⁷

Gerhardsson stressed that, like any Jewish teacher in that context, Jesus required his disciples to commit his teachings to memory.²⁷⁸ Within the earliest

272 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 262-73 (273).

273 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 274-80.

274 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 280-82

275 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 288-323 (302-6). According to Gerhardsson, Paul produced his doctrinal, ethical, and ecclesiastical 'Talmud' on the basis of the Scriptures and the 'Mishnah', which was the Gospel tradition, and communicated it to the early Christian congregations.

276 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 324-35 (327).

277 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 324-25.

278 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 326-29.

church in Jerusalem, Jesus' closest disciples (the *collegium* of Apostles) were the first authorities of the Gospel tradition. It was their responsibility to intensively study the Scriptures ('midrash exegesis') and discuss doctrinal questions. In a rabbinic manner, both authoritative sayings of Jesus and narrative accounts of his deeds were memorized, repeated, expounded, and applied.²⁷⁹

Gerhardsson rejected the form-critical idea that the primary modes of transmission were preaching, exhortation, and apologetics.²⁸⁰ The traditions were probably used in all these and other activities like prayer, sacred meals, charitable activity, exorcism, and healing. However, the essential *Sitz im Leben* for the 'actualization', collection, and fixing of the tradition took place when it was taught in a manner reminiscent of the rabbinic teaching techniques. The collegium of apostles in Jerusalem presented the tradition on the basis of eyewitness accounts, relating their teaching to the Scriptures.²⁸¹ Gerhardsson did not address the question of interpretation of the tradition in these situations.

Besides the technical transmission and the reliability of the tradition, the change and variability in the tradition was addressed by Gerhardsson.²⁸² He allowed for the change and development of the tradition to a certain degree. Jesus might have delivered some of his sayings in more than one version; there was the category of 'theme and variations' in Jewish teaching. Also, most of the Gospel material is haggadic and was not transmitted as literally as halakhic material.²⁸³ Furthermore, adaptations might have occurred at an early stage when the material was gathered. The complex translation process (mainly from Aramaic to Greek) may also have resulted in variations. The possibility of small alterations due to faulty memorization could not be excluded. The material was also subject to redaction when it was interpreted and placed in new contexts.²⁸⁴

To sum up Gerhardsson's position, Jesus and his first followers purposefully

279 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 329-32.

280 See Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 9-16. 'Preaching' was the primary use of the tradition according to Dibelius. 'Eyewitnesses and ministers of the word' in Lk. 1.2 was taken as a reference to a group of early Christian preachers, whose preaching initiated the growth of the tradition from which the Gospel material was later derived by the Evangelists.

281 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 330-31, 335; also Gerhardsson, *Reliability*, pp. 41-44.

282 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, p. 334: '[i]f the gospel tradition was carried in this way, how can there be variations between different parallel traditions?'

283 This raises the question as to where the literally transmitted halakhic material is found.

284 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 334-35. Gerhardsson allowed, for instance, that the baptism and temptation narratives were creations of Christian scribes. See Gerhardsson, *Reliability*, pp. 49-58 (55-56).

aimed at the accurate transmission of the Jesus traditions. Within the Gospels, the traditions are interpreted and do not offer a completely historically accurate picture of what actually happened during Jesus' earthly ministry. The Jesus traditions are nevertheless basically reliable: they are not the result of the creative work of the anonymous community in its changing circumstances and needs, like Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann had argued.

2.2.3 CRITIQUE & EVALUATION

Gerhardsson's view evoked a heated scholarly debate.²⁸⁵ His rabbinic model

285 For discussions and criticisms of Gerhardsson's view, see e.g. William D. Davies, 'Reflections on a Scandinavian Approach to the "Gospel Tradition"', in *Neotestamentica et Patristica. Freundesgabe Oscar Cullmann* (NovTSup, 6; Leiden: Brill, 1962), pp. 14-34; McArthur, *In Search of the Historical Jesus*, pp. 33-40; Peter H. Davids, 'The Gospels and the Jewish Tradition: Twenty Years After Gerhardsson', in R. T. France and D. Wenham (eds.), *Gospel Perspectives, Vol. 1: Studies of History and Tradition in the Four Gospels* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1980), pp. 75-99; Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer, passim*; *idem*, 'Jesus as Preacher and Teacher', pp. 185-210; Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 8-14; *idem*, 'Conclusion: The Work of Birger Gerhardsson in Perspective', in Kelber and Byrskog (eds.), *Jesus in Memory*, pp. 173-206; E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, p. 15; E. P. Sanders & Margret Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels*, pp. 129-32; Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, pp. 1031-35; Jacob Neusner, 'In Quest of the Historical Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai', *HTR* 59 (1966), pp. 391-413; *idem*, 'The Rabbinic Traditions About the Pharisees Before A.D. 70: The Problem of Oral Transmission', in Neusner (ed.), *The Origins of Judaism, Vol. 2: The Pharisees and Other Sects* (New York: Garland, 1990), pp. 160-62; Philip S. Alexander, 'Orality in Pharisaic-Rabbinic Judaism at the Turn of the Eras', in Wansbrough (ed.), *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition*, pp. 159-84; Ben F. Meyer, 'Some Consequences of Birger Gerhardsson's Account of the Origins of the Gospel Tradition', in Wansbrough (ed.), *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition*, pp. 424-40; Shemaryahu Talmon, 'Oral Tradition and Written Transmission, or the Heard and Seen Word in Judaism of the Second Temple Period', in Wansbrough (ed.), *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition*, pp. 121-58; Barry W. Henaut, *Oral Tradition and the Gospels: The Problem of Mark 4* (JSNTSup, 82; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), pp. 41-53; Byrskog, *Jesus the Only Teacher, passim*; *idem*, *Story as History, passim*; *idem*, 'Introduction', pp. 1-20; Martin Jaffee, 'Oral Tradition in the Writings of Rabbinic Oral Torah: On Theorizing Rabbinic Orality', *Oral Tradition* 14 (1999), pp. 3-32; *idem*, *Torah in the Mouth: Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism, 200 BCE-400 CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), *passim*; *idem*, 'Honi the Circler in Manuscript and Memory: An Experiment in "Re-Oralizing" the Talmudic Text', in Kelber and Byrskog (eds.), *Jesus in Memory*, pp. 87-111; Harm W. Hollander, 'The Words of Jesus: From Oral Traditions to Written Record in Paul and Q', *NovT* 42 (2000), pp. 340-57 (342-44); Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 197-98; *idem*, *The Oral Gospel Tradition*, pp. 213-29; Michael F. Bird, 'The Formation of the Gospels in the Setting of Early Christianity', *WTJ* 67 (2005), pp. 113-34; *idem*, *Gospel*, pp. 83-90; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 249-52; Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38; Terence C. Mournet, 'The Jesus Tradition as Oral Tradition', in Kelber and Byrskog (eds.), *Jesus in Memory*, pp. 39-61; David E. Aune, 'Jesus Tradition and the Pauline Letters', in Kelber and Byrskog (eds.), *Jesus in Memory*, pp. 63-86; Loveday Alexander, 'Memory and Tradition in the Hellenistic Schools', in W. Kelber and S. Byrskog (eds.), *Jesus in Memory: Traditions in Oral and Scribal Perspectives*; Alan Kirk, 'Memory', in Kelber and Byrskog (eds.), *Jesus in Memory*, pp. 155-72; Kankaanniemi, *Guards*, pp. 59-62; Rodríguez, *Structuring, passim*; *idem*, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 34-36; Eve, *Behind*, pp. 33-46.

received much criticism immediately after its publication,²⁸⁶ the initial reactions by Morton Smith and Jacob Neusner in particular being so dismissive that Gerhardsson was largely denied a hearing for some time.²⁸⁷ However, these early criticisms must be read in light of subsequent discussion; an important indication of the unfairness of the early dismissals is Neusner's own preface for the 1998 edition of Gerhardsson's work, where he apologizes for initially following Smith's simplistic misrepresentation of Gerhardsson's view.²⁸⁸

The most common criticism against Gerhardsson is anachronism: Gerhardsson is accused of naïvely reading *later* rabbinic techniques into the first-century situation.²⁸⁹ This criticism is, however, at least partly unwarranted, as has been more recently argued by several scholars.²⁹⁰ First, although Gerhardsson later admitted to have written his dissertation at a time when scholarship was more optimistic about the use of rabbinic material to illustrate earlier periods,²⁹¹ he never suggested that it should *simply be read back into Jesus' time*. Rather, even though the pedagogical techniques were refined after 70 and 135 CE, *completely new methods* were not invented by the rabbis. Thus, the rabbinic materials would have conveyed the basic idea of what first-century Jewish teaching methods were like.²⁹²

286 For the lists of early reviews, see Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. xxiii, xxiv. See esp. the sympathetic yet critical early review by Joseph A. Fitzmyer, 'Note: Memory and Manuscript: The Origins and Transmission of the Gospel Tradition', *TS* 23 (1962), pp. 442-57.

287 See Morton Smith, 'A Comparison of Early Christian and Early Rabbinic Tradition', *JBL* 82 (1963), pp. 169-76 (176), who famously deemed Gerhardsson's thesis 'impossible to conceive'; Neusner, 'In Quest of the Historical', pp. 391-413. Even in his 2011 article for the *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, Arland J. Hultgren, 'Form Criticism and Jesus Research', pp. 1:649-71 (671), is able to state in quite a dismissing fashion: 'Their viewpoint [that of Riesenfeld and Gerhardsson], however, has not been accepted beyond a small circle of scholars.' My impression is that Gerhardsson has received much more attention and credit in recent scholarship than such a statement accounts for.

288 Neusner, 'Foreword', in Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. xxv-xlvi.

289 Most notably, Smith, 'Comparison', pp. 169-76; also Talmon, 'Oral Tradition and Written Transmission', pp. 121-58 (132-33); Davids, 'The Gospels and the Jewish Tradition', pp. 75-99 (76-81); Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 14; Terence C. Mournet, *Oral Tradition and Literary Dependency*, p. 64.

290 See e.g. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 198; Bird, 'Formation', pp. 113-34 (125-27); Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 250-51; Byrskog, 'Introduction', pp. 1-20 (6); Eve, *Behind*, p. 39.

291 See Gerhardsson's preface for the 1998 edition of his work, Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. xii-xiii. Gerhardsson's rabbinic source material is not dealt with in detail here, as such a discussion would require an in-depth critique in light of recent scholarship of the rabbinic literature, a task outside the scope of this dissertation.

292 See e.g. Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. xii-xiii, 30, 77-78; *idem*, *Tradition*, pp. 14, 16-21; also *idem*, *Reliability*, p. 73. All italics are mine.

Secondly, Gerhardsson paid attention to the larger context of Greco-Roman education, assuming that mechanical methods of oral transmission were not explicitly Jewish or rabbinic.²⁹³ It has been confirmed by other scholars that these methods, such as memorization and replication of teaching, were common in the wider ancient world at the time.²⁹⁴ The basic historical analogy may thus hold despite the charge of anachronism: the core elements of the mechanical teaching method, employed by Jewish rabbis, probably existed prior to 70 CE, and can illuminate early Christian transmission of traditions.²⁹⁵ It is only fair to mention that the Jewish rabbis probably were not the first to use memory in education.

There is, nevertheless, more to be said with regard to the question of anachronism. Gerhardsson's rather optimistic view of the continuity between Pharisaism and Rabbinic Judaism has more recently led to the criticism that he seems to have assumed, like the form critics, that before the writing of the Gospels the Jesus traditions were purely oral and did not make use of writing.²⁹⁶ While the Pharisees probably had an oral tradition independent of Scripture,²⁹⁷ the notion of a purely oral transmission of 'oral Torah'²⁹⁸ is probably a later Amoraic construction (from the third century CE onwards) and should be applied to neither the Pharisaism of the pre-70 CE period nor to the transmission of the Jesus traditions in the same period.²⁹⁹ Martin Jaffee has argued extensively that,

293 E.g. Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 22-27, 86-89, 150; cf. Byrskog, 'Introduction', pp. 1-20 (6).

294 Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, ch. 3; Bird, 'Formation', pp. 113-34 (126); Alexander, 'Memory and Tradition in the Hellenistic Schools', pp. 113-53 (135-39, 152); so also Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 250-51; Eve, *Behind*, p. 39. On 'memorization' as a method of instruction in the Greco-Roman world, see e.g. Quintilian, *Inst. Orot.* 1.3.1; 2.4.15; Seneca, *Contr.* 1. pref. 2, 19; Plutarch, *lib. Educ.* 13; Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 1.48; Xenophon, *Symp.* 3.5-6; Diogenes Laertius, *Vit.* 10.1.12; Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), p. 28; *idem*, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (2 vols.; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004), pp. 1:57-62.

295 See e.g. Davies, 'Reflections on a Scandinavian Approach', pp. 14-34 (10, 33-34); Alexander, 'Orality in Pharisaic-Rabbinic Judaism', pp. 159-84; Bird, 'Formation', pp. 113-34 (126-27). When asked about his impression of Gerhardsson's view at a meeting with the Historical Jesus Research group (Åbo Akademi) in Helsinki on January 4, 2015, Craig A. Evans commented on the basic analogy, '...there is reasonable evidence to believe that there was some continuity from the proto-rabbinic phase to the post-70 era.' Evans indicated that Gerhardsson is 'more right than wrong'.

296 Davids, 'The Gospels and the Jewish Tradition', pp. 75-99 (79); Talmon, 'Oral Tradition and Written Transmission', pp. 121-58 (146-48); Eve, *Behind*, pp. 39-40; cf. Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 71-78, 79-83, 113-14.

297 Cf. Mk 7.1-15 and Josephus, *Ant.* 13.297-298; Bird, 'Formation', pp. 113-34 (126).

298 According to Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 251, Gerhardsson 'may...have been misled by the rabbis' principle of exclusively oral transmission of "oral Torah" (expressed in b. Gittin 60a: 'Words orally transmitted you may not write').

299 See esp. Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth*, ch. 7; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 251; Eve, *Behind*, pp. 39-40.

despite the general preference of a living teacher over written books in antiquity, there never was a purely oral process of transmission.³⁰⁰ In the Jewish circles, the Pharisees wrote down their ‘traditions of the fathers’,³⁰¹ and there were other highly literate Jewish groups at the time of Jesus (for example, the Qumran community).³⁰² The transmission of rabbinic material always involved an interplay between oral performance and written text.³⁰³ Retrospectively, it seems, therefore, that Gerhardsson’s rabbinic model did not take the role of written text seriously in the pre-70 CE period.

This criticism of Gerhardsson raises the question as to whether the historical Jesus or the disciples could have displayed the literary skills required by the rabbinic-type transmission situation, envisaged by Gerhardsson. After all, Jesus originated and mainly ministered in rural Galilee, which probably had a low rate of literacy,³⁰⁴ and according to the Jesus traditions, called as his leading disciples three fishermen, Peter, James, and John, of whom literacy might not have been required.³⁰⁵ As for the disciples, Gerhardsson argued for a picture contradictory to that of the Jesus traditions: the majority of the disciples probably came ‘from that section of the people which looked to the learned Pharisees as its teachers and spiritual leaders’,³⁰⁶ which indicates that they were probably familiar with the Pharisaic teaching methods. However, Gerhardsson’s explanation in *Tradition & Transmission*, namely, that the disciples are merely depicted as ‘uneducated’ in the Gospels for ideological purposes, is somewhat wanting. First, his allowance of such ideological changes may undermine his basic task of trying to establish the *reliability* of the tradition.³⁰⁷ Secondly, besides his recognition that ‘[t]he Christian Church has always regarded the twelve as unlearned men of the

300 Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth*, *passim*; *idem*, ‘Oral Tradition in the Writings of Rabbinic Oral Torah’, pp. 3-32 (23-24): ‘Rabbinic oral-performative tradition must be imagined as a diverse phenomenon, incorporating aspects of rote memorization of documents (fixed-text transmission) and more fluid oral performative aspects (free-text transmission)’. Also, p. 24, n. 30: ‘...I do not follow him [Gerhardsson] in claiming a total absence of written textuality for either tradition.’

301 Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth*, ch. 3.

302 Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth*, ch. 2.

303 See e.g. Jaffee, ‘Oral Tradition in the Writings of Rabbinic Oral Torah’, pp. 3-32; *idem*, *Torah in the Mouth*, *passim*; Eve, *Behind*, pp. 39-40.

304 See e.g. Keith, *Jesus’ Literacy*, pp. 71-123; *idem*, ‘Early Christian Book Culture’, pp. 22-39 (35-36); Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*; also, Eve, *Behind*, pp. 10-11; contra Millard, *Reading and Writing*. Cf. ch. 2.1.3; 2.3.2.

305 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 40-41.

306 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, p. 202.

307 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 40-41; cf. Gerhardsson, *Tradition*, pp. 24-26.

people,' Gerhardsson speaks of the development that must have taken place in the disciples' educational skills during the decades of leading the work of the church.³⁰⁸ This explanation begs the question, as to how exactly Gerhardsson viewed the historical situation. Were the disciples familiar with the Jewish (Pharisaic) teaching methods due to their background (unlike the Jesus traditions indicate), or did their learning increase gradually? Despite this ambiguity, Gerhardsson makes a fair point regarding 'the development of specifically *Christian* exegesis and theology' prior to the writing of the Gospels: the phenomenon needs to be explained and cannot be bypassed with light remarks about the education level of Jesus' disciples at the time of their call.³⁰⁹

As for the historical Jesus, Gerhardsson's analogy between the teaching role of Jesus and the title 'rabbi' has a ring of historical truth to it. Although it remains debated whether or to what extent writing served as an actual control on the transmission of Jesus traditions,³¹⁰ Jesus' role as a Jewish teacher indicates that a rabbi-pupil relationship may reflect to some degree Jesus' relation to his disciples. While Jesus' charismatic prophetic leadership does not suggest the typical attributes of a rabbi or scribe,³¹¹ and there are direct claims in the Gospel material that Jesus did not teach like a scribe,³¹² 'rabbi' is not a completely inadequate definition of his ministry of teaching; while Jesus surely was not 'a convenient Jewish rabbi' but rather fitted into many categories of leadership (such as sage, healer, prophet), teaching was a very central activity in his ministry, ῥαββί

308 Gerhardsson, *Tradition*, p. 25. The work would have included preaching, teaching, searching the Scriptures, discussions on doctrinal questions, and exercising discipline and apologetics.

309 Gerhardsson, *Tradition*, pp. 25-26. Italics are original. See Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 288; Riesenfeld, *Jesus als Lehrer*, pp. 497-98, who argue that there could have been individuals within the Jesus movement who were from classes that could read and write.

310 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, p. 201-2; *idem*, 'Illuminating', pp. 266-309 (307), argued that written notebooks, such as collections of Jesus' sayings or accounts of his life, could have been used in as aids to memory by early Christians prior to the full written Gospels. However, see Eve, *Behind*, pp. 8-14: the notes 'remained little more than an aide-memoire'; cf. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 289: the notebooks would reinforce the capacity of oral transmission to preserve the traditions faithfully. Also, see Keith, 'Early Christian Book Culture', pp. 22-39 (31 n. 42, 37), who, while not denying that early Christian manuscripts could sometimes function as aids to memory, emphasizes 'their broader social significance' in maintaining and articulating group identity. Cf. ch. 2.1.3; 2.3.2.

311 Martin Hengel, *The Charismatic Leader and His Followers* (trans. J. C. G. Greig; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1981), pp. 42-57; Charles K. Barrett, *Jesus and the Gospel Tradition* (London: SPCK, 1967), pp. 9-10; in Bird, 'Formation', pp. 113-34 (124); *idem*, *Gospel*, p. 85.

312 Cf. Mk 1.22; Mt. 7.29; Smith, 'Comparison', pp. 169-76 (172); in Bird, 'Formation', pp. 113-34 (124); *idem*, *Gospel*, p. 85.

being the most frequently used title for Jesus in the traditions preserved in the Gospels.³¹³

Recent scholarship suggests that Jesus' teaching method seems to have conveyed, at least to some audiences, that he was a scribal-literate Jewish teacher, although in reality he may only have appeared as one.³¹⁴ It may not be too far-fetched to assume some Pharisaic-scribal kind of influence on the disciples from Jesus; teaching and behavior were taken as a challenge by and led into rivalry with the Pharisees, who were held in high regard as local religious authorities.³¹⁵ This raises the question as to why Jesus would have employed drastically different methods from those of his opponents.³¹⁶ Also, would it have been impossible for the disciples to reflect, at least, a growing interest in a pedagogical method typical in that context? After all, Gerhardsson originally never said that Jesus was a Tannaitic-type rabbi and his disciples were themselves formally educated Pharisees, although he did imply that they were not 'uneducated' in the sense that the Gospels indicate.³¹⁷ Gerhardsson's model did, therefore, draw scholarly attention to important historical features concerning Jesus as a Jewish teacher and his disciples, often neglected within the form-critical paradigm.

Some have objected to Gerhardsson's thesis on the grounds of there being no clear presentation of a rigid handing of traditions by Jesus and his followers in

313 See e.g. Günther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth* (trans. I. McLuskey, F. McLuskey, J. M. Robinson; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1973), pp. 57, 83, 96-97; Bruce D. Chilton, *Profiles of a Rabbi* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989); *idem*, *Rabbi Jesus* (New York: Doubleday, 2000); Bird, 'Formation', pp. 113-34 (126); cf. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 165-88, on Jesus' literacy; for ῥαββί in the Gospels, see BDAG (2000), p. 902.

314 See Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 165-88 (188), who argues this on the basis of 'the various early Christian Jesus-memories that appear in the sources'.

315 On the Pharisees, see Meier, *A Marginal Jew, III*, pp. 289-388 (339): 'All Gospel sources testify to Jesus' interaction with Pharisees during the public ministry. The tone of the interaction is often adversarial...both Jesus and the Pharisees were competing to influence the main body of Palestinian Jews and win them over to their respective visions of what God was calling Israel to be and do at a critical juncture in its history.' However, see also the notions in Meier, *A Marginal Jew, III*, p. 340, that there are expansions on the Pharisees' roles in the Gospels of Matthew and John as part of their polemical agendas.

316 See Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 165-188, who argues that Jesus may not have been taken as a serious scribal-level authority by his rivalries due to his lack of formal education, but nevertheless had to be reckoned with publicly in order to demonstrate that he was not one of the scribal-literate authorities; however, these situations could have the exact opposite effect, leading many in the audience to conclude that Jesus was one of such formally educated authorities.

317 Cf. Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 201-2: the majority of the disciples probably came 'from that section of the people which looked to the learned Pharisees as its teachers and spiritual leaders'. Also, Gerhardsson, *Reliability*, p. 73: 'I have never said that Jesus was only a rabbi, still less that he was a rabbi of the late Tannaitic type...'

the New Testament.³¹⁸ It is, however, not clear how strong of an objection the lack of such evidence really is. Eve points out that ‘if it were the case that Jesus and his followers were using the teaching and learning techniques common to their culture...there would be no particular reason for the New Testament authors to draw attention to the fact; they would be more likely simply to take it for granted.’³¹⁹ In fact, the Gospel material does depict Jesus using his disciples to transmit his teachings to others during his lifetime, which suggests at least some form of memorization on the part of the disciples.³²⁰ Indeed, it is not implausible to argue that the use of rabbinic-like terminology in the NT³²¹ ‘provides at least one significant point of contact between the transmission of traditions in early Christianity and rabbinic Judaism.’³²²

In line with Gerhardsson, some scholars have aimed to present other historical evidence of systematic memorization in the tradition process.³²³ Some of the suggestions are not compelling. Bird is probably right in contending that Riesner’s suggestion, that the references to Jesus’ house in the Gospel of Mark explicitly refer to ‘Jesus’ school of teaching,’ is far-fetched.³²⁴ Also, Riesenfeld’s suggestion, that Paul prepared himself for apostolic work by committing the Jesus tradition to memory during his three-year stay in Arabia, seems somewhat oversimplified.³²⁵ Although Paul probably would have reflected the Jesus traditions against his own background in Pharisaism, there is no clear evidence that he actively memorized the tradition specifically during that time in Arabia. However, Byrskog’s notion of the Matthean community does not strike as unimaginable. According to him,

318 Smith, ‘Comparison’, pp. 169-76 (174-75); Barrett, *Jesus and the Gospel Tradition*, pp. 9-10; Sanders & Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels*, p. 142; Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 14; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 198; cf. Eve, *Behind*, p. 43.

319 Eve, *Behind*, p. 43, despite his rather skeptical view on Gerhardsson’s overall thesis.

320 See e.g. Mk 6.7-13; Lk. 9.1-6; 10.1-16; Mt. 9.36-10.15; Davids, ‘The Gospels and the Jewish Tradition’, pp. 75-99 (84); Bird, ‘Formation’, pp. 113-34 (126). This is admitted also by Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 198, who nevertheless maintains that the model of memorization does not account for ‘divergencies in the tradition’.

321 The terminological connections are presented in Bird, ‘Formation’, pp. 113-34 (126).

322 Bird, ‘Formation’, pp. 113-34 (126); cf. Riesenfeld, *The Gospel Tradition*, p. 16; Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 290-91; *idem*, *Tradition*, p. 7. However, note the criticism by Eve, *Behind*, p. 41, that the NT usage of παράδοσις of the Christian tradition is entirely Pauline, and Paul’s use may reflect his Pharisaic background more than the teaching methods of Jesus and his disciples (already in Smith, ‘Comparison’, pp. 169-76).

323 See Bird, ‘Formation’, pp. 113-34 (125); also *idem*, *Gospel*, pp. 85-86.

324 Bird, ‘Formation’, pp. 113-34 (125); cf. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, pp. 437-39; e.g. Mk 2.1, 3.20, 9.33.

325 Bird, ‘Formation’, pp. 113-34 (125); *idem*, *Gospel*, pp. 85-86; cf. Riesenfeld, *The Gospel Tradition*, pp. 17-18; also, already Riesenfeld, *The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings*, pp. 19-20.

the community focused on Jesus as the teacher and applied his teachings to their community life, as they transmitted them in a careful and controlled manner. This suggestion is possible, given the pedagogic atmosphere of the time.³²⁶

While some role of memorization in the process of transmission is widely recognized, Gerhardsson's model does not seem to take into account the variation that has taken place within the Jesus traditions.³²⁷ In other words, there seems to have been no real concern among the Synoptic authors to preserve memorized material in a fixed form.³²⁸ Gerhardsson allowed some variability and flexibility and would probably consider such changes compatible with his theory of verbatim learning, paralleled within the rabbinic tradition; one of his central arguments was that most of the Gospel tradition consists of haggadic material, which is often transmitted with more variation in wording than halakhic material.³²⁹ Nevertheless, while it has been pointed out that the rabbinic material neither remained stable in the course of transmission nor aimed at preservation of the *ipsissima verba* but rather formulaic summaries,³³⁰ it is debatable whether the variations in the Synoptic material really resemble the ones in the rabbinic material referred to by Gerhardsson.³³¹ Therefore, Gerhardsson's model of flexibility and variation needs to be qualified.

There were probably 'differences between eyewitness memories' and 'the ways the individual members of the twelve told the traditions/memories' from the beginning; the Jesus traditions must have been told and retold by other teachers 'in the absence of eyewitnesses already during the first period'.³³² This would

326 Byrskog, *Jesus the Only Teacher*, pp. 235, 329, 401; pace Bird, 'Formation', pp. 113-34 (125).

327 E.g. E. Earle Ellis, 'The Synoptic Gospels and History', in Chilton & Evans (eds.), *Authenticating the Activities of Jesus* (NTTS, 28; Leiden: Brill, 1999) pp. 49-57 (56); Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 198; Bird, 'Formation', pp. 113-34 (124-25); Eve, *Behind*, pp. 41-42; also, see Kankaanniemi, *Guards*, p. 60 n. 179: 'The most poignant criticism against Gerhardsson's theory concerns the differences in Synoptic descriptions of the same events and sayings.'

328 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 41-42; cf. e.g. Mt. 5.3-11; Lk. 6.20-26; Mt. 6.9-13; Lk. 11.2-4.

329 Eve, *Behind*, p. 42; cf. Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 334-35; *idem*, *Tradition*, pp. 31-47; *idem*, 'Illuminating', pp. 266-309 (298-99); *idem*, *Reliability*, pp. 51-57, 71, 79-81; 'The Secret', pp. 1-18 (15-16). It is questionable whether Gerhardsson succeeded in demonstrating the analogous 'haggadic' and 'halakhic' materials in the Jesus traditions.

330 Alexander, 'Orality in Pharisaic-Rabbinic Judaism', pp. 159-84 (172-76, 182); Eve, *Behind*, p. 42.

331 Eve, *Behind*, p. 42, points out that '[i]f Gerhardsson were content to argue that the Jesus tradition preserved the gist rather than the wording of Jesus' sayings this might not be too problematic for him, but he makes a point of distinguishing between the way the Gospel tradition preserved Jesus' words and the way other New Testament writers as Paul use the gist of Jesus' teaching in paraphrase.'

332 Kankaanniemi, *Guards*, p. 62; also see Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 201, on Kelber, *Oral and*

inevitably have resulted in some variation in the traditions, as well as flexibility and freedom in the communities in which the different versions of eyewitness memories and interpretations of the traditions were told and retold. When different versions of the same story were heard from the twelve by other teachers, some freedom must have been taken in the retelling.³³³

It is also argued that the process of transmission cannot be viewed as ‘systematic impartation of encyclopedic knowledge’, in other words, ‘rigid’, due to the itinerant and urgent nature of Jesus’ mission to proclaim the kingdom.³³⁴ This criticism, however, partly misses the point; it is at the very heart of Gerhardsson’s thesis that the formal process of teaching and transmission of tradition was *a separate activity* from its use in other contexts,³³⁵ imaginably also in proclamation to ‘other villages’ which ‘desperately had to hear the gospel of the kingdom.’³³⁶ The tenability of Gerhardsson’s model is not so much determined by the social use of the tradition, say, in urgent situations of proclamation, as by whether or not there could have, besides that, existed a systematic setting for handing on of traditions among the disciples of Jesus. It is not unimaginable that Jesus would have applied the basic pedagogical method of his time when with his disciples, although neither the effect of the social use of the tradition on its transmission nor the flexibility in its telling cannot be done away with.³³⁷

Another major criticism of Gerhardsson’s thesis, namely, that his notion of the controlling *collegium* formed by the twelve apostles in Jerusalem is implausible, has been presented by several scholars.³³⁸ First of all, it needs to be acknowledged that Gerhardsson never claimed Jerusalem to be the sole context of ‘the work

Written, that ‘oral retelling of Jesus’ words will already have begun during Jesus’ lifetime’.

333 Kankaanniemi, *Guards*, pp. 62-63. Kankaanniemi, *Guards*, pp. 59-60, is sympathetic to Gerhardsson’s model in many respects, while adhering to what he labels ‘the reconstruction of the so-called Scandinavian school and Dunn-Bailey-Wright model of the *informal controlled* transmission of traditions’.

334 Bird, ‘Formation’, pp. 113-34 (125), referring to Crossan, *The Historical Jesus*, p. xxxi: ‘Jesus left behind him thinkers not memorizers, disciples not reciters, people not parrots’.

335 Cf. e.g. Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 330-31, 335; *idem*, *Reliability*, pp. 41-44; Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 174; *idem*, ‘Introduction’, pp. 1-20 (10).

336 Bird, ‘Formation’, pp. 113-34 (125).

337 It does not occur implausible to me that there could have been both conservative forces (esp. authoritative individuals) and significant flexibility involved in the process of transmission.

338 E.g. Bird, ‘Formation’, pp. 113-34 (125); Davies, ‘Reflections on a Scandinavian Approach’, pp. 14-34 (25-27); Davids, ‘The Gospels and the Jewish Tradition’, pp. 75-99 (87); Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 14; Eve, *Behind*, pp. 40-41, 44-45; Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, p. 36; cf. Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 214-20, 330-31, 334.

of the word', although he stressed the centrality of the leaders of the Jerusalem church.³³⁹ He somewhat qualified his position later by stating that the evangelists took their traditions from different sources.³⁴⁰

In contrast to the criticism, Loveday Alexander contends that such a *collegium* could have existed on the analogy of Hellenistic schools. Luke's picture would have had to make sense to his audience, and such a *collegium* is what would be expected in the light of Hellenistic school tradition. Also, the need to develop the tradition would not have been left to 'chances of memory' because of its importance as a bearer of the community's identity.³⁴¹ This argument is, however, inconclusive regarding the historicity of the *collegium*: it could have been the case that Luke coined the idea exactly because of the expectations of his community. On the other hand, even Eve, who otherwise deems Gerhardsson's model too scribal and related to the medium of writing, admits that such a *collegium* would not be impossible to envisage if orally operated.³⁴²

Aside from the criticism of the medium of writing, the important role of controlling authorities during the transmission process should not be underestimated.³⁴³ Rafael Rodríguez is probably right in contending that Gerhardsson's reading of Acts 15 as 'a regular description of early Christian general session', as opposed to 'a special, ad hoc gathering of the Jerusalem church to settle a significant, persistent problem that was not typical for the early Christians', is too speculative.³⁴⁴ Rodríguez argues further that, in his letters, Paul provides authoritative doctrinal and pragmatic pronouncements independently of Jerusalem, which alone suggests a broader distribution of authority within early Christianity than the *collegium* of the twelve in Jerusalem.³⁴⁵ However, the

339 Gerhardsson, *Memory*, p. 334: 'An intensive work on the logos was also carried on in other churches, but the Jerusalem church was the centre of the early Christianity and the leaders of this congregation was considered as the highest doctrinal authority of the whole Church.'

340 Gerhardsson, *Reliability*, p. 50.

341 Alexander, 'Memory and Tradition in the Hellenistic Schools', pp. 113-53 (152); cf. Eve, *Behind*, p. 41.

342 Eve, *Behind*, p. 41.

343 Eve, *Behind*, p. 45, admits that 'it would be odd indeed if the Twelve ceased to have any function within a year or two of Jesus' death or if certain persons did not come to have much more control over the tradition than others.'

344 Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, p. 36; cf. Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 245-61.

345 Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, p. 36.

authority and eyewitness status of the twelve³⁴⁶ is clearly articulated by Paul,³⁴⁷ who himself seems to have been reluctant to break the authority structure of early Christianity ‘during the dynasty of the twelve’ by freely creating Jesus traditions.³⁴⁸ This is not to be taken as an understatement about the flexibility of the process due to different tellings and variant forms of the traditions, which were based on the same episodes and also found in the written Gospels eventually.³⁴⁹

All in all, Gerhardsson’s model attempted to turn the scholarly attention to ‘the profoundly mnemonic character of written and, above all, oral tradition,’ and introduced ‘neglected diachronic aspects into the form-critical program.’³⁵⁰ Unfortunately, these aspects of his work were neglected for a long time. Despite the reservations expressed by some, for example, that is difficult to imagine Gerhardsson’s theory to describe the whole tradition process from Jesus’ earthly preaching to the written Gospels in detail,³⁵¹ his basic analogies regarding the transmission of tradition and the role of memory in education are historical in nature, and as such they seem plausible.

Some of the commendable aspects in Gerhardsson’s model have been recognized by scholars otherwise very critical of his theory. Werner Kelber, a chief critic of Gerhardsson, is able to comment appreciatively, ‘Gerhardsson...advanced an explanatory model that was suited to demonstrate the historical concreteness of the traditioning processes and the actual techniques that were operative in the transmission and reception of the tradition.’³⁵² Also, Eric Eve, who is not convinced

346 On the historicity of the twelve, see J. P. Meier, ‘The Circle of the Twelve: Did It Exist During Jesus’ Ministry,’ *JBL* 116 (1997), pp. 635-72; *idem*, *A Marginal Jew, III*, pp. 125-97; James E. Charlesworth, *Jesus within Judaism* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), pp. 136-38; also Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, p. 326.

347 E.g. 1 Cor. 9.1-5; 15.3-11; Gal. 1.11-19; 2.1-10. Especially, that of Peter.

348 Kankaanniemi, *Guards*, pp. 60-62 (62). That Paul does not seem to create sayings is indicated by 1 Cor. 7.12. It seems plausible that ‘the Jesus traditions Paul assumed that his churches knew derived mostly from Jerusalem.’

349 Cf. Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 21: ‘while they [the twelve] were important traditionists, they were by no means the only ones...the “common folk” cannot be ruled out from the telling of stories...authorities can influence but not entirely control speech to the extent imagined by Gerhardsson.’ However, also Kankaanniemi, *Guards*, p. 62, who regrets that, by the critics of ‘the Scandinavian approach,’ the notion of control exercised by the twelve is often taken to denote a defense of wooden literalism.

350 Byrskog, ‘Introduction,’ pp. 1-20 (11).

351 See Eve, *Behind*, p. 45; Mournet, *Oral Tradition and Literary Dependency*, p. 64. Especially, when differences between rural Galilee where Jesus ministered, Jerusalem where the twelve gathered, and the Gentile cities where Paul ministered, are taken into account.

352 Kelber, ‘Conclusion: The Work of Birger Gerhardsson in Perspective,’ pp. 173-206 (177).

of Gerhardsson's overall account of the oral tradition behind the Gospels, contends, 'that the primitive Church would have been concerned to preserve traditions about Jesus and would have regarded some persons as particularly authoritative tradents is a priori more probable than form criticism's assumptions to the contrary'.³⁵³ Finally, Rafael Rodríguez, who deems Gerhardsson's conception of transmission too rigid and inflexible, says, 'Gerhardsson...rightly recognized that the early Christians thought they were passing on Jesus' actual teachings and accounts of his actual life...Jesus' disciples preserved his teaching by committing it to memory and transmitting his teaching in memorized form...This...represents a significant advance over NT scholarship's form-critical legacy'.³⁵⁴

In sum, Gerhardsson tried to turn the scholarly attention to the reality that the transmission process of the Jesus traditions is to be related to the historical techniques of transmission such as memorization and replication. His work, which was initially rejected and denied a hearing, enabled later scholars to recognize that there were authoritative individuals exercising control over the transmission process, as opposed to the form-critical notions of anonymous community: the first Christians committed to memory *what they believed were* Jesus' actual teachings and accounts of his life. Later views that cohere with Gerhardsson have had an impact on research, which Gerhardsson himself did not have due to the initial rejection of his theses. This view of the Jesus traditions results in the possibility of reconstructing a much more substantial picture of the historical Jesus than had been possible within the form-critical paradigm of Dibelius and Bultmann. The work of Werner H. Kelber, another central figure in the study of the nature and transmission of Jesus traditions, is analyzed in the next section.

2.3 RADICAL DISCONTINUITY BETWEEN ORALITY AND TEXTUALITY

During the latter half of the twentieth century, the rise of the redaction-critical study of the Gospels gave new impetus to explaining the transmission of the Jesus traditions; viewpoints, which differed considerably from both the form-critical ideas of Dibelius and Bultmann and Gerhardsson's view, began to be offered. With the increased emphasis on the gospel authors as individuals with systematic

353 Eve, *Behind*, p. 45.

354 Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, p. 35.

literary and theological agendas, the form-critical notion of the Evangelists as ‘mere collectors and editors’ of the traditions was by and large abandoned. Therefore, the Gospels were no longer viewed as the end-products of the evolution of the oral tradition, but rather as something new, written and differentiated from the previous oral tradition.³⁵⁵

Influenced by the redaction-critical emphases, particularly two scholars, Erhardt Güttgemanns³⁵⁶ and Werner H. Kelber³⁵⁷, argued against a form-critical understanding of ‘orality’ and oral tradition as fixed and accessible as such through the written text; drawing from interdisciplinary studies such as folklore, linguistics, and orality, a radical discontinuity was envisaged to have existed between the pre-Gospel ‘orality’ of the Jesus traditions and the later written ‘textuality’ of the Gospels.³⁵⁸ A brief account of Güttgemanns’ view is provided first, as his interest in the oral and written media of communication was important for Kelber. The main focus of this chapter is, nevertheless, on the work of Kelber, as Güttgemanns’ critique, already dealt with in this dissertation,³⁵⁹ was largely focused on the problems of form criticism. Kelber’s viewpoints, while in many respects reminiscent of Güttgemanns, have been given more heed in subsequent scholarship.³⁶⁰

355 On early redaction criticism of Mark, see esp. Willi Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist: Studies in the Redaction History of the Gospel* (trans. J. Boyce, D. Juel, W. Poehlmann, R. A. Harrisville; Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1969), who argued that the earlier theories about anonymous transmission of the pre-Gospel traditions could not explain the unity of the Gospels; ‘an individual, an author personality’, pursuing ‘a definite goal with his work’ needs to be accounted for (p. 18).

356 Güttgemanns, *Candid Questions* (1979) is the English translation from the German original, Güttgemanns, *Offene Fragen zur Formgeschichte des Evangeliums. Eine methodologische Skizze der Grundlagenproblematik der Form- und Redaktionsgeschichte* (BevT, 54; Munich: Kaiser, 1970). The following brief account of Güttgemanns’ view is based on Eve, *Behind*, pp. 48-51.

357 Kelber’s most important contribution on the subject, *The Oral and Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q*, was originally published in 1983 (Fortress). The 1997 edition, referenced in this dissertation, includes a new somewhat modified introduction by the author. Also see e.g. the following articles, Kelber, ‘Mark and Oral Tradition’, *Semeia* 16 (1979), pp. 7-55; *idem*, ‘Narrative as Interpretation and Interpretation of Narrative: Hermeneutical Reflections on the Gospels’, *Semeia* 39 (1987), pp. 107-33; *idem*, ‘Jesus and Tradition: Words in Time, Words in Space’, *Semeia* 65 (1995), pp. 139-67; *idem*, ‘The Case of the Gospels: Memory’s Desire and the Limits of Historical Criticism’, *Oral Tradition* 17 (2002), pp. 55-86; *idem*, ‘The History of the Closure of Biblical Texts’, *Oral Tradition* 25/1 (2010), pp. 116-40; *idem*, ‘Rethinking the Oral-Scribal Transmission/Performance of the Jesus Tradition’, in Charlesworth (ed.), *Jesus Research*, pp. 500-30.

358 This model is labeled ‘the media contrast model’ by Eve, *Behind*, pp. 47-65.

359 Cf. ch. 2.1.3.

360 See e.g. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 199-204; Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 37-39; Bird,

2.3.1 ERHARDT GÜTTGEMANNS

One of Erhardt Güttgemanns' (b.1935) main ideas was that, through being incorporated into a written Gospel, the Jesus traditions began to represent a new genre; therefore, form criticism's narrow concept of *Sitz Leben* as a direct window to the social history of each form of tradition via the written text needed to be rejected.³⁶¹ On the basis of linguistic studies, Güttgemanns argued that the oral and the written media were two different modes of communication; a characteristic of the latter was, for example, its function of freeing language from the immediate context of utterance.³⁶² Arguing for a discontinuity between the oral and written levels of tradition, Güttgemanns referred to the work of Albert Lord on Balkan oral epics, supposing that Lord's investigation applied to oral tradition universally.³⁶³

Güttgemanns relied on both Willi Marxsen's redaction-critical work and the linguistic notion of a *Gestalt*, which basically denoted that a literary composite (for example, a Gospel) was more than the sum of its parts, namely, the individual traditions; therefore, the nature of the whole could not be derived from the tradition history of its parts.³⁶⁴ Güttgemanns seriously questioned the demonstrability of any notion of pre-Markan redactional phases and outlined a sharp contrast between the written Gospel and the oral tradition that preceded it.³⁶⁵ Many aspects of Güttgemanns' view were accepted by Kelber, who further elaborated the distinction between the oral and written media.

2.3.2 WERNER H. KELBER

In his most significant work, *The Oral and the Written Gospel*, Werner H. Kelber (b.1935) outlined his view of the relationship between the oral pre-Markan Jesus tradition and the written Gospel of Mark. While referring to the work of Güttgemanns,³⁶⁶ Kelber relied heavily on 'American and British specialists on oral

Gospel, pp. 91-92.

361 Güttgemanns, *Candid Questions*, pp. 96-125.

362 Güttgemanns, *Candid Questions*, pp. 196-99.

363 Güttgemanns, *Candid Questions*, pp. 204-10.

364 Güttgemanns, *Candid Questions*, pp. 277-90.

365 Güttgemanns, *Candid Questions*, pp. 333-42.

366 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 1-2.

culture,' such as Milman Parry (1902–1935)³⁶⁷, Albert B. Lord (1912–1991)³⁶⁸, Walter Ong (1912–2003)³⁶⁹, Ruth Finnegan (b.1933)³⁷⁰, and Jack Goody (1919–2015)³⁷¹, as well as several folkloric studies³⁷². Kelber began with the common view that Mark was a groundbreaking written account of the life and ministry of Jesus, setting a precedent for many subsequent accounts; he also argued, mainly on the basis of Ong's work, for the conceptual categories of 'orality' and 'textuality' to explain the Greco-Roman context of transmission.

For Kelber, Bultmann's 'model of evolutionary progression' and Gerhardsson's 'model of passive transmission' were important starting points, though he considered both of them inadequate on the basis of their descriptions of oral process in terms of written records. Kelber labeled his own view of oral transmission as 'a process of social identification and preventive censorship'.³⁷³ The difference between speech and writing was central to Kelber, who posited that 'oral and written compositions come into existence under different circumstances'.³⁷⁴ The content of the spoken word is influenced by the presence of an immediate audience, while an author of the written text is detached from any immediate social context and can, therefore, 'exercise controls over his compositions'; further, 'textual composition and transmission...enjoy a measure of freedom from mnemonic imperatives and social pressure', to which the speaker is, besides linguistic devices, always bound.³⁷⁵

According to Kelber, the pre-Gospel orality can only be explained by the

367 Milman Parry, 'Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making, I: Homer and Homeric Style', *HSCP* 41 (1930), pp. 73-147; *idem*, 'Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making, II: The Homeric Language as the Language of an Oral Poetry', *HSCP* 43 (1932), pp. 1-50; *idem*, 'Whole Formulaic Verses in Greek and Southslavic Heroic Songs', *TAPA* 64 (1933), pp. 179-97.

368 Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (HSCL, 24; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960).

369 E.g. Walter J. Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958); *idem*, *Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell University Press, 1977).

370 E.g. Ruth Finnegan, 'How Oral is Oral Literature?', *BSOAS* 37 (1974), pp. 52-64; *idem*, *Oral Poetry*.

371 Jack Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Goody & Watt, 'The Consequences of Literacy', pp. 27-68.

372 See Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 1-2, for references to the journals of folkloric studies, p. 35 n. 12.

373 Specifically, on Bultmann, see Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 2-8; on Gerhardsson, pp. 8-14; on Kelber's own view, pp. 14ff.

374 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 14-17 (14).

375 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 15.

reality that Jesus himself operated as an oral teacher, not a reader or writer.³⁷⁶ In the Jesus tradition, Jesus is only described as writing something in the '(textually precarious) story of the adulterous woman' (Jn. 8.1-11), in which 'Jesus' "writing" is a parody of formal, literary writing'; also, in another Johannine passage (Jn. 7.15), Jesus is depicted as 'a man of literacy and probably scriptural knowledge (*grammata oiden*), but without formal rabbinic schooling (*mē memathēkōs*).'³⁷⁷ The theological interests of the author had clearly shaped the Matthean Jesus into an authoritative Rabbinic interpreter of the Torah; Jesus was clearly not a leader of a school of tradition, but rather a prophetic speaker and eschatological teacher. Kelber contended, 'His message and his person are inextricably tied to the spoken word, not to texts...the impact Jesus made on friends and foes alike was to no small degree due to his choice of implementation of the oral medium.'³⁷⁸

Kelber argued that Jesus, being an oral performer, did not speak with textual preservation in mind, but rather risked his message on the oral medium; therefore, his words would not only be misunderstood, but they would also vanish immediately after their utterance. Nevertheless, Kelber believed that the origins of the tradition go back to Jesus' orally performed words. He disagreed with the Bultmannian notion of the post-Easter beginnings of the tradition, as part of Jesus' teaching would have been passed on already during his lifetime. In light of Kelber's concept of 'oral hermeneutics', this passing on also undermined Bultmann's idea of the post-Easter period as the point of departure for christological development; the early Christians, speaking in Jesus' name, would function as carriers of his authority and voice, presumably beginning during his lifetime.³⁷⁹

This did not mean, however, that there was any form of controlled or verbatim process of transmission. Jesus mainly recruited rural Galileans, not the urban middle class people. His message was never intended to be recorded for the sake of educated readers. In fact, Kelber did not think there was any reason 'to revive the romantic notion of the simple, or even boorish, Galilean fishermen' of the tradition or the picture of Peter and John as non-literate and common men (Acts

376 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 18-22.

377 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 18

378 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 18

379 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 19-20. Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 40 n. 183, referred for example to W. Marxsen, *The Beginnings of Christology* (trans. Paul Achtemeier and Lorenz Nieting; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), in which '[t]he thesis of the post-Easter beginnings of christology has been further undermined'.

4.13); oral habits would have been natural for the earliest followers of Jesus, who would have had only ‘tenuous connections with literate culture.’³⁸⁰

Kelber also somewhat downplayed Gerhardsson’s emphasis on the role of the twelve as transmitters of traditions. The transmission cannot be limited to the twelve, even though they were important traditionists. Other teachers and prophets must have had a role in the process, as had been indicated for example by Gerd Theissen and Eugene Boring.³⁸¹ In addition to the people in official leadership roles, Kelber emphasized the role of the ‘common folk’ in ‘the telling of stories’. Although the authorities could have an influence, they could not entirely control the process of transmission simply because the people ‘who were healed or exorcized, impressed or offended by Jesus became the potential carriers of tradition.’³⁸² In fact, Kelber found neither any indication that Jesus’ words were intended to be memorized by authorities, nor that Jesus would have been insistent on verbatim repetition and memorization. Accordingly, Gerhardsson’s model of ‘passive transmission’ in isolation from social involvement was unrealistic and failed as a model for both oral transmission and the writing of Mark’s Gospel.³⁸³ While Kelber did not completely reject the notion of the existence of written documents during the oral period (for instance, the Q tradition, other sayings collections, anthologies of short stories, parables, and miracles), he did not think they had any role of transcending ‘an essentially oral state of mind’; texts were not always used or copied verbatim in the written form, but rather through hearing, which blurred the ‘lines of orality and textuality.’³⁸⁴

Kelber argued that the survival and continuity of the transmitted words was dependent on their social relevancy and acceptability; with the concept of *social identification* he contested the view of the verbatim memorization of tradition,

380 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 21; cf. ch. 2.2; Gerhardsson, *Memory*, 201-2; *idem*, *Transmission*, pp. 24-26, from whose viewpoint it can be inferred that the Jesus traditions preserved in the Gospels depict the disciples as ‘unliterary’ for ideological reasons.

381 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 41 n. 185, 186, referred, for example, to Gerd Theissen, ‘Itinerant Radicalism: The Tradition of Jesus Sayings from the Perspective of the Sociology of Literature’, *RR* 2 (1975), pp. 84-93, [which is the English translation of the German original Theissen, ‘Wanderradikalismus: Literatursoziologische Aspekte der Überlieferung von Worten Jesu im Urchristentum’, *ZTK* 70 (1973), pp. 245-71], and M. Eugene Boring, *Sayings of the Risen Jesus: Christian Prophecy in the Synoptic Tradition* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

382 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 21.

383 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 21-22.

384 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 23.

basically denoting that orally recited traditions, such as sayings, miracles, parables, and apophthegmatic stories, were adapted in characteristic speech forms to the present needs of an audience by the speaker; this was the only way to grant them the possibility of survival.³⁸⁵ *Social identification* questioned the early form-critical notion of limiting ‘form’ to a specific *setting in life*. Kelber insisted that such a restriction did not accurately depict the real life of oral discourse: ‘Distinct forms of speech can and do function in more than one social setting.’³⁸⁶ Specifically, Kelber understood ‘form’ as formal patterns of oral thinking.³⁸⁷

According to Kelber, the social realities and flexibility of oral transmission cannot be accounted for, unless discontinuity (forgetting and rejection) is given due heed along with continuity (remembrance and transmission). He argued for the concept of *preventive censorship*, which in the most extreme cases meant that ‘a tradition that cannot overcome the social threshold to communal reception is doomed to extinction.’³⁸⁸ *Preventive censorship* may cause an oral tradition to shrink and be condensed through the speaker only emphasizing the elementary elements; the audience in turn may try to protect themselves from forgetting by focusing merely on the core of the tradition. Kelber outlined a model of oral transmission, which exhibited both ‘conservative urge for preservation’ and almost careless ‘predisposition to abandon features not socially approved’; this process would show flexibility in becoming compatible with social needs.³⁸⁹

Kelber outlined some of the problems he saw in the form-critical idea of the uniform evolution of the Synoptic tradition.³⁹⁰ He abandoned the form-critical insistence of *original form*, which betrayed ‘the bias of textuality’ and ignored oral behavior. The concepts of *original form* and *ipsissima vox* were useless and invalid descriptions of oral life, simply because each oral performance was a unique creation and an authentic speech act in itself, as had been shown by the works of Parry and Lord.³⁹¹

Moving on to discuss ‘Mark’s oral legacy’, Kelber argued that speaking did ‘set linguistic standards for the synoptic tradition’, and ‘oral features’ were imported

385 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 24-26

386 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 25-26.

387 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 27.

388 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 29.

389 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 29-30.

390 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 32-33, accuses redaction-critical study of the Gospels of similarly assuming the feasibility of ‘regression from the gospel’s text to prior textual stages.’

391 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 30-34 (30); cf. e.g. Lord, *Singer of Tales*, p. 101.

into the Gospel of Mark. Orality had significantly contributed to the Gospel, which makes it possible to study the written Gospel's oral legacy. While in a sense killing the spoken language, the written medium froze and preserved the oral forms, which can be studied with the distinct features of oral life in mind. Kelber focused specifically on the feature of storytelling, which for him represented 'the pre-Markan mode of language'; he categorized Mark's 'brief tales' into four types: *heroic stories* (healing stories), *polarization stories* (exorcisms), *didactic stories* (apophthegmata), and *parabolic stories*. The last type was of special interest for Kelber, who thought it was 'essential for an understanding of the gospel both as textualization of oral materials and as narrative'.³⁹²

First, the ten *heroic* (healing) *stories* in Mark³⁹³ displayed both uniformity of composition and variability of narrative exposition. Albeit attempting to treat these stories as 'a matter of recall more than of record', Kelber argued, on the basis of the Gospel text, for the three component parts, *exposition of healing* (for example, 'arrival of healer and sick person'), *performance of healing* (for example, 'utterance of healing formula'), and *confirmation of the healing* (for example, 'admiration/confirmation formula'), dividing each into 'a series of auxiliary motifs'.³⁹⁴ Even though the healing stories frequently employ commonplace structures, they nevertheless portray features of variability, which are inseparable from any activity of oral transmission; the healing stories betray the plurality, uniformity, and variability, which can only be accounted for by viewing the stories as oral production, in which no performance by a narrator is the original or the permanent one.³⁹⁵

Kelber also outlined the oral mode of dramatization in the healing stories. In line with Bultmann, he recognized the principle of *scenic duality*; typically only two personalized actors (Jesus and the sick person or a group of people) are in the focus of these stories with 'single-stranded' plots. Also, the character of Jesus is undeveloped in these stories, which underlines their oral character; the healing stories emphasize Jesus' heroism, thus simplifying and reducing him to

³⁹² Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 44-45 (45).

³⁹³ *Peter's Mother in Law* (Mk 1.29-31); the *Leper* (1.40-45a); the *Paralytic* (2.1-12); the *Man with a Withered Hand* (3.1-6); *Jairus's Daughter* (5.21-24, 35-43); the *Woman with a Hemorrhage* (5.25-34); the *Syrophoenician Woman* (7.24-30); the *Deaf Mute* (7.31-37); the *Blind Man of Bethsaida* (8.22-26); the *Blind Bartimaeus* (10.46-52).

³⁹⁴ Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 46.

³⁹⁵ Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 46-51; cf. Lord, *Singer of Tales*.

one dimension. The oral medium is not interested in the complexity and ordinary life of Jesus, but it rather remembers him as a heroic performer of extraordinary deeds with 'an enlarged status,' yet retaining a touch of his human frailty.³⁹⁶ Kelber even referred to the Jesus of the heroic stories as 'a genuine manifestation of *oral christology*.'³⁹⁷

Secondly, the three exorcisms, namely, the *polarization stories*³⁹⁸ were dealt with separately from the healing stories by Kelber, although these stories display heroic tendencies similar to those of the healing stories. Again, Kelber detected three different component parts, *confrontation* (for example, 'meeting of exorcist and possessed'), *expulsion* (for example, 'command to exit'), and *acclamation* (for example, 'choral formula'), as well as 'a series of auxiliary features.' The exorcism stories are both uniform in compositional structure and variable in narrative performance; the oral composition narrates thematic commonplaces such as expected endings, while the same story can be told in different ways depending on the social conditions of the oral performance. Kelber pointed out the sharp adversary relationship between Jesus and the forces of evil in each story; the *agōn*, the contest, was 'a hallmark of oral culture,' and conflict was a lot more favorable for the functioning of the oral medium than the ambiguous and complex ordinary life. While exemplifying the same 'oral christology' of heroism as the healing stories, the exorcisms fail to move from ideological simplicity to complex theological reflection.³⁹⁹

Thirdly, Kelber labeled 'the apophthegmatic tradition' as the *didactic stories*, which include controversies, double-controversy dialogues, and biographical tales, each culminating in a memorable saying of Jesus. Referring to both Bultmann and Dibelius, Kelber found six examples⁴⁰⁰ of this kind of tradition, which betray evidence of pre-Markan formulation.⁴⁰¹ The didactic stories are a form of speech with an educational function; they combine story with ethical statement, being

396 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 51-52.

397 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 52. Italics original.

398 The exorcism at the *Synagogue of Capernaum* (Mk 1.21-28); the exorcism of the *Gerasene Demoniac* (5.1-20); the exorcism of the *Epileptic Boy* (9.14-29).

399 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 52-55.

400 *Table Fellowship with Sinners* (Mk 2.15-17); the *Issue of Fasting* (2.18-19); *Plucking of Corn on Sabbath* (2.23-28); the *Issue of Divorce* (10.2-9); the *Issue of Possessions* (10.17-22); *Payment of Taxes* (12.13-17)

401 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 55; Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 83 n. 34 refers to Bultmann, *Geschichte*, pp. 39-73 ('apophthegmata') and Dibelius, *From Tradition*, pp. 37-69 ('paradigms').

purposefully created for the purpose of oral communication. Kelber argued that such ethical directives would have made no sense apart from their social settings; indeed, the storyteller would focus on the personalization and actualization of the essential things to be remembered, instead of trying to offer generalized principles.⁴⁰²

Fourthly, Kelber discussed in particular six *parabolic stories*⁴⁰³ of the Gospel of Mark, while he recognized that parabolic discourse was present across the Gospel.⁴⁰⁴ Kelber indicated that Mark associates 'Jesus, the oral performer exclusively with parabolic speech (4.33-34).'⁴⁰⁵ There was, however, neither a uniform compositional structure nor one synchronic pattern in the six Markan stories (or the Synoptic parables in general). Kelber noticed that the parabolic stories are ordinary and realistic in nature, drawing from the agricultural world of Galilean peasant society and first-century Jewish life; he pointed to a problem that this ordinariness (or 'notion of parabolic realism') raises for the mnemonic process: while speakers and hearers could recognize themselves in the stories that narrate the mundane everyday life, this feature, and its lack of the striking and extraordinary features, would hardly have guaranteed enduring transmission. However, Kelber noted that there is much more to the parables than just 'parabolic realism', namely, memorable contrasts, for example, between the triple failure and triple success of the seed in the parable of the *Sower*.⁴⁰⁶

Further, in explaining the mnemonic process of the parabolic stories, Kelber employed Paul Ricoeur's concept of 'extravagance', which basically meant that, in a parable, the extraordinary is found within the ordinary; the concept 'promotes intensification and exaggeration, risks paradox and hyperbole, and strains or transgresses the hearers' sense of realism.'⁴⁰⁷ Despite acknowledging that 'extravagance' is only moderately developed or nonexistent in most of the Markan parables, Kelber argued that all parables share a *metaphorical quality*: the meaning of a parable 'lies outside its own narrated world'.⁴⁰⁸ Due to this hermeneutical

402 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 55-57.

403 The *Sower* (Mk 4.3-8); the parable of the *Reaper* (4.26-29); the parable of the *Mustard Seed* (4.30-32); the parable of the *Wicked Tenants* (12.1-11); the parable of the *Fig Tree* (13.28); the parable of the *Doorkeeper* (13.34).

404 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 57-64.

405 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 58.

406 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 58-59.

407 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 60-61 (60).

408 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 61.

quality, parables are like unfinished products dependent on their social contexts of oral performance and the interaction between the speaker and the hearers. Therefore, parabolic language is 'a quintessential *oral form of speech*'; parabolic speech lacks both *the original form* and *the original meaning*, every instance of telling and interpretation being a unique interaction between the speaker and the audience.⁴⁰⁹

Kelber followed the form-critics Schmidt, Dibelius, and Bultmann in viewing the Passion narrative as an exception to the linking of individual units in Mark's composition; there was no trace of the activity of incorporating 'oral forms' into the account, which is a coherent and tightly plotted story of Jesus' death. However, Kelber emphatically rejected the form critics' and others' notion of a pre-Markan version of the Passion narrative from the period close to the actual events; he rather viewed the coherence and realism of Mark's story as indications of his narrative competence. The mutually exclusive theories offered to explain the nature and development of the Passion narrative only pointed out, according to Kelber, that 'decompositioning' does not successfully explain its extraordinary textuality. Kelber did not believe that the narrative coherence indicated any closeness to the events; he found neither a plausible setting, nor a formal parallel to a supposed 'extended pre-Markan Passion narrative'. For example, it was unlikely that such a written passion narrative would have developed from the distinct oral formula of 1 Corinthians 15.3b-5.⁴¹⁰ On the contrary, Kelber contended that 'orality', which normally tended towards heroism, could not handle the 'antiheroic' death of the Messiah; indeed, the tragic event could only be written about from a distance. Accordingly, the Passion narrative was composed by Mark to promote his theological agenda and show the meaning and necessity of Jesus' death in the divine plan with the help of the Scriptures.⁴¹¹

409 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 62.

410 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 185-199 (186-191).

411 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 197-199. Eve, *Behind*, pp. 51-60 (57), refers to the criticism of Thomas J. Farrell, 'Kelber's Breakthrough', in L. H. Silberman (ed.), *Orality, Aurality and Biblical Narrative* (Semeia 39; Decatur, GA: Scholars Press, 1987), pp. 27-46 (40-41), who argues that Mark does not depict Jesus' death as 'unheroic'. Kelber, 'Biblical Hermeneutics and the Ancient Art of Communication: A Response', in Silberman (ed.), *Orality*, pp. 97-105 (102-3), modifies this position by suggesting that Mark's Passion narrative redefines heroism in light of the cross. On refusal of literary sensibilities in Roman antiquity to promote graphic descriptions of crucifixion, see Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion: In the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), pp. 38, 77-81; citations in Joel B. Green, 'The Death of Jesus', in Holmén & Porter (eds.), *Handbook*, pp. 3:2383-408 (2389), who thinks Kelber overemphasizes

Kelber argued that, apart from the Passion narrative, the single oral stories of Mark's Gospels were the backbone of his entire narrative of the life of Jesus.⁴¹² In Mark's connected narrative, individual units are linked together by stereotypical connective devices,⁴¹³ which are derived from the Gospel's oral building blocks; in addition to their connecting function, these devices create the sense of suddenness and urgency in Mark's narrative.⁴¹⁴ The Gospel has an oral flavor to its overall composition, which is indicated by several stylistic and rhetorical features: folkloristic triads (three disciples separated from within the twelve, three predictions of passion and resurrection by Jesus, the disciples asked three times to wake in Gethsemane, etc.), the use of third person plural instead of the passive, the direct speech instead of indirect speech, constant repetition, a colloquial version of Koine Greek removed from Attic elegance, and description of characters in action with minimum character development.⁴¹⁵ In light of all the characteristics of oral story telling, Kelber concluded that Mark's style is closer to that of a speaker than a writer.⁴¹⁶

Kelber also attempted to acknowledge the 'integrative powers' of Mark's oral legacy, which Kelber believed had brought the individual units together, forming the chapters 1–13 of the Gospel. However, he did not go as far as to follow the view originally posed by Herder that there existed an *oral gospel*, which would inevitably result in the written Gospels due to the dissemination caused by the continual delivery of the *oral gospel*; Kelber insisted that, since Herder's day, redaction and literary criticism had demonstrated that the authors of the Synoptic Gospels were literarily competent and responsible for the distinct theological views present in their works. Furthermore, he pointed out that the analogies between Homeric epics (such as *Iliad* and *Odyssey*) and the Gospels, as well as between the Yugoslav epic singers⁴¹⁷ and the Gospels, should not be overemphasized. For one thing, *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are oral poetry in metric language distinct from the prose narrative of the Gospels; for another, both the Homeric epics and Yugoslav epics stemmed from centuries-old oral cultures, while Mark's oral legacy represented a tradition

this aspect.

412 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 64-70.

413 For example, *archestai* with infinitive verbs of action and speaking, the adverbial *eythus*, the iterative *palin*, the abundant use of paratactic *kai*, etc.

414 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 64-65.

415 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 66-70.

416 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 68.

417 Such as Avdo Mededović, who was popularized by the studies of Parry and Lord.

still at a very early stage. Also, Mark's compositional activity bound heterogeneous units into a coherent narrative, while orality tends to gather homogeneous material.⁴¹⁸ Kelber did not, however, consider it 'intrinsically implausible that Mark imposed his writing authority upon an unorganized oral lore.'⁴¹⁹

After denying any possibility of a step-by-step progression of oral tradition toward the written Gospel, Kelber moved on to discuss the nature of Mark's textuality.⁴²⁰ He argued sharply: 'To the extent that the gospel draws on oral voices, it has rendered them voiceless.'⁴²¹ Mark's work of writing meant that the oral performer and the audience no longer were part of the process of making the message; the writing process resulted in 'a subversion of the *homeostatic balance*', decontextualization and distancing of the message from the social life.⁴²² In the process, Mark consistently describes the disciples, who had been the oral representatives (as opposed to 'writers') of Jesus and his oral message, as failing to comprehend Jesus' message; the sharp critique of the oral authorities marks the departure from oral norms and habits towards the written textuality, the greatest example of the failure of oral tradition being the fleeing of the disciples and the failure of the women to deliver the message of the Empty Tomb. Also, Jesus' family is described very negatively, even in a hostile light.⁴²³ Furthermore, Mark's critique of the prophets in Mark 13:21-23 is taken by Kelber as a general rebuttal of the Christian prophets, who were the most powerful carriers of the present authority of Jesus through the *oral medium*.⁴²⁴ Compared to Matthew and Luke, Mark also presents less of Jesus' 'oral words' in order to further silence the oral tradition.⁴²⁵

Kelber argued that Mark's written textuality was kind of a reorientation. He employed Güttgemann's notion of Mark's Gospel as a *Gestalt*, namely, that, after being detached from their oral settings and placed into the written narrative, the pericopae were changed in both nature and meaning. For instance, the parables, having entered 'a veritable maze of hermeneutical complications', could no longer be interpreted separated from their immediate literary contexts.⁴²⁶ Mark's Gospel

418 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 77-80.

419 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 79.

420 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 90-105.

421 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 91.

422 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 92-94 (92).

423 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 96-98, 102-4.

424 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 98-99.

425 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 100-2

426 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 105-115 (111).

was, as had been pointed out previously in connection with the *parabolic stories*, written as a ‘written parable’ throughout, Mark 4.10-12 constituting a kind of hermeneutical key to the entire Gospel text.⁴²⁷

Moving on to discuss Paul and Q, Kelber set Mark’s preference of the written medium in sharp contrast with the orality he supposed was maintained in both Paul and the Q tradition. First, Paul’s letters were written with an oral-aural mindset, as opposed to visual imagery; hearing was necessary for the receiving of Paul’s message, namely, the gospel (Gal. 3.2), which needs to be viewed in light of oral hermeneutics.⁴²⁸ Second, Paul’s polemical stance toward the law had first and foremost to do with its written nature; the written, fixed law (‘letter’) was in principle opposed to Paul’s oral gospel, which was characterized by freedom in the Spirit.⁴²⁹ With regard to the oral hermeneutic of the Q tradition, Kelber insisted that it depicted Jesus as a prophetic authority, whose ever-present proclamation made distinction between neither the pre-Easter and the post-Easter Jesus, nor the sayings of Jesus and those of his followers. The focus on Jesus’ sayings, the specific omission of the Passion narrative, and the relative lack of narrative elements in Q point towards an oral hermeneutic, indicating a direct presence of Jesus with his followers, a feature lacking in the historically distanced, textual, and even regressive narrative of Mark’s Gospel.⁴³⁰

Kelber’s distinction between the pre-Gospel orality and the later written textuality resulted in a rather skeptical view towards the methods often used in the study of the historical Jesus. Kelber insisted that, while the early Christians would have been interested in ‘recapturing the “real story”’, there was no ‘high competency in preserving the life and person of Jesus’ within the early Christian oral culture of storytelling. Jesus had to enter language and could only continue to exist within its bounds; the oral medium would exercise control over the kind of Jesus that would be preserved and transmitted. Brevity and conciseness being virtues of Mark’s oral legacy, Jesus was simplified, heroized, and depicted as a visually impressive figure in a world of conflict. Therefore, Kelber took for granted that this oral process, in which the tellers and hearers played a crucial role,

427 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 117-129.

428 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 140-51.

429 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 151-64; on Paul, also pp. 165-77, pp. 203-6.

430 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 201-3, 209. Kelber, ‘The Case of the Gospels’, pp. 55-86 (70-72, 78-81), has later undermined the two-source hypothesis and the existence of Q, which questions his arguments concerning the oral hermeneutics of Q in *Oral and Written*. See Eve, *Behind*, p. 60.

would refuse to preserve the *historical* Jesus in the ‘modern’ sense; oral mentality recognizes neither the categories of ‘authentic’ and ‘inauthentic’ when it comes to Jesus’ words, nor submits to the search for ‘the real Jesus’ behind the texts. Even though this does not mean complete loss of ‘rapport with actuality’, the process of transmission is fashioned for mnemonic purposes and immediate relevancy; historical accuracy and reliability are always subordinate to oral expediency and social identification.⁴³¹

2.3.3 CRITIQUE & EVALUATION

Kelber’s view has evoked both negative and positive responses; his work is critiqued and evaluated here in light of the subsequent scholarly discussion.⁴³² First, the criticisms raised against Kelber’s case are presented and evaluated; Kelber’s notions of orality and literacy, his reconstructions of the historical Jesus and the disciples, his understanding of the ‘oral hermeneutics’ of Mark, Paul, and Q, as well as his use of the concepts *preventive censorship* and *social identification* are addressed. Second, after these problematic areas, the particular strengths of

431 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 70-77 (70-71).

432 See e.g. Joanna Dewey, ‘Oral Methods of Structuring Narrative in Mark’, *Int* 43 (1989), pp. 32-44; *idem*, ‘Textuality in an Oral Culture: A Survey of the Pauline Traditions’, *Semeia* 65 (1994), pp. 37-65; Paul J. Achtemeier, ‘Omne Verbum Sonat: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity’, *JBL* 109 (1990), pp. 3-27; Larry W. Hurtado, ‘The Gospel of Mark: Evolutionary or Revolutionary Document’, *JSNT* 40 (1990), pp. 15-32; *idem*, ‘Greco-Roman Textuality’, pp. 91-106; *idem*, ‘Oral Fixation and New Testament Studies? “Orality,” “Performance” and Reading Texts in Early Christianity’, *NTS* 60 (2014), pp. 321-40; Byrskog, *Jesus the Only Teacher*, pp. 24, 319-20, 323-24, 331-49; *idem*, *Story as History*, pp. 33-34, 128-44 (131-38); *idem*, ‘The Transmission of the Jesus Tradition’, in Holmén & Porter (eds.), *Handbook*, pp. 2:1465-95 (1487-88); John Halverson, ‘Oral and Written Gospel: A Critique of Werner Kelber’, *NTS* 40 (1994) pp. 180-95; Risto Uro, ‘Thomas and oral gospel tradition’, in Risto Uro (ed.), *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas* (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1998), pp. 8-32 (8-19); Harm W. Hollander, ‘The Words of Jesus: From Oral Traditions to Written Record in Paul and Q’, *NovT* 42 (2000), pp. 340-57; Gerhardsson, *Reliability*, pp. 114-23; *idem*, ‘The Secret’, pp. 1-18; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 199-204; *idem*, ‘Remembering Jesus’, pp. 1:183-205; Matti Myllykoski, ‘Mark’s Oral Practice and the Written Gospel of Mark’, in Jiří Mrázek & Jan Roskovec (eds.), *Testimony and Interpretation: Early Christology in Its Judeo-Hellenistic Milieu* (Festschrift P. Pokorný; JSNTSup, 272; London, T & T Clark, 2004), pp. 97-113; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 283, 316; Rodríguez, *Structuring, passim*; *idem*, ‘The Embarrassing Truth About Jesus: The Criterion of Embarrassment and the Failure of Historical Authenticity’, in Keith & Le Donne (eds.), *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, pp. 132-51 (144-45); *idem*, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 37-39; Keith, *Jesus’ Literacy*, pp. 16-17, 166; *idem*, ‘Early Christian Book Culture’, pp. 22-39; Eve, *Behind*, pp. 61-65; Horsley, *Text and Tradition*, pp. 220-45; Bird, ‘Formation’, pp. 113-34; *idem*, *Gospel*, pp. 91-92; Hübenthal, *Das Markusevangelium*, pp. 24, 31-37, 41-42; Kirk, *Q in Matthew*, pp. 2-3, 18-20. Also, see the early review by Thomas E. Boomershine in *JBL* 104 (1985), pp. 538-40.

Kelber's theory are presented. Kelber's notions of the multiformity and the nature of tradition, the congruency of his viewpoints with social memory theory and the memory approach, and his emphasis on the significance of Mark's Gospel are discussed at the end of the chapter.

To begin with the most common criticism, shared by a wide range of scholars, it has been argued that Kelber's distinction between orality and textuality in the earliest Christianity is too sharp and radical.⁴³³ This criticism has to do with Kelber's general reconstruction of the ancient media context. While Kelber's emphasis on orality is important in showing the inadequacy of a modern literate mind-set for studying oral transmission,⁴³⁴ his view of the early Christian and Greco-Roman context is weakened by problems in both method and conclusions. As pointed out by Hurtado, Kelber's work does not rely on historical analyses of the Greco-Roman media context *per se*, but is built upon studies (such as Ong and Lord) on the advent of literacy and textuality as well as oral communication in illiterate or marginally literate cultures; thus, Kelber's case for the pre-Markan orality of the Jesus traditions rests upon whether the context can be viewed as such a culture.⁴³⁵

It has been indicated that Kelber's case would be better off had he, instead of studying folklore, Homeric rhapsodists, and socio-anthropological studies,

433 See e.g. Hurtado, 'The Gospel of Mark', pp. 15-32; *idem*, 'Greco-Roman Textuality', pp. 91-106; also Uro, 'Thomas and oral gospel tradition', pp. 8-32 (15-19); Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 128-29; Gerhardsson, *Reliability*, pp. 115-23; *idem*, 'The Secret', pp. 1-18; Myllykoski, 'Mark's Oral Practice', pp. 97-113 (101-2); Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 202-3; Eve, *Behind*, pp. 61-63; Bird, *Gospel*, p. 91-92; also, Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, I, p. 193 n. 62, who states that 'Kelber exaggerates the gap between the oral and written forms of the Gospel'. Cf. many of the voices in *Semeia* 39 (1987), in which see esp. T. E. Boomershine, 'Peter's Denial as Polemic or Confession: The Implications of Media Criticism for Biblical Hermeneutics', pp. 47-68.

434 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 200: 'The distinction [between oral and written, between oral performance and literary transmission] is important, not least since it requires modern literary scholars to make a conscious effort to extricate their historical envisaging of the oral transmission of tradition from the mind-set and assumptions of long-term literacy.' In his revised introduction to the 1997 edition of *Oral and Written*, Kelber qualified his position by deeming the initial 'Great Divide' between orality and textuality in antiquity exaggerated, yet maintained that such a strong thesis was necessary to resist 'typographic modes of thought' in scholarship. Albeit addressing many of his critics in the revised introduction, Kelber ignores the severe criticism in Hurtado, 'The Gospel of Mark', pp. 15-32; *idem*, 'Greco-Roman Textuality', pp. 91-106. See Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. xix-xxxi.

435 Hurtado, 'Greco-Roman Textuality', 91-106 (93). Hurtado (p. 93) points out that Kelber's view of orality, based on Ong and others, could be contested in light of the works available at the time. See the criticism and references to orality studies in Halverson, 'Oral and Written Gospel', pp. 180-95 (181-83).

looked for parallels in sources from Second Temple Judaism and Greco-Roman antiquity of the first century.⁴³⁶ To be sure, Kelber did not consider the context of the earliest Christianity completely foreign to literacy or textuality; he gave a brief account of the use of writing in the ancient near east, concluding, first, that Christianity ‘sprang up in a milieu that both in its Jewish and in its Hellenistic loyalties had long set a high premium on the written word’⁴³⁷ and, second, that ‘[t]hroughout antiquity writing was in the hands of an élite of trained specialists, and reading required an advanced education available only to few’.⁴³⁸ While evidence supports both of these conclusions, it also points further to a period of widespread influence of textuality in the Hellenistic age; the literary environment was ‘rich and varied’ and produced a great number of letters.⁴³⁹ This is not an objection to the general observation that ‘orality’, namely, the spoken word, rhetoric, performance of theatrical works, reading of literary texts aloud, et cetera,⁴⁴⁰ were

436 Bird, *Gospel*, p. 92; see Talmon, ‘Oral Tradition and Written Transmission’, pp. 121-58; Alexander, ‘Orality in Pharisaic-Rabbinic Judaism’, pp. 159-84; David E. Aune, ‘Prolegomena to the Study of Oral Tradition in the Hellenistic World’, in Wansbrough (ed.), *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition*, pp. 59-106; Gerhardsson, *Reliability*, pp. 85 n. 56, 116-17. Gerhardsson, *Reliability*, p. 85 n. 56, asks, ‘why we should elevate the type which A. B. Lord investigated in Yugoslavia to the status of standard model of “orality,” “oral tradition,” “oral composition,” “oral literature,” or the like, when after all the world is full of alternatives.’ Also, Uro, ‘Thomas and oral gospel tradition’, pp. 8-32 (17): ‘...universal claims based on the preliterate period of Greece and twentieth-century Balkan practice may also be misleading.’

437 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 16.

438 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 17.

439 See Hurtado, ‘Greco-Roman Textuality’, pp. 91-106 (94-95), who takes this as an indication of a wide popular literacy and education; cf. Keith, *Jesus’ Literacy*, pp. 71-123, who does not think there is evidence for a wide-spread literacy anywhere in the ancient world. Nevertheless, Keith (e.g. p. 81ff.) retains that religious devotion did not require literate education and textuality had a great impact in the period. See Keith, *Jesus’ Literacy*, p. 85 n. 61: ‘Some scholars who stress (appropriately) that Jewish and early Christian cultures were oral/aural unfortunately press this matter too far in their descriptions of this oral/aural environment as something antithetical to textuality.’

440 On the question whether the ancient people did read silently, see Paul J. Achtemeier, ‘Omne verbum sonat’, pp. 3-27, who famously argued that literature was produced by dictation and read by recitation; however, for a thorough discussion of the weaknesses of that view, see e.g. Frank D. Gilliard, ‘More Silent Reading in Antiquity: Non omne verbum sonat’, *JBL* 112 (1993), pp. 689-96; M. F. Burnyeat, ‘Postscript on Silent Reading’, *The Classical Quarterly* 47 (1997), pp. 74-76; A. K. Gavrilov, ‘Techniques of Reading in Classical Antiquity’, *The Classical Quarterly* 47 (1997), pp. 56-73; Alessandra Fusi, ‘The Oral/Literate Model: A Valid Approach for New Testament Studies?’ (PhD Thesis; The University of Sheffield, 2003); also, William A. Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture in the High Roman Empire: A Study of Elite Communities* (Classical Culture and Society; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 7 n. 12, who labels Achtemeier’s paper ‘a naïve summary of the debate’. References in Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 43, 126 n. 19. Also, see Keith, ‘Early Christian Book Culture’, pp. 22-39 (24-31), who discusses Johnson’s work in detail and, besides his recognition of the limits of Johnson’s study, concludes (p. 27), ‘[Johnson’s] study

greatly valued by the people of the Greco-Roman world in the same era; however, this orality should not be taken 'as a basis for minimising the place of texts and the activities associated with them (writing, reading, copying etc.).'⁴⁴¹ Indeed, one can speak of a system of interaction between oral communication and written manuscripts, wherein the latter bear specific symbolic and social significance; in such an interaction, reading cannot be reduced to a cognitive act or a process, but should instead be viewed as '*the negotiated construction of meaning within a particular sociocultural context*'.⁴⁴² Even if the actual reading was only done by the educated, this 'construction' must have also influenced the populace.

More specifically, Kelber's approach to the earliest Christian movement as an oral sub-culture to the more 'literate' Judaism of particularly the Qumran community is misleading.⁴⁴³ While the Qumran community was probably more scribal-oriented than the earliest Christian movement, it is not self-evident that the latter formed an oral sub-culture, dominated by 'pre-literate orality', within the Greco-Roman Jewish Palestine. While evidence seems to agree with Kelber's general conclusion that the overall rate of literacy was probably low within Jewish circles, textuality was in fact valued and more widely-shared than he allows.⁴⁴⁴

is thoroughly convincing in drawing out the ways in which reading practices were embedded in larger cultural realities that both shaped those practices and gave them meaning.'

441 Hurtado, 'Oral Fixation', pp. 321-40 (323), who argues against some historical oversimplifications made by the advocates of 'performance criticism' of the New Testament.

442 William A. Johnson, 'Toward a Sociology of Reading in Classical Antiquity', *AJP* 121 (2000), pp. 593-627 (603); reference in Keith, 'Early Christian Book Culture', pp. 22-39 (26). Italics are original. Ancient reading practices are more accurately addressed with the concepts of 'reading communities' or 'reading cultures'.

443 Hurtado, 'Greco-Roman Textuality', pp. 91-106 (95); on the setting and relevancy of Qumran, see Talmon, 'Oral Tradition and Written Transmission', pp. 121-58; cf. Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 16-17.

444 For the level of literacy, see Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 71-123; *idem*, 'Early Christian Book Culture', pp. 22-39 (35-36); Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*; also, Eve, *Behind*, pp. 10-11; contra Millard, *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus*.

See the references in Hurtado, 'Greco-Roman Textuality', pp. 91-106 (95-96, n. 13-15), who, despite some ambiguity, succeeds in emphasizing the wide-spread textuality. On the importance of the synagogue as a particularly important institution in promoting an appreciation of texts, see Josephus' references to the Jewish emphasis upon popular levels of education, *Josephus, Apion* 1.60; 2.171-78, 204. Hurtado, 'Greco-Roman Textuality', pp. 91-106 (96 n. 15), comments, 'Even if somewhat idealized, Josephus' statements likely reflect cultural values characteristic of first-century Jewish society.'

However, Hurtado's points need to be qualified with Keith, 'Early Christian Book Culture', pp. 22-39 (35-36 n. 60): 'If he [Hurtado] means that many Jews were literate, that is incorrect... Hurtado is correct about the cultural influence of texts, however, and here Stock's distinction between "textuality" and "literacy" is important.' Nevertheless, I find the following statements generally plausible, as far as textuality is concerned: Gerhardsson, *Reliability*, p. 115: 'The society

One cannot view 'orality in the Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity as a "lack of influence of textuality".⁴⁴⁵ The early Christian identity was dependent on the written texts, namely, the manuscripts, which enabled and reflected 'a specific reading community'; even though early Christian communities did not share the social status and wealth of the elite in the higher Roman empire, 'the sociological principle that their revered texts were bound up with their concepts of who they were was as true for synagogues reading Torah, Pauline churches reading epistles, and Justin Martyr's church reading the Gospels and prophets as it was for Pliny, Galen, Gellius, and their friends reading antiquarian Greco-Roman texts'.⁴⁴⁶ In the earliest Christianity, there was no pure orality but rather various 'oralities' and interactions with scribal practices or written textuality.⁴⁴⁷

Though it is not contested by most NT scholars that the oral medium was the primary means of transmission of the pre-Markan Jesus traditions, Kelber's characterization of the context is questionable; it does not take into account the reality that '[early Christian oral tradition] exists within a culture with a strong literacy as well as vigorous orality'.⁴⁴⁸ Even if the early Christian culture is viewed as 'predominantly oral', it cannot go without notice that oral versions of a tradition would not vanish after the writing and the content of the written versions would usually be transmitted *orally*.⁴⁴⁹ A sharp distinction between oral and written transmission is hard to imagine, as any strand of tradition could have 'oscillated from oral to written forms at various stages in its transmission and amid multiple

where Jesus appeared... was no preliterate society. Nothing indicates that the formative milieu of Jesus was not at all or only to a small degree influenced by the written word'; *idem*, 'The Secret', pp. 1-18 (17): 'Writing, reading, and listening to written texts had for many centuries influenced the way in which Jews, especially leaders and teachers, thought and expressed themselves.' Cf. ch. 2.1.3; 2.2.3.

445 Keith, 'Early Christian Book Culture', pp. 22-39 (35-36), referencing Hurtado, 'The Gospel of Mark', pp. 15-32 (17).

446 Keith, 'Early Christian Book Culture', pp. 22-39 (31).

447 Samuel Byrskog, 'A New Perspective on the Jesus Tradition: Reflections on James D. G. Dunn's *Jesus Remembered*', in Robert B. Stewart & Gary R. Habermas (eds.), *Memories of Jesus: A Critical Appraisal of James D. G. Dunn's Jesus Remembered* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2010), pp. 59-78 (75); Bird, *Gospel*, p. 92; Hurtado, 'Greco-Roman Textuality', pp. 91-106 (93-98); Øivind Andersen, 'Oral Tradition', in H. Wansbrough (ed.), *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition* (JSNTSup, 64; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), pp. 17-58; also, Uro, 'Thomas and oral gospel tradition', pp. 8-32 (17). Cf. also ch. 2.2.3 above on Birger Gerhardsson's view.

448 Andersen, 'Oral Tradition', pp. 17-58 (47); reference in Hurtado, 'Greco-Roman Textuality', pp. 91-106 (97 n. 19).

449 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 202.

streams of preservation.⁴⁵⁰ Linked with this is Gerhardsson's notion that both oral and written texts can be both fixed and flexible.⁴⁵¹

Connected to Kelber's reconstruction of the context is his view of the historical Jesus as an oral performer and teacher, as opposed to a reader or writer.⁴⁵² While it was certainly the case that Jesus mainly operated orally as a speaker as Kelber insists,⁴⁵³ viewing him simply as an oral performer of parabolic material that is comparable to nineteenth-century folklore does not fully do justice to him as a *Jewish* teacher of the first-century; one needs to take into account that Jesus' teaching method seems to have conveyed, at least to some audiences, even a scribal-level of literacy.⁴⁵⁴ In fact, Gerhardsson's view seems to be closer to the first-century situation in indicating that Jesus was a Jewish 'rabbinic' teacher, who taught in *meshalim*, formulated pointed sayings; this may indicate a greater degree of memorability than Kelber's picture of Jesus allows, although one must not directly link Jesus with the rabbis of the later periods.⁴⁵⁵

Furthermore, Kelber gives a somewhat oversimplified picture of the disciples.⁴⁵⁶ While the Jesus traditions depict the disciples as 'unliterary men', it is not clear that this picture is not in need of any revision. As already indicated in this study, one need not think of the disciples as a bunch of formally educated Pharisees to recognize that, as Jewish men, they would have been strongly influenced by Jewish Scriptures, and would have had more than 'tenuous connections with literate culture.'⁴⁵⁷ In any case, the disciples' relationship with Jesus was *pedagogical* in nature and must have had an impact on them; the possible development of their literary and educational skills in the course of time cannot be ruled out.⁴⁵⁸ Even in a context of low overall literacy, it is not impossible to imagine that some of the

450 Bird, *Gospel*, p. 92.

451 Gerhardsson, *Reliability*, pp. 117-18.

452 Cf. Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 18-22.

453 Contra e.g. Hollander, 'The Words of Jesus in Paul and Q', pp. 340-57 (351), who argues 'we do not know for sure whether Jesus was an oral performer, a teacher.'

454 See Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 165-88, who is himself sympathetic to many aspects of Kelber's account; cf. ch. 2.2.3 above.

455 Gerhardsson, *Reliability*, p. 120; Eve, *Behind*, p. 63; cf. e.g. Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 18.

456 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 21-22, 41 n. 185, 186; cf. Gerhardsson, *Memory*, pp. 201-2; the discussion above in ch. 2.2.3.

457 Cf. Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 21.

458 Cf. Gerhardsson, *Tradition*, pp. 25-26, who indicates that an explanation is needed for the development of *Christian* exegesis and theology prior to the writing of the Gospels, namely, in the period when at least some of the disciples were still alive. On the development of early Christian book culture, see Keith, 'Early Christian Book Culture', pp. 22-39.

earliest members of the Jesus movement could read and write.⁴⁵⁹ The differences between Kelber and Gerhardsson's views of Jesus and the disciples stem from their different reconstructions of the literary context; while Kelber's view of low literacy is supported by evidence,⁴⁶⁰ he seems to have underestimated the influence of texts and textuality in the context.⁴⁶¹ Despite the low-level literacy, early Christian manuscripts had a broad significance in the maintenance and articulation of the early Christian group identity.⁴⁶²

Besides the inaccurate notion of orality, Kelber's views of the oral hermeneutics of Mark, Paul and Q are problematic. Kelber's argument that Mark's textuality was a clear departure from oral practices, and the writing of the Gospel intended to 'silence' the oral Jesus traditions, is untenable for several reasons.⁴⁶³ First, Mark cannot be viewed in objection to sayings material simply because he did not include as much of it as Matthew and Luke did later. Too much of sayings material would not have fitted his 'fast-paced dramatic narrative'; also, at the time of writing, there were no standard precedents for the amount of sayings material that Mark should have included in his Gospel.⁴⁶⁴ Second, it is not reasonable to take the condemnation of false prophets in Mark 13.21-22 as a general rebuttal of *all* Christian prophets due to their capacity as carriers of Jesus' authority via the *oral* medium.⁴⁶⁵ This is a matter of reconstruction with no definite answer: while some have suggested that Mark may have referred to 'sign prophets' mentioned in Josephus' writings⁴⁶⁶ or the propaganda of Vespasians' supporters while he was

459 Cf. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 288; Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, pp. 497-98.

460 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 63: 'Kelber envisages a situation rather closer to a primarily oral culture with very low levels of literacy. Recent scholarship would tend to support Kelber's view here.'

461 It is debated whether writing served as a control of the transmission of Jesus traditions. On the role of written notes, see e.g. Eve, *Behind*, 8-14, who takes a rather skeptical view, and Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 289, who is more optimistic.

462 See Keith, 'Early Christian Book Culture', pp. 22-39 (37), who, while not denying that early Christian manuscripts could function as aids to memory, reminds that '[m]anuscripts were integral factors in the maintenance and articulation of group identity, often becoming shorthand expressions of the group identity.'

463 Hurtado, 'Greco-Roman Textuality', pp. 91-106 (98-99); Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 202-3; Eve, *Behind*, pp. 61-62; cf. Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 90-105.

464 Eve, *Behind*, p. 61; cf. Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 100-2.

465 Cf. Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 98-99, who claims this, although he (p. 98) first admits, 'Whether one dates the prophets before or after the fall of the temple, they are in any case closely bound up with the turbulence of the Roman-Jewish war.' See Myllykoski, 'Mark's Oral Practice', pp. 97-113 (102): '...it is difficult to perceive how Mark could have thought to overcome, or silence, the oral prophecy by a written gospel story, even though it is likely that he was fighting against "false prophets".'

466 Eric Eve, *The Jewish Context of Jesus' Miracles* (JSNTSup, 231; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press,

attempting to get on the imperial throne⁴⁶⁷, others contend Mark's statements betray evidence of 'a Christian preoccupation with the parousia hope' and, thus, warn against those making statements about the return of Christ.⁴⁶⁸ Whatever the context of Mark's condemnation, no clear indication is given that the warning had particularly to do with the *oral* medium. Third, as Eve points out, the absence of the resurrection event in Mark need not speak anything about Mark's media preferences, since other explanations can be given; for instance, Mark could have 'conceived the resurrection as an immediate translation to heaven.'⁴⁶⁹ Fourth, Kelber's argument against any form of pre-Markan existence of the Passion narrative has been argued to be weak; it seems likely that some version of a pre-Markan Passion narrative did exist.⁴⁷⁰

Further, Kelber's argument that Mark portrays the disciples negatively in order to highlight the failure of oral tradition is not sustainable.⁴⁷¹ Many different explanations for the negative image of the disciples have been given, none of them emphasizing Mark's preference of textuality over oral authorities of the Jesus traditions: an underlying Christological polemic, a desire to create dramatic irony, a need for a narrative foil, an emphasis on the impossibility of salvation by human

2002), pp. 296-325; in Eve, *Behind*, p. 61 n. 44. For messianic pretenders in the era of Jewish war, see *Josephus, War* 2.433-48, 4.503-44; for 'sign prophets' with reference to the later stages of the siege, *War*, 6.285-300.

467 Theissen, *The Gospels in Context*; Eric Eve, 'Spit in Your Eye: The Blind Man of Bethsaida and the Blind Man of Alexandria', *NTS* 54 (2008), pp. 1-17; in Eve, *Behind*, p. 61 n. 45.

468 Richard T. France, *The Gospel of Mark* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), p. 528-29, who presents the references in Josephus, yet indicates that a more exclusively Christian use may be intended by Mark.

469 Eve, *Behind*, p. 61.

470 See e.g. William R. Telford, 'The Pre-Markan Tradition in Recent Research (1980-1990)', in F. Van Segbroeck, C. M. Tuckett, G. Van Belle and J. Verheyden (eds.), *The Four Gospels 1992. Festschrift Frans Neirynck* (vol. 2; BETL, 100B; Leuven: University Press, 1992), pp. 693-723 (702); Christopher Bryan, *A Preface to Mark. Notes on the Gospel in Its Literary and Cultural Settings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 133-35; Halverson, 'Oral and Written Gospel', pp. 180-195 (191-94); Hurtado, 'Greco-Roman Textuality', pp. 91-106 (92); Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 141 n. 251; contra Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 185-99.

471 See e.g. Dewey, 'Oral Methods', pp. 32-44 (42); Hurtado, 'Greco-Roman Textuality', pp. 91-106 (100); Mournet, *Oral Tradition and Literary Dependency*, pp. 84-86; Eve, *Behind*, pp. 61-62; cf. Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 96-98, esp. p. 97: 'This leads us to suggest that the dysfunctional role of the disciples narrated the breakdown of the mimetic process and casts a vote of censure against the guarantors of tradition. Oral representatives and oral mechanism have come under criticism.'

Although Kelber somewhat qualified his view of the 'Great Divide' in the introduction to the 1997 edition of *Oral and Written*, he still maintained 'Mark's polemic against the disciples... as an estrangement from the standard-bearers of oral tradition' (p. xxv). This is pointed out by Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 203 n. 165.

means and on divine omnipotence, pastoral encouragement, et cetera.⁴⁷² It has been argued that, due to Mark's nature as oral narrative, 'a first-century audience hearing the Gospel would probably take the negative portrayal of the disciples much less seriously than contemporary Marcan scholars do.'⁴⁷³

Kelber's understanding of Mark's textuality as a silencing force is further undermined by the fact that Mark betrays many characteristics of ancient oral narrative. Mark both uses originally oral units of material, which Kelber admitted,⁴⁷⁴ and as a whole reflects methods of composition for oral performance in front of a listening audience, not for individual readers.⁴⁷⁵ On the basis of her analysis of Mark in light of the depictions of oral narrative in Plato, Dewey has shown that, for example, the episodic, aggregative (for instance, frequent use of *kai*) and visual nature of narrative, the lack of linearity in plot and character development, and the use of 'acoustic responses' ('backward and forward echoes') in both small and large sections of the narrative, betray evidence that Mark's Gospel was built upon an oral storytelling tradition.⁴⁷⁶ Thus, Mark's textuality is not a radical departure from oral narrative, but rather 'profoundly influenced by, and allied with, the nature of oral narrative.'⁴⁷⁷

Mark's principled 'objection' to oral tradition, as envisaged by Kelber, can be easily construed as contradictory to what he said elsewhere about Mark's oral legacy and style.⁴⁷⁸ To be sure, Kelber did distinguish between primary and secondary orality: the former referred to orality in isolation from textuality, while

472 Eve, *Behind*, p. 61, lists all these possible explanations, referring to C. Clifton Black, *The Disciples According to Mark: Markan Redaction in Current Debate* (JSNTSup, P27; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989). For more literature on the disciples in Mark, see Hurtado, 'Greco-Roman Textuality', pp. 91-106 (100 n. 28).

473 Dewey, 'Oral Methods', pp. 32-44 (42); reference also in Hurtado, 'Greco-Roman Textuality', 91-106 (100), who agrees with many aspects of Dewey's analysis.

474 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 44-89, 'Mark's Oral Legacy'.

475 Dewey, 'Oral Methods', pp. 32-44; Hurtado, 'Greco-Roman Textuality', pp. 91-106 (98-99); also, Hurtado, 'Oral Fixation', pp. 321-40, who stresses that this is to be differentiated from 'oral composition', where texts are created each time in oral performance.

476 Dewey, 'Oral Methods', pp. 32-44. In her study of Plato and Mark, Dewey employs Eric A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge: Belknap of Harvard University, 1963). Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 95-96, does discuss Havelock's work in relation to the alphabetization of the Greek language and the rise of literacy, but ignores important aspects. Cf. Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 130.

477 Hurtado, 'Greco-Roman Textuality', pp. 91-106 (99). Also, Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 130: '*The gospels, then, while indeed gaining from the feed-back of literacy, are as stories reflective of an oral mind-set.*' Italics original.

478 As pointed out by Eve, *Behind*, p. 59.

the latter meant the oral performance, for which Mark's Gospel was written (or orality based on a written text).⁴⁷⁹ However, regardless of the secondary orality, Kelber's notion of the disruption of oral legacy is difficult to maintain, while arguing for an intentional oral element in the Gospel's composition.⁴⁸⁰ The concept of 'secondary orality' does not ease the overemphasized tension between Mark's textuality and 'pre-Markan (primary) orality'.⁴⁸¹ This problem remains, although Kelber has somewhat qualified his position in his subsequent writings, stating that Mark was not only attempting to downgrade the pre-Gospel oral tradition, but also reacting against other written documents (such as the sayings gospels like Q and the Gospel of Thomas).⁴⁸²

Kelber's view of Paul's media preferences also has to be judged as flawed.⁴⁸³ Paul most likely did not deliberately choose 'an oral-aural mindset', as opposed to written textuality, for the delivery of his message; the numerous references to speech and hearing in his letters are probably reflections of his media context.⁴⁸⁴ While Kelber agrees with Sanders' – in its time – groundbreaking conclusion that the law in Paul does not refer to legalism or attempts to 'earn God's favor' or salvation by good works,⁴⁸⁵ he nevertheless imagines a sharp distinction between the written law and Paul's oral gospel message. However, Paul hardly objected to the law mainly due to its written nature, but was, in both Galatians and Romans, primarily opposed to the kind of Jewish particularism, which would

479 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 217-18; cf. Eve, *Behind*, p. 59. Eve, p. 59 n. 34, points out that Kelber's use of 'secondary orality' differs from that of Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (New Accents; London and New York: Routledge, 2002), who uses the term as a reference to 'orality in electronic broadcast media.'

480 See Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 141 n. 249.

481 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 59: 'He [Kelber] fully accepted that Mark was probably written for oral performance, but such a performance would be an instance of secondary orality, meaning orality not mediated by texts in the course of its transmission. This distinction seems fair enough as far as it goes, but it is far from clear that it entirely meets the case. While Kelber may be correct to suggest that Mark did not write in order to preserve the oral tradition, the fact that he was prepared to make such an extensive use of it is a little odd if he objected to it so much in principle.' Cf. Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 213, 217-18.

482 See Kelber, 'Narrative as Interpretation', pp 107-28 (107-19); Kelber, 'Biblical Hermeneutics', pp. 97-105 (100); Eve, *Behind*, p. 60.

483 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 203-4; Eve, *Behind*, p. 62.

484 Eve, *Behind*, p. 62; cf. Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 140-51.

485 Kelber, *Oral and Written*, p. 151; cf. E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), p. 482: '[t]he reason for not keeping the Law which Bultmann adduces (that keeping it is itself sinning, because it leads to sin: boasting before) is notably not in evidence.'

exclude Gentiles from the people of God.⁴⁸⁶ On the one hand, regarding Galatians, it would have been fatal for Paul's Gentile mission had he not objected to the circumcision of his Gentile converts as a requirement of church membership; in Romans, on the other hand, Paul's argument against the law has more to do with its incapability to empower one to do what is right than with its written nature; receiving the Spirit, not aural commandments, is the solution. Even if Paul wrote Romans as a substitute for a personal visit and oral presence, the letter cannot be construed as a presentation of Paul's 'oral hermeneutics' due to the complexity of its argument and its nature as a written letter.⁴⁸⁷

Moreover, Kelber's original argument that Q was a collection of sayings, to which early Christian prophets contributed orally in order to directly address the audience with Jesus' authority,⁴⁸⁸ ignores the reality that Q is usually considered a *written* document with a literary history, not an oral sayings collection; this alone undermines the distinction between oral and written authority.⁴⁸⁹ Kelber's distinction fails to recognize that both oral and written tradition can 'effect a re-presentation (making present again) of ancient teaching'.⁴⁹⁰

Further, the old notion, adopted by Kelber, that there was no difference between the words of the historical Jesus and his followers (for example, early Christian prophets), has been argued to be false.⁴⁹¹ Kelber's argument that no true sense of the past, for example, of the historical Jesus, is transmitted *orally*, since every oral performance is unique and mainly construed with the audience's needs in view, is exaggerated.⁴⁹² In fact, some oral societies do betray an awareness

486 See e.g. James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 128-61; on Paul's media preferences in general, also Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 204: 'Paul would certainly not have recognized such distinctions.'

487 Eve, *Behind*, p. 62.

488 Cf. Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 201-7. However, see Kelber, 'The Case of the Gospels', pp. 55-86 (70-72, 78-81), which undermines the two-source hypothesis and the existence of Q, questioning his argument in *Oral and Written*.

489 See Uro, 'Thomas and oral gospel tradition', pp. 8-32 (13-15), esp. p. 14: 'The combination of oral mentality and the genre of Q in this way is problematic. One can, for example, refer to several recent analyses in which this "prophetic self-consciousness of Q" has been identified as a decisive factor in the document's literary history...The impression given by these recent analyses is not that 'prophetic' redaction of Q is a literary byproduct of a process which was predominantly an oral and free transmission of Jesus' sayings. Rather the redaction seems to have been deeply involved in a literary process...'

490 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 204; on Kelber's notions on the Christian prophets, see Halverson, 'Oral and Written Gospel', pp. 180-95.

491 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 131-33; cf. the discussion in ch. 2.1.3.

492 Cf. Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 24-26, 30-34; Lord, *Singer of Tales*, p. 101.

of historical truth, even if not simply for the sake of the history itself; historical information, including archaic features, can be preserved in oral tradition without a clear function in the community.⁴⁹³ Even though the Jesus traditions were related to early Christians' own concerns⁴⁹⁴ and social control of the traditions that were central to the community's identity must have been exercised,⁴⁹⁵ there was no perfect correspondence between the traditions and their use within early Christian contexts. Some traditions that were either 'non-functional' (dissimilar to Christian interests) or even 'counter-functional' (possibly embarrassing or harmful to Christian interests) could be preserved in the early Christian communities.⁴⁹⁶ For example, despite Mark's framing of his story as an oral narrative, it cannot be ruled out that the negative portrayals of the disciples and Jesus' family in the Gospel have their core in historical events, and were, despite their possible 'counter-functionality', passed on among other Jesus traditions by the early Christian communities.

Kelber pushes the principles of *social identification* and *preventive censorship* too far, as they easily undermine the nature of oral presentation. When depicting the context of the pre-Markan oral tradition, it needs to be noted, as Hurtado does, that oral composition 'is usually not composed fully impromptu, but is prepared in various ways beforehand with a view to the audience.'⁴⁹⁷ It is difficult to imagine

493 Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 131; *idem*, 'A New Perspective on the Jesus Tradition', pp. 459-71 (468-70); Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 246; *idem*, 'Gospel Traditions: Anonymous Community Traditions or Eyewitness Testimony', pp. 483-99 (485-86); Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38 (34-35); Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, pp. 121-22; cf. ch. 2.1.3.

494 Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38 (37).

495 Gerd Theissen, *The New Testament: A Literary History* (Fortress: Minneapolis, 2012), pp. 21-25 (22): 'The handing on is not arbitrary, but is influenced by the hearers, whose social control of the tradition is all the more rigorous the more important it is for the identity of the society.'

496 Interestingly, in his 2012 work, Theissen, *The New Testament*, pp. 21-25 (22 n. 10), upholds the principle of *preventive censorship*, for which he had argued from the 1970's onwards (e.g. in Theissen, 'Wanderradikalismus', pp. 245-71). It is, however, doubtful whether the principle of *preventive censorship* is congruent with Gerd Theissen and Dagmar Winter's quest for the plausible Jesus, to which the criterion of dissimilarity is essential. Theissen and Winter, *The Plausible Jesus*, alienate the historical Jesus methodically from early Christian beliefs by arguing that the traditions, which are dissimilar to the early Christian beliefs, are more likely to derive from the historical Jesus. One must ask whether the use of the criterion of dissimilarity is meaningful if the principle of *preventive censorship* is upheld. Does not the principle make the quest for traditions dissimilar to the early Christian interests pointless?

497 Hurtado, 'Greco-Roman Textuality', pp. 91-106 (101); Hurtado (p. 101) concludes, 'in oral compositions, the author has considerably more control over the composition than Kelber recognizes, and in written compositions for oral performance the anticipated audience exerts more influence than Kelber grants.'

that the Jesus traditions, over which authoritative individuals could exercise some control, would have been told and retold in such a fluid and flexible manner that one could speak of the uniqueness of the content of *each* oral performance and a complete adaptation of the traditions to the audience and social pressure. While one may not imagine as rigid a model of control as Gerhardsson did, there were individuals exercising control over the oral transmission.⁴⁹⁸ Jesus' role as the originator of the traditions and the teacher of the disciples, who would commit his teachings to memory in a memorable form, cannot be overlooked. Thus, when emphasizing the tradition's 'predisposition to abandon features not socially approved', Kelber seems to have downplayed his own notion of a 'conservative urge to preservation of essential information', which is evident in the memorable forms of the traditions.⁴⁹⁹

Nevertheless, Kelber's overall theory has considerable strengths, which are not nullified by the previous criticisms; none of the issues have pulled the rug completely out from under Kelber's case. It is significant that Kelber draws more scholarly attention towards the notion of the multiformity of the Jesus traditions; while not being the first scholar to pay attention to the fact,⁵⁰⁰ Kelber acknowledges 'a plurality of authentically original, genuine versions of a saying or group of sayings', and recognizes that, besides the early Christians, Jesus himself could utter the same saying or parable in a different form on various occasions.⁵⁰¹ Although one may not speak of the *uniqueness* of each rendition, as Kelber did, this is an important point regarding the variability in the process of transmission; the recognition of multiformity leans toward a notion of 'oral tradition as a *context* of communication rather than simply as a *medium* of communication', which could be studied like a written text.⁵⁰² This view embraces the category of memory rather

498 Eve, *Behind*, p. 45; Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, p. 35, admit this, while in many ways positive towards Kelber; cf. ch. 2.2.3 on Gerhardsson's view.

499 Cf. Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 29-30.

500 Already, for instance, Gerhardsson, *Manuscript*, pp. 334-35, did note that Jesus may have delivered some of his sayings in more than one version; however, his overall account did not do justice to such a notion of variability.

501 Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 38-39. See the subsequent article, Kelber, 'Jesus and Tradition', pp. 139-67 (151); however, already Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 25-26: 'Distinct forms of speech can and do function in more than one social setting.'

502 Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 38-39. Italics original. Kelber, 'Jesus and Tradition', pp. 139-67 (159), refers to tradition as 'biosphere in which speaker and hearers live. It includes texts and experiences transmitted through or derived from texts. But it is anything but reducible to intertextuality. Tradition in this broadest sense is largely an invisible nexus of references and identities from which people draw sustenance.'

than that of tradition, further undermining the early form-critical notion of the original form linked with the particular social setting.⁵⁰³ Consequently, Kelber's view has been applauded for being broadly consistent with social memory theory and the memory approach to the Jesus traditions and the study of the historical Jesus.⁵⁰⁴

Furthermore, even if not as rigid and fixed as Kelber envisaged, the kind of textuality that Mark's Gospel created later has to be taken seriously. Albeit in an environment of complex interactions between orality and textuality, Mark nevertheless was a pioneering example of revolutionary textuality, which later on enabled early Christians to read texts 'liturgically in the manner that non-Christian Jews read the Hebrew sacred texts in synagogue and elite Romans read their classics in the context of meals.'⁵⁰⁵ Mark simply was 'a major step in the transmission of the Jesus tradition,'⁵⁰⁶ giving, granted unintentionally, an impetus for the reception-history of that tradition in the form of manuscripts, which 'nurtured, shaped, and maintained various (often competing) Christian identities'; thus, while wrong about many aspects of Mark's textuality, Kelber was right in indicating that Mark's writing was significant and related to early Christian identity.⁵⁰⁷

In short, Kelber's view cannot be excluded from the recent conversation on the nature and transmission of the Jesus traditions. Although his original split between orality and textuality displayed a fallacy in method,⁵⁰⁸ Kelber has more

503 Eve, *Behind*, p. 64. Cf. the comments in Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 316 n. 60: '[Kelber, "The Case of the Gospels", pp. 55-86] insists that "remembering" in the Jesus tradition and the Gospels was overwhelmingly controlled by present needs and aspirations. This absorption of the past into the present gives Kelber's approach an important continuity with form criticism.'

504 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 65, 132-33; cf. Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 70-77, where Kelber argues that the oral process refuses to preserve the historical Jesus in the 'modern' sense and rejects the categories of 'authentic' and 'inauthentic,' as they are foreign to the mnemonic purposes; this does not mean that nothing can be known of history, only that historical accuracy is subordinate to oral principles. Kelber himself has embraced what Eve labels 'the social memory approach.'

505 Keith, 'Early Christian Book Culture,' pp. 22-39 (38).

506 Hurtado, 'Greco-Roman Textuality,' pp. 91-106 (105-6), despite his sharp criticism of Kelber's view of Markan textuality.

507 Keith, 'Early Christian Book Culture,' pp. 22-39 (38-39). Of course, Kelber was not the first scholar to speak about the significance of Mark's Gospel.

508 Hurtado, 'Greco-Roman Textuality,' pp. 91-106 (94), complained: 'Kelber's attempt to attribute the distinctive hermeneutics and "psychodynamics" of the orality of oral cultures to oral communication in literate cultures...seems to go against the studies from which he has derived the categories of orality and textuality...Lord, Ong and the others Kelber refers to all deal in terms of *oral cultures* (in which writing technology is either not known or not yet fully in place). Kelber tries to attribute the characterization of these oral cultures to the early Christian groups in

recently become more sensitive to both the similarities between oral tradition and written tradition and their mutual influence in the ancient past.⁵⁰⁹ It has been suggested by some within the memory approach that Kelber's contribution to the discussion, beginning from *The Oral and Written Gospel*, is a game-changer in relation to the pre-Gospel oral tradition.⁵¹⁰ While not giving up the source-critical two-source theory (the primacy of Mark, existence of Q), Kelber's work questioned many of the presuppositions of the so-called Third Quest, including what he viewed as an overemphasis on literary sources and the use of the criteria of authenticity. The work of Kenneth Bailey, another contributor to the discussion on the transmission of the Jesus traditions in early Christianity, is the final view, discussed in this chapter.

2.4 INFORMAL CONTROLLED ORAL TRADITION

Less than a decade after Werner Kelber's initial work, another approach to the nature and transmission of the Jesus traditions in early Christianity emerged. Starting in 1991, Kenneth E. Bailey (1930–2016) argued for *informal controlled oral tradition*. In his two relatively brief articles, Bailey attempted to find a median position between Bultmann's flexible 'informal uncontrolled oral tradition' and Gerhardsson's inflexible 'formal controlled oral tradition': there was a rather inflexible core in each tradition with a community-controlled freedom in how individuals would tell the stories. In contrast to other strictly historical and theoretical models, Bailey's approach offered examples of oral transmission in a culture which was supposedly comparable to the first century Jewish Palestine; on the basis of his experiences of teaching in the Middle East for four decades,⁵¹¹

the pre-Markan period, but this would be justified only if he could show that the early Christians were situated in such an oral culture.'

509 See Keith, 'Early Christian Book Culture', pp. 22-39 (33-34); cf. the collection of essays in Werner Kelber, *Imprints, Voiceprints, and Footprints of Memory: Collected Essays of Werner H. Kelber* (RBS, 74; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013).

510 Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, p. 39, who thinks it is only a slight exaggeration to speak of a 'Kelber revolution in NT scholarship'.

511 Bailey noted about his career, which consisted of teaching the New Testament in seminaries and institutes in Egypt, Lebanon, Jerusalem and Cyprus, that his 'academic efforts have focused on trying to understand more adequately the stories of the Gospels in the light of Middle Eastern culture'. See Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2008), p. 11. Bailey's other academic titles include, for instance, Kenneth E. Bailey, *Poet & Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes: A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables in Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980); *idem*, *Finding the Lost: Cultural Keys to Luke 15* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1992); *idem*, 'Women in Ben Sirach and in the New Testament', in R.

Bailey contended that the rural Middle Eastern village life and the ways of communication therein had not drastically changed over the course of two millennia.⁵¹² The purpose of this section is to find out whether Bailey's suggestion and his anecdotal evidence holds up to critical scrutiny in light of more theoretical approaches and historical data. Bailey's view is first represented from his two articles; then, the criticism against his view is presented and evaluated.⁵¹³

2.4.1 KENNETH E. BAILEY

Bailey started his account by stating that both 'the Bultmannian' and 'the Scandinavian' models of oral transmission exist in the Middle East of modern times. The former, namely, the informal uncontrolled oral tradition, or 'rumour transmission,' takes place, for example, when tragedies and atrocity stories are being told and elaborated; the latter, that is, the formal controlled oral tradition exists among the Muslim sheiks, who memorize the entire Qur'an, and among the Eastern Orthodox clergy, who memorize their extensive liturgies. The former form of tradition results 'from natural human failings,' while the latter 'is a carefully nurtured methodology of great antiquity' still practiced by both Christians and Muslims.⁵¹⁴

In addition to these two kinds of transmission, Bailey argued for a third phenomenon, an ancient method of transmission, namely, *informal controlled oral tradition*, which was still at work in the Middle East. Regarding such transmission, Bailey focused on the setting, functions, the kinds of material retained, the controls exercised by the community, and the techniques for introducing new material. First, the setting of transmission was an informal evening gathering of villagers, *haflat samar*, the Arabic *samar* being a cognate of the Hebrew *shamar* ('to preserve'). The *haflat samar* was, according to Bailey, an informal 'party of preservation' in which there was neither specific teacher nor student, but in

A. Coughenour (ed.), *For Me to Live: Essays in Honor of James Leon Kelso* (Festschrift J. L. Kelso; Cleveland: Dinnon/Liederbach, 1972).

512 Kenneth E. Bailey, 'Informal Controlled Oral Tradition and the Synoptic Gospels,' *Themelios* 20 (1995), pp. 4-11, originally published in *AJT* 5 (1991), pp. 34-54; *idem*, 'Middle Eastern Oral Tradition and the Synoptic Gospels,' *ExpTim* 106 (1994), pp. 363-67. Bailey borrowed the idea of 'median position' from C. H. Dodd, *The Founder of Christianity* (London: Macmillan, 1970), and attempted to offer a concrete methodological model, which he thought Dodd's work lacked.

513 The most important critic of Bailey is Theodore J. Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory of Oral Tradition: A Theory Contested by Its Evidence,' *JSHJ* 7 (2009), pp. 3-43.

514 Bailey, 'Informal,' pp. 4-11 (4-5).

theory anyone could participate in the telling of poems and other traditional materials; in reality, the older, more gifted, and socially prominent men would do the reciting.⁵¹⁵ Bailey attempted to support his view of the setting and the reciters by his own experience in the village of Kom al-Akhdar in the south Egypt, where he had asked someone about the village traditions; although this person was ‘in his sixties’ and ‘seemed to be an appropriate person to ask’, he was interrupted by others after only a few remarks because he was not originally from the same village; thirty-seven years of living in that village, Bailey recounts, had not made that person an appropriate reciter.⁵¹⁶

Bailey argued that five different kinds of material were transmitted in this setting: short proverbs, story riddles, poetry, parables, and accounts of the important figures in the history of the village or community. For example, in support of the transmission of poetry, Bailey referred to the so-called *zajal*, which was ‘a distinct unlettered form of verse, composed by intelligent villagers’, who were ‘not necessarily literate’ and performed at festive occasions like weddings; an example of a *zajali*, a man skilled to create such village verse *ad lib*, was a seventeenth-century Maronite monk, who composed a complete history of the Maronite church in *zajal*; this work was transmitted orally for over 200 years.⁵¹⁷

Bailey’s account allowed for different levels of flexibility for the different kinds of material. The strictest level of control was exercised by the community over the recitation of poems and proverbs: no flexibility was allowed, and any mistakes made by the reciter were subject to public correction. In the other extreme were jokes, casual news, and atrocity stories, which were not central to the identity of the community; this type of material floated and died ‘in a state of total instability’, being totally flexible. Most importantly, there was the material that fell between the two extremes; some flexibility, that is, individual interpretation of the tradition was allowed for parables and recollections of historical people and events, central to the community’s identity. This material was at the core of Bailey’s interest; there was both control over the basic features of the material (such as the central thrust and flow, the basic scenes, the names, the proverbs cited, the conclusions, and the punch lines) and flexibility in style and detail.⁵¹⁸

515 Bailey, ‘Informal’, pp. 4-11 (5-6); *idem*, ‘Middle Eastern’, pp. 363-67 (364).

516 Bailey, ‘Informal’, pp. 4-11 (6).

517 Bailey, ‘Informal’, pp. 4-11 (7).

518 Bailey, ‘Informal’, pp. 4-11 (7-8). Bird, *Gospel*, p. 93, points out that Bailey’s model comes close to Øivind Andersen’s view, namely, that oral transmission operates in a setting that is ‘structured

For example, Bailey cited one of his own experiences from sitting in a *haflat samar* and hearing the ‘Shann’ story.⁵¹⁹ Bailey linked another example of ‘some flexibility’ with this occasion. Ten years after hearing the ‘Shann’ story, he had asked the Palestinian, Jordanian, Syrian, and Egyptian village boys in his class in Beirut about the story; all – except the Egyptian who had not heard it – knew the story and could list the items that must be preserved in an authentic transmission: the punch-line had to be repeated verbatim, the three basic scenes could not be changed (except the order of the last two), and the basic flow and the conclusion had to remain the same.⁵²⁰ In his second article, Bailey seemed to allude to the same kinds of experiments when he stated that he had ‘watched the students instinctively form the controlling community and together explain to me the acceptable boundaries for a given story’.⁵²¹

Bailey found additional support for the material with ‘some flexibility’ (or both continuity and freedom) in a historical narrative that was important to an individual village. ‘Father Makhiel of the village of Dayr Abu Hennis’ had provided Bailey with a story about the founding of the village, all the way from the fourth century CE; according to the story, the village had been founded when Christian monks established a monastery near Antinopolis, a city built by the Romans in the second century CE. The monks of the monastery were known for making baskets with three handles; the three handles, which stood for the Trinity, enabled them to ‘witness’ about their faith, as they sold the baskets in the market. ‘To change the basic story-line while telling that account in the village of Dayr Abu Hennis,’ Bailey asserted, ‘is unthinkable’.⁵²²

Regarding the techniques for introducing new material into the tradition, Bailey gave an account of an occasion in Beirut at a public lecture in 1967. The Rev. Ibrahim Dagher, whom Bailey labeled ‘[t]he official head of the Protestants in Lebanon’ and ‘an authentic reciter of the *informal controlled* oral tradition of

but open’ See Andersen, ‘Oral Tradition’, pp. 17-58 (19).

519 Bailey, ‘Informal’, pp. 4-11 (7): ‘Sixteen years ago, seated in a *haflat samar*, someone responded to the group conversation with ‘*Wafaqa Shannun Tabaqa*’ (Shann was pleased to accept Tabaqa). I immediately sensed that this was the punch-line of a story, and the story was unknown to me. So I asked, in good biblical fashion, ‘What mean ye by these things?’ The circle quickly sensed the formal nature of what was happening, and someone said, ‘Rev. Dagher knows the story.’ In fact, they all knew it, but the ranking patriarch was given the honour of telling the story to the newcomer.’

520 Bailey, ‘Informal’, pp. 4-11 (7).

521 Bailey, ‘Middle-Eastern’, pp. 363-67 (366).

522 Bailey, ‘Informal’, pp. 4-11 (8).

his community', told a parable related to the Palestinian-Lebanese conflict and the war in June 1966. In the parable, a camel was trying to enter a Bedouin's tent; however, instead of the conclusion and the punch-line that everyone expected, namely, that the camel would drive the Bedouin out of the tent, Dagher's ending had the camel jerk his neck and strike the top of the tent, so that it collapsed on the Bedouin and the camel. Bailey gave an explanation for what Dagher meant with the revised ending of the story, which entered the informal controlled oral tradition and 'survived in Protestant circles and was retold all across the Middle East'.⁵²³ Bailey claimed that Dagher's rendering of the parable was so unforgettable that the version he provided in the article had 'recorded above at least 80 per cent of Rev. Dagher's *ipsissima verba*' even eighteen years after Bailey heard the parable.⁵²⁴

In order to demonstrate how the informal controlled oral tradition functioned in practice, Bailey also related four stories about the nineteenth century Scottish Presbyterian missionary John Hogg (in Egypt ca. 1854–1886), who founded Protestant congregations in Egypt. Bailey's point was to compare the stories found in the biography of Hogg written by his daughter Rena L. Hogg⁵²⁵ a few decades after Hogg's death to the oral traditions that Bailey himself encountered in the same villages between 1955 and 1965. Bailey argued that these stories were transmitted and preserved in the informal controlled oral tradition for about ninety years. Each individual account would be primarily preserved in the village of origin, while the more dramatic stories would circulate more widely from village to village; the stories about Hogg's words and deeds were central to the community's identity, became a part of its tradition, and were passed on in the *hafalat samar* (*hafalat* being the plural of *haflat*).⁵²⁶

523 Bailey, 'Informal', pp. 4-11 (9): 'We the Lebanese have welcomed our Palestinian brothers into Lebanon, but there is danger lest they break down the social and political structures of Lebanon and bring the whole country crashing down around our ears.'

524 Bailey, 'Informal', pp. 4-11. Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (27 n. 21-22), remarks that Bailey has reduced the 'ninety percent' of the original *AJT* article to '80 per cent' and revised '22 years ago' to 'eighteen years ago' in the version published in *Themelios* (cited in this dissertation).

525 Rena L. Hogg, *Master Builder on the Nile: Being a Record of the Life and Aims of John Hogg, D.D., Christian Missionary* (New York: Flemming Revell, 1914). Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (8 n. 10), points out a contradiction concerning the date of John Hogg's death in Rena Hogg's biography: John Hogg is first (pp. 283-86) said to have died in February of 1886, but subsequently a list of key dates in his life (p. 294) mentions February 27, 1885 as the day of his death.

526 Bailey, 'Informal', pp. 4-11 (8).

Bailey offered brief accounts of the Hogg stories, which he claimed to have found ‘told in almost the same way’⁵²⁷ as Rena Hogg had found them in 1910, when she dipped into the tradition.⁵²⁸ Bailey records first an incident of a village guard urinating on Hogg’s head.⁵²⁹ Second, somewhat surprisingly, Bailey recounts, however, a story not included in Rena Hogg’s work: Hogg’s response to a ‘trouble-maker’, who offers him dried cow manure.⁵³⁰ Third, Bailey employs another story not included in Hogg’s biography, a story about children singing a taunt song to Hogg.⁵³¹ Fourth, Bailey tells about Hogg’s encounter with a band of robbers.⁵³² In his second article, Bailey claimed to have heard these stories ‘[f]

527 See Weeden, ‘Kenneth Bailey’s Theory’, pp. 3-43 (7 n. 8), who indicates that, while this wording is found in the 1995 reproduction of Bailey’s article that appeared in *Themelios* (cited in this dissertation), Bailey initially used the phrase ‘almost the identical wording’ in the original version of his article published in AJT.

528 Bailey, ‘Informal’, pp. 4-11 (9). Bailey, ‘Middle-Eastern’, pp. 363-67, does not cite any Hogg stories.

529 Bailey, ‘Informal’, pp. 4-11 (8): ‘One village proudly told of how he [Hogg] was preaching in a village courtyard and the mayor, anxious to cause trouble, sent a village guard up onto the adjoining roof to urinate on him. Hogg stepped aside, took a handkerchief from his pocket, wiped his head and continued preaching without looking up. The mayor was so shamed and impressed that after inquiry and study he joined the infant church and became one of its leaders.’

530 Bailey, ‘Informal’, pp. 4-11 (8): ‘In a trouble-maker’s home in the village of Nazlet al-Milk Hogg was asked, ‘Dr Hogg, do you seek to obey what is written in the Gospels?’ ‘I do,’ answered Hogg. ‘Very well then,’ they said, ‘in the Gospel it says that the evangelist is to eat what is set before him. Do you accept that?’ ‘Yes,’ came the reply, whereupon they placed in front of him a dried cow manure patty of the type that village homes use for cooking fuel and said to him, ‘Very well, then, eat *this!*’ Hogg reflected momentarily and answered quietly, ‘*Da akl in-nar. Eddini akl al-bashar wa akulha*’ (This is food for a fire. Give me food for people and I will eat it). The present writer is fully confident that the above Arabic sentence is a record of Hogg’s exact words spoken once over a hundred years ago and here recorded for the first time.’

531 Bailey, ‘Informal’, pp. 4-11 (8): ‘In the village of al-Muti’ah he anchored his houseboat on the river at the edge of the village. After some time village children began gathering and in turn composed a taunt song which they sang every time he came down from or returned to the houseboat. The taunt song was along the following lines: Mister John Hogg is too tall. Crack his head and see him fall. Hour after hour, day after day, this became tiresome. Hogg decided that something had to be done. So he purchased a large sack of hard candy and told the children that he really appreciated their song. Would they sing it for him? Delighted, the children then sang the song with gusto. He then expressed gratitude and passed out hard candy to the singers as a reward. This continued for a number of days until the sack of hard candy was finally finished. On the next occasion they sang the taunt song as usual. He offered his usual thanks and praise, but there was no candy. The children complained, ‘Where is our candy?’ He answered, ‘I don’t have any more candy.’ They responded testily, ‘Well, if you don’t give us any candy we won’t come here and sing your song for you!!’ The candy was not forthcoming and so the children stomped off, never to return. The incident occurred about 1870. It was proudly reported to me in 1961 by the al-Muti’ah Evangelical community, complete with taunt song.’

532 Bailey, ‘Informal’, pp. 4-11 (8-9): ‘Before the First World War John Hogg’s daughter dipped into this same oral tradition and in her biography of him told how he was waylaid at night by a band of robbers who demanded valuables. He quickly surrendered a gold watch and his money, but indicated that he had a treasure worth far more. They were curious. He pulled a small book from

rom the grandchildren of Rena Hogg's informers' with about ninety percent of the same words; Bailey indicated that he could either read these stories in English from Rena Hogg's book or hear them told in Arabic by the village communities.⁵³³

Besides these stories about John Hogg, Bailey attempted to support his case by an account about a groom, who was accidentally shot at his own wedding in 1958. Bailey recalled having himself missed the wedding in which the incident is said to have occurred.⁵³⁴ Bailey mentioned that he only heard about the incident a week later upon his return to the village, when an account of the story was related to him by several people from different sociological levels: a boatman on the river, a young boy in the street, the village guards, the mayor, and a preacher. The different versions of the stories varied in detail, but the climaxes were remarkably similar: 'Hanna [the groom's friend] fired the gun. The gun did not go off. He lowered the gun. The gun fired [*durib al-bundugiyya* – passive].'⁵³⁵ Bailey contended that the divine passive in the climax of the account indicated that the community had together decided that it was God *not* Hanna, who had fired the gun, and consequently blood revenge was not required. To the police, Bailey noted, the villagers told a different version of the account: '[a] camel stepped on him,' which was not intended as a deception of the authorities but was rather a sophisticated phrase of Middle Eastern double-talk, meaning the matter had been settled among the members of the community and no further involvement from the police was wanted. The community had made the theological decision about the nature of the incident and condensed the story accordingly; although all details were privately and unofficially given to the police, they could not get any other summary of the event than the same climax from any of the five thousand villagers.⁵³⁶

Furthermore, Bailey referred to his own experiences of preaching in Middle Eastern churches. He argued that a central core of information in a story new to

his pocket and spent the entire night telling them of the treasures it contained. By morning the band, convicted of the evil of their ways, sought to return his watch and money and pledged themselves to give up highway robbery. Hogg took the watch but insisted that they keep his money, and indeed then financed the gang personally.'

533 Bailey, 'Middle Eastern', pp. 363-67 (366).

534 Bailey, 'Informal', pp. 4-11 (9): 'At village weddings hundreds, or even thousands, of rifle rounds are fired into the air in celebration. Much of the ammunition is old and the guns are fired carelessly. At times, as in this case, tragedy results. In the celebrations after the wedding ceremony a friend of the groom fired his rifle. The gun did not go off. He lowered the gun and then the defective bullet fired, passing through the groom [Butrus] who was killed instantly.'

535 Bailey, 'Informal', pp. 4-11 (9).

536 Bailey, 'Informal', pp. 4-11 (9).

the community entered the community's oral tradition in a particular way. Starting with an elder in the front row shouting across the church, the congregants would repeat the central thrust of the story told by the preacher with a punch-line a few times to each other. According to Bailey, the preacher could not continue until this had taken place; the villagers had to learn the stories in order to be able to share them across the village. Bailey took this process as evidence for how *informal controlled* oral tradition functioned, solidified, and orally recorded information for transmission; the core of the material would remain 'relatively inflexible', while there would be 'a community-controlled freedom to vary the story according to individual perspectives.'⁵³⁷

At the end of his first article, Bailey presented some conclusions of the *informal controlled* oral tradition for Synoptic studies. He stated that the 'ministers of the word' (ὀπηρεῖται... τοῦ λόγου) in Luke 1.2 were to be taken as eyewitnesses. According to Bailey, the *informal controlled* oral tradition could function in the villages of Palestine until the Jewish-Roman war disrupted the sociological structures in which the oral tradition was transmitted. Bailey held that anyone over twenty years of age would have naturally become an authentic reciter of the tradition by the time of the destruction; however, after the disruption, the method had to be refined and only the eyewitnesses of the historical Jesus could be qualified as 'ministers of the word'. Bailey indicated that these specifically designated authoritative witnesses would ensure the 'authenticity' of the tradition to the end of the first century. Bailey explained that the 'corruption' evident in the apocryphal gospels became possible through the destruction of the earliest controlling communities.⁵³⁸

In sum, Bailey attempted to outline a method that both ensured the 'authenticity' and allowed for the freedom and variability of the Jesus traditions. Bailey argued that the Synoptic material primarily consists of the same forms that were preserved by *informal controlled* oral tradition: proverbs, parables, poems, dialogues, conflict stories, and historical narratives. These materials were remembered by early Christians, as their Christian identity was by and large defined and affirmed by Jesus' words and deeds; they were interested in history, the historical Jesus, and the preservation of the Jesus traditions due to what they

537 Bailey, 'Informal', pp. 4-11 (10).

538 Bailey, 'Informal', pp. 4-11 (10).

believed about Jesus.⁵³⁹

2.4.2 CRITIQUE & EVALUATION

Although Bailey's two relatively short articles appeared in somewhat less prominent journals (*Asia Journal of Theology/Themelios & Expository Times*) and do not present a full-fledged historical model, his viewpoints have attracted some significant attention and critique, and deserve, therefore, discussion and evaluation.⁵⁴⁰ Bailey's 'informal controlled oral tradition' has gained a following among such heavyweight historical Jesus scholars as James D. G. Dunn and N. T. Wright; for both Dunn and Wright, Bailey serves as 'the third way' between Bultmann and Gerhardsson. According to Dunn, Bailey 'provides an explanatory model for the Jesus tradition,'⁵⁴¹ whereas Wright believes Bailey's view can 'be taken as a working model' for the authentic oral preservation of the Jesus traditions.⁵⁴² Rafael Rodríguez suggests that the impact of Bailey can be compared to that of Kelber, although 'Bailey's work in no way compares to Kelber's in terms of volume or its sophistication.'⁵⁴³ Rodríguez may, however, exaggerate the significance of Bailey's original work, as the attention it has gained is largely due to Dunn and Wright. Bailey's theory has also met severe criticism, the loudest of the critical voices being Theodore J. Weeden, who finds Bailey's case unconvincing and attempts to demolish its theoretical foundation.⁵⁴⁴

Weeden's main criticism has to do with the tenability of Bailey's anecdotes from modern Middle Eastern village life; the stories with no concrete support from

539 Bailey, 'Informal', pp. 4-11 (10).

540 See e.g. Dale C. Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth: Millenarian Prophet* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), p. 73 n. 280; Byrskog, 'A New Perspective on the Jesus Tradition', pp. 459-71 (465); Gerhardsson, 'Secret', pp. 1-18 (4-7); Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 252-63; Markus Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word: Refocusing New Testament Study* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), p. 175 n. 26; Paul R. Eddy and Gregory A. Boyd, *The Jesus Legend: A Case for the Historical Reliability of the Synoptic Jesus Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), pp. 262-63 n. 84; Kelly R. Iverson, 'Orality and the Gospels: A Survey of Research', *CBR* 8 (2009), pp. 71-106 (91); Mournet, 'The Jesus Tradition as Oral Tradition', pp. 39-61; McIver, *Memory, Jesus, and the Synoptic Tradition*, pp. 115-17; J. S. Kloppenborg, 'Memory, Performance, and the Sayings of Jesus', *JSHJ* 10 (2012), pp. 97-132 (112-117); Eve, *Behind*, pp. 66-85; Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 47-50; Bird, *Gospel*, pp. 92-95.

541 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 205-10 (210); also *idem*, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory of Oral Tradition: Critiquing Theodore Weeden's Critique', *JSHJ* 7 (2009), pp. 44-62 (44), in which Dunn laments, 'Unfortunately KB's [Kenneth Bailey's] presentation of his thesis appeared in not so prominent journals and did not attract the attention it deserved.'

542 Wright, *Victory of God*, pp. 133-36 (136).

543 Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 50-51.

544 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43.

socio-anthropological study are said to not carry the methodological weight of the ‘informal controlled oral tradition.’⁵⁴⁵ This criticism has, foremost, to do with how Bailey handles his comparative material, namely, the John Hogg stories and other anecdotes.

(1) *Bailey’s Use of the Hogg Stories*. Weeden begins by presenting what he thinks are some critical flaws in Bailey’s use of Rena Hogg’s book. Regardless of what Bailey says about comparing the written and oral versions of the Hogg stories, there is a great discrepancy between the stories cited by Rena Hogg and those cited by Bailey; only two of the four Hogg accounts used by Bailey are found among the thirteen stories included in Rena Hogg’s biography of her father: the urinating incident and the robber band incident.⁵⁴⁶ As only these two stories are comparable, Bailey does, according to this criticism, place too much weight on the comparability of the two sources of the Hogg stories.⁵⁴⁷

To add insult to injury, Weeden argues that Bailey’s description of neither one of the two stories matches Rena Hogg’s version. Regarding the urinating incident, Weeden presents Rena Hogg’s version, which he thinks differs considerably from the version Bailey claims to have heard recited later.⁵⁴⁸ Weeden believes both accounts ‘likely refer to the same incident’, since Rena Hogg would have used ‘vile water’ as a euphemism for urinating. This does not, however, mean that the story would be told with ‘almost the identical wording’⁵⁴⁹ by Rena Hogg; a comparison of the two accounts does not support Bailey’s method of informal *controlled* oral tradition in which the indispensable and non-variable aspects of the story would be maintained. Weeden presents the differences between the two versions. First, Bailey’s version has John Hogg preaching outside in the courtyard when the mayor of the village, ‘anxious to cause trouble’, sends a guard to urinate on his head. In

545 Weeden, ‘Kenneth Bailey’s Theory’, pp. 3-43 (37): ‘Judged against a sound social-scientific methodology, Bailey’s methodology for making a convincing case for his theory by citing anecdotal experiences, without any documented verification by independent, impartial and reliable observers, leaves much to be desired.’

546 Weeden, ‘Kenneth Bailey’s Theory’, pp. 3-43 (8-9).

547 Cf. Bailey, ‘Informal’, pp. 4-11 (9): ‘Rena Hogg dipped into that tradition in 1910. I dipped into the same tradition in 1955-65 and found the same stories told in almost the same way.’

548 Weeden, ‘Kenneth Bailey’s Theory’, pp. 3-43 (10): ‘Not infrequently the filth of the streets was flung after him [John Hogg] by the way, and words as filthy were called loudly in contempt and derision as he passed, while on one occasion vile water was poured on his head through a gap in the ceiling of a room from which his audience had been forcibly ejected.’

549 Cf. Bailey’s initial phrase ‘almost the identical wording’ in the original version of Bailey, ‘Informal’, published in *AJT*.

Rena Hogg's account, John Hogg is inside a room from which his audience has been ejected; inside the room, 'vile water' is 'poured on his head through a gap in the ceiling.' The latter account lacks any mention of the mayor, the urinating guard, or the motivation for urinating on Hogg's head.⁵⁵⁰ This leads Weeden to argue that '[t]he basic flow of the story and its basic scene have significantly changed in the course of the story's recitation in the Hogg-founded communities from 1910 to the 1950s-60s.'⁵⁵¹ Second, what Bailey argued was the 'inviolable' punch line of the story, namely, the transformation of the mayor, has been either neglected by Rena Hogg or added to the story later on.⁵⁵² Weeden argues that Bailey's account has drastically changed the picture of John Hogg; he is idealized 'as a great Christian evangelical', who 'remains undeterred' when humiliated. On the basis of these 'significant differences', Weeden concludes that it is informal *uncontrolled* oral tradition that accurately defines the process of transmission of the urinating incident.⁵⁵³

However, Weeden's critique of Bailey's use of the urinating incident has problems of its own. Highly critical of how Weeden views Bailey's overall case and the two Hogg-stories in particular, Dunn gives three valid points against Weeden's view of the urinating incident.⁵⁵⁴ Weeden fails, first, when he tries to depict Rena Hogg as telling the *story* as if her version has a conclusion that does not match that of Bailey; Rena Hogg's version should be treated as an allusion to the incident, not as an account of it, namely, as a *story* that can be compared to that of Bailey.⁵⁵⁵ Second, Weeden mistakenly assumes that the 'punch line' is the focal point of Bailey's story, whereas the key point, which is the stable core Bailey stresses, in both versions is 'the shameful indignity to which Hogg was subjected'.⁵⁵⁶ In line with Eve, it is reasonable to explain the lack of John Hogg's response and the mayor's conversion in Rena Hogg's version by the process of legendization, which took place after the incident and is demonstrated in Bailey's version. This

550 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (10-11); esp. *Table 1* on p. 11.

551 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (11).

552 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (11). Weeden, p. 11 n. 11, points out that Rena Hogg may have found the incident in his father's correspondence, which would explain many of the differences between her and Bailey's account. This would indicate drastic changes in the story between John Hogg's description of the incident in his correspondence and when Bailey encountered the story.

553 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (12).

554 Dunn, 'Bailey's Theory', pp. 44-62 (50-51).

555 Dunn, 'Bailey's Theory', pp. 44-62 (50-51); so also, Eve, *Behind*, p. 75.

556 Dunn, 'Bailey's Theory', pp. 44-62 (51).

process retained the context of hostility towards John Hogg, as well as some other similarities,⁵⁵⁷ while also adding new elements.⁵⁵⁸ Third, Weeden operates here (as in his overall critique) on a flawed understanding of oral tradition, which represents a literary mindset; in an oral culture, there is no 'original version' to which subsequent versions can be compared, nor can traditions be evaluated in terms of exact similarity, as the same stories are told in different ways.⁵⁵⁹ Bird also points to the same problem in Weeden's critique: Weeden fails to appreciate 'the nature of oral tradition as a rehearsal of the same story, continuous in outline, but always with variation in detail'.⁵⁶⁰ Given these parameters, one can hardly speak of a completely 'uncontrolled' oral tradition with regard to the urinating incident.⁵⁶¹

With respect to the robber band incident, Weeden insists that Bailey's case is weakened by the way Bailey reports the story and how Rena Hogg assesses its authenticity. Providing Rena Hogg's version of the story, Weeden indicates that both the conclusion and summary punch lines differ from Bailey's version.⁵⁶² Despite the obvious similarities, unlike Bailey, Rena Hogg defines the robbers as 'Copts and Moslems'. More importantly to Weeden, as a result of John Hogg's talk to them about his 'small book', the robbers are 'converted' in Hogg's version, but

557 For example, the unpleasant liquid descending from a) someone standing on a roof, or b) someone standing in the space above the ceiling.

558 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 75-76.

559 Dunn, 'Bailey's Theory', pp. 44-62 (50-51). See the discussions on the question of 'original version' in the previous chapters, esp. on Kelber's view.

560 Bird, *Gospel*, pp. 93-94 n. 88.

561 Contra Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (12).

562 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (13); esp. *Table 2* on pp. 14-15; Hogg, *Master Builder*, pp. 214-15: 'At a village many miles distant from Assiut [Hogg's home base] Dr. Hogg had been paying one of his periodic visits. The evening meeting was over and the missionary had sat late in conversation with his host and his friends, when to the amazement of all he rose to bid them adieu. In vain they urged him to spend the night with them, expatiating on the length of the way and the robbers that infested the district. He would neither await the daylight nor accept an escort. His work necessitated his reaching Assiut by morning, and in the Lord's keeping he was as safe as with armed men. He had not walked far in the dense darkness when he was accosted by a robber band who demanded his gold watch and purse. These he surrendered without demur, surprising his marauders with the gratuitous information that he had with him still another treasure that he would gladly add to their store. To their chagrin all that he drew from his pocket was a small book, but his audience were soon so entranced by the magic of his tongue and of that priceless Word, that their greed speedily vanished, their consciences awoke, and they began to hunger for salvation. Before morning dawned the whole band had been converted and were eager to return to him his stolen goods. But the purse he refused, and as one and all, Copts and Moslems alike, had decided to abandon their life of robbery, he supported them liberally from that time forward out of his own pocket until they had learned to earn an honest living and had become respected and God fearing members of the Church!'

Bailey says they were only ‘convicted of their evil ways’. Also, Rena Hogg provides the punch line that her father supported the converted robbers ‘until they had become respected members of the Church’; Bailey’s version lacks any conclusion that they became members of the Church. Weeden concludes that these differences alone are too great to support Bailey’s case; they ‘violate two canons of informal controlled oral tradition.’⁵⁶³

Moreover, Weeden argues that what Bailey fails to mention about Rena Hogg’s comments in relation to the robber band incident seriously questions Bailey’s use of the biography as a comparative material for the authentic preservation of oral tradition.⁵⁶⁴ On the one hand, Rena Hogg’s preface to the robber band incident casts a shadow of doubt on the reliability of the account: Hogg states that the story shows ‘how fact and fancy mingle in such current lore’, and that ‘[t]he story has many versions and we tell it as related by a fine old patriarch.’⁵⁶⁵ On the other hand, she recounted another version of the story after the previous version, indicating that the previous version was not the original story.⁵⁶⁶

563 Weeden, ‘Kenneth Bailey’s Theory’, pp. 3-43 (13, 15).

564 Weeden, ‘Kenneth Bailey’s Theory’, pp. 3-43 (15-21).

565 Weeden, ‘Kenneth Bailey’s Theory’, pp. 3-43 (16); Hogg, *Master Builder*, p. 214.

566 Weeden, ‘Kenneth Bailey’s Theory’, pp. 3-43 (16-17); Hogg, *Master Builder*, pp. 215-16: ‘It seems heartless to destroy so romantic a tale, but the original story itself deserves preservation as recounted by the chief actors Dr. Hogg and Mr. Shenodeh Hanna, his companion on the historic occasion. Their story runs as follows: After a hasty breakfast on a hot Saturday in June, the two friends left the ‘Ibis’ [their boat] at sunrise to walk to the village of Tahta two and a half miles distance from the river. They were warmly received by the only Protestant in the place, and his house was so continuously crowded by eager listeners that for once Egyptian hospitality seemed swamped by the tide of interest, and the bodily wants of the preachers were completely overlooked. All day long they read and sang and preached and prayed, the changing audience fresh and eager, the speakers weaker and fainter with the passing hours, and all proposals to leave were overborne by the host’s repeated assertion that he would feel forever disgraced if his guests should quit his house without food. At last, after fourteen hours of fasting, a sumptuous meal was spread, and of this the famished men partook with more speed than wisdom before starting out with a suitable escort to ride to the river. A jolting donkey is no happy sequel to a hasty meal, and Dr. Hogg, finding his companion unable to ride and his escort restive under enforced delay, decided that they would complete their journey on foot and unaccompanied. The servants with some polite demur gladly availed themselves of the reprieve, and the two preachers started riverward alone. When they reached the water’s edge the boat was not in sight, and whether the landing lay north or south they could not tell. Some men when accosted misled them, either by mistake or of set purpose, their lack of a lantern perhaps arousing suspicions, and the night wore on in fruitless and solitary wanderings. Suddenly they observed on the river bank a man, innocent of clothes and bearing a gun, who started towards them till arrested by the sight of their shouldered umbrellas, which in the starlight passed easily for firearms. The younger man [Shenodeh Hanna] was distracted with fear, and still more so when he heard the sound of swimmers in the river perhaps coming to join their naked friend in some bloody deed. The two wanderers walked on as if unheeding, but when a little distance was gained, turned

After giving this account of the incident, Rena Hogg continues by explaining that her father and Hanna had different understandings of who the men were; whereas John Hogg thought they were simply guarding their melon crop, Hanna believed, as the later version has it, they were highway robbers. Hanna even included this version in his ‘thrilling’ sermon a few days later.⁵⁶⁷ From the changes that have taken place in what Weeden calls ‘the historically original, fundamental, unalterable components’, he concludes that the band of robbers incident (or the ‘melon growers’ incident?) fails to support Bailey’s methodology. To Weeden, Rena Hogg’s comments undermine any notion of the informal controlled oral tradition, ‘constantly practiced in Middle Eastern village communities to preserve the original, historical authenticity, the faithful transmission of oral tradition integral and indispensable to the respective communities.’⁵⁶⁸

Weeden’s critique of the robber band incident is much more substantial than of the urinating incident. Dunn notes that Weeden is ‘justified in drawing attention to the issues concerning the correlation between the story and the event which gave rise to the story and provides an appropriate warning against reading historical events too quickly from the stories to which the events gave rise.’⁵⁶⁹ This call for caution does not, however, mean that Weeden’s critique is overall satisfying. While in this case one can speak of Bailey’s and Rena Hogg’s versions of the *story*, Weeden misses the point that the similarities between the two versions are not unlike the ones in the Synoptic Gospels, which often give variant versions to make different points. As argued by Dunn, Hogg’s ‘converted’ and

inland, running rapidly to reach a point invisible from the beach. Avoiding Scylla, they came as it seemed upon Charybdis—a group of smokers, three men and a boy, two of them armed and with the usual vicious guard of watch-dogs. Dr. Hogg thought it best to throw himself frankly on their protection, and as the dogs sprang forward with a threatening welcome, “Call off your dogs”, he cried, “and I shall tell you a story that will make you laugh”. A discussion followed, and they were soon received within the smoking circle to spend the remainder of the night in this strange company. As sleep was distant, it was proposed to pass the time in songs and tales, and Mr. Shenoodah chose a Bible story that gave him the opportunity of dwelling on the sin of murder and the fearful punishment awaiting the guilty, a tale which brought from one of his listeners the confession that only his brother’s intervention had prevented him from shooting at Mr. Shenoodah on his first approach. Towards morning the air grew cold, and the missionary, made anxious by his young friend’s cough, dug a deep hole for him in the sand and buried him to the neck, after which both secured some broken sleep. At dawn one of their guard accompanied them to the boat, lying miles from the spot at which they had encamped, and received for the service a backsheesh that sent him away blessing their memory.’

567 Weeden, ‘Kenneth Bailey’s Theory’, pp. 3-43 (17-18); Hogg, *Master Builder*, pp. 17-18.

568 Weeden, ‘Kenneth Bailey’s Theory’, pp. 3-43 (15-16).

569 Dunn, ‘Bailey’s Theory’, pp. 44-62 (53); so also, Eve, *Behind*, pp. 82-83.

Bailey's 'convicted' are within the boundaries of telling the same story differently, a phenomenon Weeden does not recognize; instead, he assumes again that there is one 'original', 'historically accurate', and 'faithfully transmitted' version of any story and, further, that the 'punch line' is the same as the conclusion. This is not the case in the Synoptic tradition, which is Bailey's point of comparison, where the reference is often to the focal point of the story.⁵⁷⁰ Dunn legitimately stresses what Bailey attempts to illustrate with the robber band incident: how the memory of John Hogg had been established during his ministry in Egypt, and how it was preserved by telling the story for decades.⁵⁷¹

Again, Weeden does not recognize the nature of the process of legendization, which must have taken place and which explains the two subsequent oral-traditional versions of Rena Hogg's long 'archetypical' account. Eve notes that the changes in the stories do not result as much from introducing new elements (or mingling 'fact and fancy') as from a process in which facts are transmuted into legend; as a result, the two versions are focused on the essentials, and an edifying thrust is added to the story: Shenoodeh Hanna is left out, all groups are merged into a single band of robbers, and Hanna's Bible recitation 'eliciting a confession' has become Hogg's reading 'to effect a stunning confession' to emphasize John Hogg as the missionary hero.⁵⁷² It is noteworthy that the band of robbers does not become, for instance, a tribe of robbers, and no miraculous elements are introduced to the incident.⁵⁷³ The process of legendization could have started early, presumably only a few days or weeks after the incident, as Hanna transformed his and John Hogg's experience into a sermon, dramatizing and adding the edifying elements to it.⁵⁷⁴ As the eyewitness, Hanna had a vital role in turning the too-complex incident into a memorable story, preserving the tradition, though not its 'historical accuracy', in a form that was useful for the community. He would not have resisted this process backward toward the more complex 'original version'.⁵⁷⁵ Consequently, Bailey's theory is not disconfirmed simply because the two subsequent versions do not share unaltered what Weeden considers the fundamental components.⁵⁷⁶ In fact,

570 Dunn, 'Bailey's Theory', pp. 44-62 (52-53); cf. e.g. Mt. 8.5-13/Lk. 7.1-10. For example, Dunn points to the exchange between the risen Jesus and the centurion in Mt. 8.8-10/Lk. 7.6-9.

571 Dunn, 'Bailey's Theory', pp. 44-62 (54).

572 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 72-73.

573 Bird, *Gospel*, pp. 93-94 n. 88.

574 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 73; cf. Hogg, *Master Builder*, p. 208.

575 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 73-74.

576 Eve, *Behind*, p. 81; also Dunn, 'Bailey's Theory', pp. 44-62 (50-54).

Eve notes what may be the most important objection to Weeden, not mentioned by Dunn; in his comments on the Shann story,⁵⁷⁷ Weeden ‘generalizes from what Bailey says about one story (or at least, one type of story) into a claim for all informal controlled oral tradition.’⁵⁷⁸ Weeden’s critique regarding the different conclusions of the two versions is invalid, as Bailey’s main point holds up, namely, that ‘the central thrust of the story’ remained unchanged.⁵⁷⁹

Aside from his critique of Bailey’s use of the two particular anecdotes, Weeden also thinks that Rena Hogg’s comments on the general nature of the Hogg stories in the preface of the biography are more than harmful for Bailey’s case.⁵⁸⁰ Rena Hogg pointed out that in many Egyptian towns and villages the tales about John Hogg had gained ‘in glamour with the years’. At the time she was writing, only twenty-eight years had passed from her father’s death, and yet, she recounts, there was ‘danger that the message of his life may be lost under a tangled mass of fact and fiction.’⁵⁸¹ For Weeden, these words are a stunning revelation about the unreliability of the Hogg stories and ‘a death knell to Bailey’s theory’; in line with James C. Scott and Jan Vansina’s notions of the evolution of oral tradition in ‘non-literate, non-elite cultures’, the Hogg stories have been significantly altered in less than three decades, and the central figure has been idealized and distorted to conform to the present ideals of the communities.⁵⁸² Weeden refers to Werner Kelber’s notion of social control (and *preventive censorship*) over the oral tradition in oral societies; those historic elements of the communities’ oral tradition that conflicted with ‘the existential needs’ of the communities’ ‘present consciousness’, would have been ‘expunged from their oral tradition.’⁵⁸³

Without addressing the critique of Bailey’s overall methodological purpose at this point, one critical consideration can be made with regard to Weeden’s

577 Cf. Weeden, ‘Kenneth Bailey’s Theory’, pp. 3-43 (6), which lists the ‘fundamental components that *must be preserved without alteration in every recitation of such stories*.’ Emphasis original.

578 Eve, *Behind*, p. 81; cf. Dunn, ‘Bailey’s Theory’, pp. 44-62 (50-54).

579 Eve, *Behind*, p. 82; Dunn, ‘Bailey’s Theory’, pp. 44-62 (51).

580 One could challenge Weeden for supposing that Rena Hogg’s work is an ‘objective’ point of comparison, whereas Bailey’s material is merely based on ‘subjective’ experiences, as if Rena Hogg’s work was not influenced by the surrounding post-Victorian context.

581 Weeden, ‘Kenneth Bailey’s Theory’, pp. 3-43 (19); Hogg, *Master Builder*, pp. 13-14. Rena Hogg’s way of looking at the past?

582 Weeden, ‘Kenneth Bailey’s Theory’, pp. 3-43 (19-20); James C. Scott, ‘Protest and Profanation: Agrarian Revolt and the Little Tradition’, *Theory and Society* 4 (1977), pp. 1-38; Vansina, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 105-8.

583 Weeden, ‘Kenneth Bailey’s Theory’, pp. 3-43 (20); Kelber, *Oral and Written*.

interpretation of Rena Hogg's words: regardless of what form of social control was at play in the communities, this control did not result in the complete rewriting of John Hogg's life, as the two Hogg-incidents demonstrate.⁵⁸⁴ Thus, Weeden's criticism of Bailey's use of the Hogg stories is too severe.

(2) *Bailey's Use of 'Non-Hogg' Anecdotes.* Weeden continues his critique of Bailey's material by addressing his use of the other 'eight non-Hogg anecdotes.'⁵⁸⁵ First, Weeden acknowledges that Bailey's experience of being present in a *haflat samar* in Kom al-Akhdar village supports Bailey's notion of the informal character of the oral tradition; anyone 'grown up hearing oral tradition stories recited in a *haflat samar* can be a *haflat samar* reciter.'⁵⁸⁶ Second, however, regarding the example of the seventeenth-century *zajali* Maronite monk, who composed a complete history of the Maronite church, Weeden asks whether one can trust that a *zajali* known for occasional ad-libbing did not deviate from the original, historically authentic oral tradition of the church; it is questionable to use village poems as 'the witness for accurate transmission of oral tradition,' considering that a *zajali* would be an entertainer.⁵⁸⁷ However, Dunn points out that, when speaking about the original, historically authentic oral tradition of the church, Weeden misses the point of variation again; he does not recognize the observation of Parry and Lord that, regardless of the ad libbing and variation in wording, the stories recited by the singer or saga teller would remain substantially the same. It is this kind of a situation to which Bailey compares the transmission of the Synoptic tradition.⁵⁸⁸

Third, Weeden recognizes that Bailey's experience of being present in a *haflat samar* when the 'Shann' story was related to him by 'the ranking patriarch' is consistent with Bailey's theory of *haflat samar*.⁵⁸⁹ Fourth, Weeden questions Bailey's use of his classroom situations as examples of how controlling communities are formed; how does Bailey come to the conclusion that the students formed a controlling community, a *haflat samar*, and was this conscious

584 Bird, *Gospel*, pp. 93-94 n. 88, also speculates that Rena Hogg's statements about how fact and fiction were mixed seem like 'a post-Victorian literary device to bring proper sensibility to popular rumors and to incline readers to adhere to her account'. This is possible, but difficult to verify.

585 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (21-32).

586 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (21-22); cf. Bailey, 'Informal', pp. 4-11 (6).

587 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (22-23); cf. Bailey, 'Informal', pp. 4-11 (7).

588 Dunn, 'Bailey's Theory', pp. 44-62 (54).

589 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (23); cf. Bailey, 'Informal', pp. 4-11 (7).

or spontaneous on their part?⁵⁹⁰ While overly harsh in his critique of Bailey's use of some non-Hogg anecdotes, this is a legitimate question; indeed, it is unclear how Bailey can conclude from such classroom situations that the students formed a controlling community that is comparable to a *haflat samar*. Fifth, Weeden argues that Bailey fails to give evidence for his authenticity claim about the story of the basket makers; it is Bailey, not Father Makhiel, who concludes that changing the 'basic story' line about the monks is unthinkable.⁵⁹¹ It is not clear whether this anecdote supports Bailey's theory; at least, the story is not directly related to the *haflat samar*.⁵⁹²

Sixth, Weeden does not see how Bailey's own experience of preaching to congregants in a village supports his case; according to Weeden, there is no guarantee that the traditions repeated by the elder and memorized by the congregants were retold accurately and in a controlled fashion.⁵⁹³ As for this criticism, it needs to be noted that Bailey does not give concrete examples of what happened to stories after the church services.⁵⁹⁴ In light of this, Weeden is justified in asking whether the stories were retold accurately afterwards. However, if one assumes, like Dunn, that the established formulation of a story formed the core of future retellings, which then took place in the *haflat samar*, there is no doubt that the members of the gatherings would have controlled the retelling of what had been preached in the church setting.⁵⁹⁵ It is, nevertheless, safe to conclude that instead of directly supporting Bailey's thesis of informal controlled oral tradition, his experiences of preaching merely serve to illustrate the formation of tradition.⁵⁹⁶

Seventh, Weeden views the Dagher parable about the camel as undermining Bailey's theory; the simple fact that Dagher revised the ending of the parable, which was not even transmitted in a *haflat samar* (but rather in a public lecture), contradicts the principal canon of Bailey's theory, namely, the inviolability of the

590 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (23-24); cf. Bailey, 'Informal', pp. 4-11 (7); *idem*, 'Middle Eastern', pp. 363-67 (366).

591 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (24-25); cf. Bailey, 'Informal', pp. 4-11 (8).

592 See Eve, *Behind*, pp. 80-81, who sympathetically points out that perhaps the *haflat samar* is to be understood as the typical setting of the informal controlled oral tradition but it is not the only setting.

593 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (25-26); cf. Bailey, 'Informal', pp. 4-11 (10).

594 Eve, *Behind*, p. 79. Eve points out that the use of repetition to aid memorization in Bailey's accounts of preaching are to some extent reminiscent of Gerhardsson's view, except that the roles of teacher and student are not rigid.

595 Dunn, 'Bailey's Theory', pp. 44-62 (55).

596 Cf. Dunn, 'Bailey's Theory', pp. 44-62 (55).

punch line.⁵⁹⁷ This criticism is, however, flawed, because it focuses merely on the revised ending of the parable; Bailey's point is not to illustrate that the tradition was controlled, but rather to depict how a familiar parable tradition could be modified into something more effective. This event of modification as such became important for the community, and was remembered within it.⁵⁹⁸

Finally, Weeden criticizes Bailey's use of the shooting incident as a support for his thesis; the incident does not support Bailey's case, as 'the inviolate punch line' has been altered with the creation of two different versions. The police report contains the first variation, namely, the altered version of the cause of death of the groom; instead of being shot, a camel is said to have stepped on Burus. According to Weeden, this change at the beginning of the community's oral tradition fictionalized Burus' death by invoking the principles, which Werner Kelber labeled 'the rule of preventive censorship' and 'the law of social identification'; the incident, which was deemed socially unacceptable by the audience, was not reported in a historically accurate manner but was altered to match the community's social identity.⁵⁹⁹ In line with the principle of preventive censorship, the second variation of the punch line was coined by the community to ensure its own well-being; in order to avoid a cycle of blood revenge, it was decided that Burus' death was caused by an act of God, not Hanna, his friend. Thus, due to the preventive censorship that functioned in the community, the wedding incident cannot be used to support Bailey's version of informal controlled oral tradition.⁶⁰⁰

Weeden's description that the community reported what was important for its identity is not flawed as such. Nevertheless, in arguing that the multiple retellings of the wedding incident falsify Bailey's use of the story, Weeden ignores that the core elements of the story remained consistently fixed. As stated by Dunn, it is futile to argue from a modern Western viewpoint that the Middle-Eastern community's version of the story, which was agreed by all (including the police)

597 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (26-27); cf. Bailey, 'Informal', pp. 4-11 (9).

598 Dunn, 'Bailey's Theory', pp. 44-62 (55-57). Dunn, (p. 57), concludes: 'So KB's [Kenneth Bailey's] account is relevant to his 'informal control' model in two ways. (1) The particular re-telling of the parable was so effective because it could assume the normal constraints of informal control – the audience's knowledge of the traditional form of the parable. (2) ID's [Ibrahim Dagher's] redrafting of the familiar parable made such a powerful impact that the retelling of the story – that is, the retelling not of the parable, but of ID's revision of it – became a fixed item in the history of the Lebanese Christians.'

599 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (30); cf. Kelber, *Oral and Written*, pp. 24, 28-29, 71.

600 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (29-32); cf. Bailey, 'Informal', pp. 4-11 (9-10).

to have reflected the communal decision that Hanna was not to blame for Butrus' death, is 'historically inaccurate' or 'inauthentic'; the distortion of the historical facts as such was not the point of the community's version.⁶⁰¹ The community chose not to control the historical facts, but instead they paid attention to the significance placed on those facts.⁶⁰² However, this does not undermine the fact that there was a process of informal control operating; what the community viewed as significant – that the incident truly was an accident not caused by any human being – was controlled.

(3) *The Haflat Samar*. Beside Bailey's use of the anecdotal material, the supposed context of transmission for his 'informal controlled oral tradition', namely, the *haflat samar*, is another central target of Weeden's criticism.⁶⁰³ For Weeden, the questions of the definitive meaning and the cultural purpose of the *haflat samar* are the most fundamental and critical. Weeden refers to several Middle Eastern authorities on the Arabic language, giving two clear conclusions.⁶⁰⁴ First, as for the meaning of the words *haflat samar*, none of Weeden's authorities recognize Bailey's understanding as valid. Whereas *hafalat* can be translated 'parties', *samar* does not refer to 'preservation' or searching of true historical reality of the oral tradition; it is rather an unofficial evening gathering where people enjoy themselves, sharing proverbs, poems, old stories, and songs.⁶⁰⁵ Second, the cultural purpose of the gatherings is entertainment and amusement, not instruction. Regardless of the area of Middle East, *hafalat samar* nowhere refers to occasions where stories about historical events and people are recited with the emphasis on the historical

601 Dunn, 'Bailey's Theory', pp. 44-62 (57-61).

602 Cf. Eve, *Behind*, pp. 77-78: '...the community is more concerned to preserve its version of the "truth," insofar as that is serviceable to the community, than to preserve facts for their own sake, but this may or may not result in considerable distortion of the facts.' In this case, I do not think that anyone involved in the communal decision making thought the version about the camel was the 'historical' truth in the modern sense of 'what really happened'.

603 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (38-42).

604 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (38-42): 1) Salman Aziz, the Imam of the Muslim Community in Fox Valley, Wisconsin; 2) Nihal Shahbandar, a woman native of Lebanon; 3) Layla Yahyawi-Valenzuela, a native Syrian teacher of Arabic at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh; 4) Daniel Beaumont, Associate Professor at the University of Rochester, who teaches Arabic; 5) Devin Stewart, Winship Distinguished Research Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies at Emory University; 6) Mahmoud Al-Batal, an Arabic scholar, Associate Professor, Department of Middle Eastern Studies, University of Texas at Austin.

605 So e.g. Nihal Shahbandar, a woman native of Lebanon, with whom Weeden was able to make contact through the Imam Salman Aziz; also, Daniel Beaumont, Associate Professor at University of Rochester, who teaches Arabic. See Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (38-40).

accuracy and reliability of oral transmission. These conclusions are verified, for instance, by Professor Devin Stewart, who points out that the lexical meaning of the Arabic *samar* is not 'preserve' but to 'hold a conversation, or discourse, by night'⁶⁰⁶; Stewart also points to the dictionary of modern Egyptian dialect, which translates '*h.aflit samar*' as 'an evening party or gathering in the open air.'⁶⁰⁷ While Stewart recognizes that 'the content of what is *samar* may...vary in practice' and it may be both 'amusing and edifying', it is generally anecdotal.⁶⁰⁸ Thus, accordingly, Bailey's understanding of *hafalat samar* as 'parties of preservation' in Middle Eastern societies cannot be upheld.⁶⁰⁹

While impressed by Weeden's examination of the *haflat samar*, Dunn criticizes Weeden's unwillingness to consider that Bailey had a distinctly Christian usage of the term in mind, something of which he had much personal experience; the churches with which Bailey was familiar could have understood their gatherings differently from the usual understanding in the Middle East.⁶¹⁰ Dunn points out that Weeden's consultants emphasize the party dimension of which Bailey is aware, but this dimension could have been less prominent in the Christian villages, 'sensing a need to define themselves and their distinctive features within a predominantly non-Christian culture', a situation somewhat comparable to that of earliest Christian communities in the middle of the first century.⁶¹¹ However, regardless of how appealing the explanation is, Dunn is guilty of special pleading here, as Bailey nowhere indicates a nonstandard usage of the term; Bailey's contested claim that *samar* in Arabic is cognate of the Hebrew *shamar* ('to preserve') implies that he did not argue for a special usage of the term.⁶¹² Dunn's argument for a distinctive meaning of the *haflat samar* is an argument *ex silentio*, and in this case not a strong one; thus, Bailey's view of the *haflat samar* is undermined by Weeden's research.⁶¹³ This does not mean that the central point

606 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (40); cf. E.W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1984), p. 1424.

607 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (41); cf. Martin Hinds and El-Said Badawi, *A Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1986), p. 429.

608 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (41).

609 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (19-20), points out an additional factor which can be taken to speak against Bailey's view of informal *controlled* oral transmission: there is no reference in Rena Hogg's work to the existence of *haflat samar* in the Hogg-founded communities.

610 Dunn, 'Bailey's Theory', pp. 44-62 (49); cf. Bailey, 'Middle Eastern', pp. 363-67 (364).

611 Dunn, 'Bailey's Theory', pp. 44-62 (50).

612 Eve, *Behind*, p. 80.

613 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43.

of Bailey's view is negated, namely, that the informal controlled oral tradition preserves the core of the stories regarded as important for the community.

(4) *The Methodological Purpose of Bailey's Case*. After evaluating Bailey's anecdotal evidence, Weeden concludes that Bailey's material does not support his version of the informal controlled oral tradition. For Weeden, the question is not whether there can be *any* form of informal controlled oral tradition, rather what kind of control there is. As Jan Vansina and Werner Kelber have argued, in an oral society, oral tradition tends to become congruent with the community's social identity. According to Weeden, Bailey's material supports this kind of informal controlled oral tradition, but not Bailey's conclusions, which require historical truth and integrity of a community's oral tradition to be preserved uncorrupted.⁶¹⁴

As indicated by the references to Kelber's work, this overall critique by Weeden has its basis in valid scholarship. Weeden employs a version of the social memory theory, which is basically approved by Dunn, who phrases the view in the following way: 'that a community's oral tradition is subservient to the community's social identity, serving to give expression to that social identity rather than to retain accounts of the history of that community as it happened'.⁶¹⁵ For Dunn the application of the social memory theory to the Synoptic tradition is not the problem; instead, his sharp criticism of Weeden has to do with how Weeden, while employing the social memory theory, still assumes that 'there was or could have been an "uncorrupted," "original" account of the "historical facts"'.⁶¹⁶

On the one hand, according to Dunn, in accusing Bailey for using the anecdotes to illustrate that accurate historical information is preserved without corruption in a community's oral tradition, Weeden has misunderstood what Bailey's case was meant for: to illustrate the process of transmission of the oral Synoptic tradition. On the other hand, according to Weeden (and contrarily to what Weeden thinks Bailey attempted to demonstrate, namely, the historical and factual accuracy of

614 Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (32-37). Weeden (p. 37), asserts: '[T]he primary concern of this particular version of informal controlled oral tradition, which most of Bailey's anecdotal evidence supports, is to preserve a community's social identification in its 'present' consciousness—even if that means the alteration of its oral tradition, including the possible loss of authentic historical information related to the community's past history—in order to bring its oral tradition into congruency with the community's current self-understanding of its social identity, as well as to make its oral tradition congruently relevant in addressing the demands of new existential realities when they arise.'

615 Dunn, 'Bailey's Theory', pp. 44-62 (59).

616 Dunn, 'Bailey's Theory', pp. 44-62 (60).

the oral tradition, transmitted by a community), Bailey's anecdotes illustrate that the essential core of a story, indispensable to a community's identity, is preserved and faithfully transmitted.⁶¹⁷ So the disagreement between Dunn and Weeden lies in how Bailey's methodological purpose is to be viewed.

In fact, Bailey did attempt to apply his theory to the Synoptic tradition, claiming that the informal controlled transmission of oral tradition ensures the *authenticity* of that tradition all the way down to the end of the first century.⁶¹⁸ According to Eve, Weeden is then justified in challenging Bailey's claim for the transmission of factually accurate historical information; actually, Dunn also acknowledges the validity of Weeden's criticism in relation to the robber band incident.⁶¹⁹ This is an important notion, because it underscores that Weeden and Dunn are not very far from each other in the final analysis: the former argues for the invalidity of Bailey's historical accuracy claims, linking Bailey's data with Kelber and Vansina's model of social identity in oral societies, whereas the latter views Bailey's model as useful for the Synoptic tradition, accepting Weeden's notion of the social memory theory.⁶²⁰ Eve is justified in concluding that neither Weeden nor Dunn views the informal controlled oral tradition as providing 'a direct window or an impenetrable barrier onto historical events'.⁶²¹

But does Bailey use the word 'authenticity' in its traditional meaning among historians of Jesus as referring to 'actuality'? Rafael Rodríguez believes that Weeden has 'fundamentally misread' Bailey's work in interpreting Bailey's 'authenticity' as a reference to the uncorrupted preservation of the archaic, original historical facts, whereas Bailey used the term as a reference to the 'stability' of the oral tradition.⁶²² While this explanation may seem too sympathetic toward Bailey, admittedly, he may use the term in an unusual way.⁶²³ On the basis of Bailey's two articles, one

617 Eve, *Behind*, p. 82; cf. Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (33-34, n. 29).

618 See Bailey, 'Informal', pp. 4-11 (10); also pointed out by Eve, *Behind*, p. 82.

619 Dunn, 'Bailey's Theory', pp. 44-62 (53, 60).

620 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 82-83; Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (33, 36); Dunn, 'Bailey's Theory', pp. 44-62 (53, 59).

621 Eve, *Behind*, p. 82.

622 Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, p. 49; cf. Weeden, 'Kenneth Bailey's Theory', pp. 3-43 (33, 35-37).

623 See e.g. Bailey, 'Informal', pp. 4-11 (10): 'Thus, at least through to the end of the first century, the *authenticity* of that tradition was assured to the community through specially designated authoritative witnesses... [w]hile affirming that freedom of movement [in the Synoptic tradition noted by Dodd and Davies], it has been our intent here to study the 'braking system' that keeps that movement within limits and assures continuity and *authenticity* to what is being transmitted.' Italics are mine.

cannot be absolutely sure of whether, by ‘authenticity’, Bailey meant ‘stability’ or historical ‘factuality.’⁶²⁴ If Bailey’s term is viewed as a reference to the ‘stability’ of the core of the tradition, on the one hand, the difference of opinion between Weeden and Dunn becomes more understandable: Weeden criticizes Bailey for something that Bailey never intended his data to speak for, while recognizing the kind of informal controlled tradition that Bailey’s data supports, whereas Dunn understands Bailey’s overall case in light of the idea of the preservation of the stable core of oral tradition as compared to the Synoptic tradition without getting occupied with the questions of historical ‘factuality’. On the other hand, if Weeden is viewed as correctly reading Bailey as referring to the preservation of historical factuality, he is right in indicating that Bailey did not note the flexibility and variation of the tradition to a sufficient degree.⁶²⁵ Either way, this does not change the fact that Weeden is right in contending that Bailey’s evidence is *inconclusive* in the sense that it is not based on sound socio-anthropological research.⁶²⁶

Besides Weeden’s critique, other critical points on Bailey’s view has also been presented. Michael Bird and others have pointed out that there is no certainty that the early Jesus communities functioned in a similar way to the modern Middle Eastern communities to which Bailey refers.⁶²⁷ Furthermore, even if one assumes that Bailey’s theory is valid in the Jesus traditions’ original environment, the Palestine of the first century, it does not explain the processes of transmission of the Jesus traditions elsewhere, for instance, in Syria, Greece, and Rome; as some of the Gospels to which Bailey applies his model were actually written in these places, his model lacks the necessary explanatory power.⁶²⁸ These are valid criticisms, as

624 However, Bailey’s other writings may suggest that, in addition to the stability of the core of the tradition, he also places considerable emphasis on the capacity of the oral tradition to retain historically authentic material. For instance, Bailey, *Jesus Through*, p. 18-20 (18), views ‘the Aramaic *eyewitness testimony* to that life [the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth] as an integral part of the process through which the canonical Gospels passed’. Bailey (p. 18 n. 13) supports the idea of eyewitness testimony by a reference to Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, who argues for the historical reliability of the Jesus traditions on the basis of eyewitness testimony. Bailey (p. 20), states that ‘the Gospels are history theologically interpreted’, yet says that, overall, he attempts to examine the Gospel texts ‘holistically’ as a combination of Jesus’ words and the Gospel authors’ editing, without aiming to separate the two from each other.

625 So also Bird, *Gospel*, pp. 93-94, n. 88.

626 Weeden, ‘Kenneth Bailey’s Theory’, pp. 3-43 (37).

627 Bird, *Gospel*, p. 94; also Gerhardsson, ‘Secret’, pp. 1-18 (5): ‘Bailey is convinced that this type of transmission of oral tradition follows an extremely old practice, but the performances that he has heard and seen for himself are, after all, from our own time, not from 2,000 years ago.’

628 Bird, *Gospel*, p. 94; also Byrskog, ‘A New Perspective on the Jesus Tradition’, pp. 459-71 (465): ‘In order to work as an ‘explanatory model’ for the Jesus tradition, it [Bailey’s model] needs to

Bailey's model is based on nothing but the *assumption* of similarity of the contexts. Even though Dunn is probably right in stating that these criticisms are not fatal for the comparison of Bailey's model to the Synoptic tradition,⁶²⁹ Bailey's model can only assume the similarity between the modern Middle Eastern communities and the earliest communities of the Jesus movement, and is not comprehensive enough to explain the processes of the transmission of the Jesus traditions in different contexts of early Christianity.⁶³⁰

Bailey's model is simply too limited to function as an 'explanatory model' for the Jesus traditions.⁶³¹ Although Dunn has been able to link Bailey's idea of the preservation of the core of the traditions with the Jesus traditions found in the Gospels, it is debated whether these links are sufficient in portraying the practice of informal controlled oral tradition in the ancient setting; after all, in order to function as an explanatory or working model for the transmission of the Jesus traditions,⁶³² Bailey's model needs to account for the performance of those traditions not only in small village gatherings but also in the urban house meetings in early Christianity.⁶³³ This demand is clearly beyond the scope of what Bailey has demonstrated.

In addition to these criticisms, it has been asked, since the other two models of transmission (*informal uncontrolled* and *formal controlled*) are assumed to have existed in modern Middle Eastern contexts by Bailey, why could not these models have existed in the first-century Palestine as well? In other words, would not the Jesus traditions have been preserved by different models and in different settings in the first century?⁶³⁴ This is, of course, a valid question to pose for a model as

have some kind of comparative link to evident practices in the ancient socio-cultural setting and account not only for the contextualized performance of a village gathering, but also for the urban setting of early Christian house meetings. It does not.'

629 Dunn, 'Bailey's Theory', pp. 44-62 (46-47): 'the social habits and modes of passing on tradition in Middle Eastern villages I suspect have differed very little over the centuries, just as pre-radio, pre-TV and preinternet village communities the world over have tended to retain very conservative patterns of social life and values. Above all, I repeat, the most weighty factor for me was that the KB model helped explain the enduring character of the Synoptic Jesus tradition more effectively than any other I had hitherto encountered.'

630 Cf. Bailey, 'Informal', pp. 4-10 (10).

631 Pace Dunn, 'Bailey's Theory', pp. 44-62.

632 Cf. Dunn; Wright.

633 Byrskog, 'A New Perspective on the Jesus Tradition', pp. 459-71 (465). The question of the differences between the early Christian communities (e.g. village gatherings/urban house meetings) is discussed in the next main chapter of the dissertation (ch. 3).

634 Bird, *Gospel*, p. 94.

limited as that of Bailey, although he did indicate that the categories of models were not absolute.⁶³⁵

Despite the severe criticisms, Bailey's analogy between Middle Eastern village communities and early Jesus communities is stronger than other analogies that employ, for example, Homeric epics in ancient Greece, or folklore studies from the Balkans.⁶³⁶ Whatever one makes of Bailey's anecdotal evidence, Bailey attempts to place his case in a Middle Eastern context; despite the lack of solid socio-anthropological evidence, which is pointed out in detail by Weeden, this brings Bailey's case closer to Jesus' day and his social context than the modern West.⁶³⁷ Whatever its flaws, Bailey's anecdotal material illustrates how the core of a Jesus tradition could have been preserved by the communities. Even with his contested idea of the actual context of preservation, the *haflat samar*, and the limited textual evidence, it is not too far-fetched to conclude that Bailey's model 'accounts for stability and flexibility in the Jesus tradition, whereas the form-critical and Scandinavian models [Gerhardsson] tend to emphasize one over the other.'⁶³⁸ This is a point that creates a link between the views of Bailey and Kelber, and those who apply social memory theory to the study of the transmission of the Jesus traditions and the historical Jesus. It must be noted, nevertheless, that the attention that Bailey's case has received is probably to a large extent due to the use of his view by Jesus-scholars like Dunn and Wright.

2.5 CONCLUSION

In order to form a meaningful framework for the discussion of the development of the memory approach to the historical Jesus and the Jesus traditions, four different views on the transmission of the Jesus traditions in early Christianity were presented and critically evaluated in this chapter. First, it was argued that, while some of form criticism's insights are still useful starting points for discussion about

635 Bailey, 'Informal', pp. 4-10 (10), indicated that '[t]he pedagogy of the rabbinic schools may well lie behind some of the material', while '[t]he assumptions of radical kerygmaticizing' are unhelpful and the informal controlled oral tradition provides 'a methodological framework' for 'the bulk of the materials'.

636 Bird, *Gospel*, pp. 94-95.

637 See Eve, *Behind*, p. 84.

638 Bird, *Gospel*, p. 95; also Eve, *Behind*, p. 83. Cf. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 252-63, who argues that Bailey's explanation of the mechanism for the control of the tradition is too vague and that his notions of stability and flexibility could also be applied to a formally controlled tradition.

the nature and transmission of the Jesus traditions in early Christianity, the views of Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann have by and large become outdated; the relationship between oral tradition and the written Gospels cannot be plausibly explained through reference to anonymous collectives of early Christian tradents and by linking the 'original form' of a tradition with a *Sitz im Leben*. The form critics' romantic notion about oral tradition displayed an overemphasis on the flexibility of the Jesus traditions, while undermining the role early Christian individuals who exercised, to a degree, control over the transmission process. Both Dibelius and Bultmann presented their views during the first centuries of the twentieth century, at the time of the decline of the so-called First Quest for the historical Jesus, which explains, at least in part, their skepticism toward the possibility of knowing much about the historical person of Jesus.

Second, it was acknowledged that the two Scandinavian scholars Harald Riesenfeld and, more importantly, Birger Gerhardsson, who stressed memorization and replication of teaching as the historical techniques of transmission, enabled later scholars to recognize that there were authoritative individuals exercising control over the transmission process, as opposed to the form-critical notions of anonymous community: the earliest Christians committed to memory what they believed were Jesus' actual teachings and accounts of his life. While Gerhardsson's view of the transmission of the Jesus traditions was deemed to be unrealistically rigid and inflexible, undermining the variability of the Jesus traditions, he needs to be viewed as an important predecessor of the memory approach due to his emphasis on memorization. Gerhardsson's view results in a much more substantial (or 'maximalist') view of the historical Jesus than the ('minimalist') form-critical critical (or the so-called New Quest views with their heavy emphasis of the criteria of authenticity) would allow.

Third, it was argued that the views of Erhardt Güttgemanns and, especially, Werner Kelber, which outlined a radical discontinuity between the pre-Gospel oral Jesus tradition and the written Gospel of Mark, cannot be excluded from the research-historical discussion on the transmission of the Jesus traditions and the study of the historical Jesus. While Kelber's original split between orality and textuality was deemed to be a fallacy of method, the value of his contribution to the discussion on the oral transmission of the Jesus traditions, as well as the role of the historical Jesus as an *oral performer*, was recognized; Kelber's view of the relatively low levels of literacy within the earliest Christian communities was

generally viewed as plausible. His rejection of the categories of ‘authentic’ and ‘inauthentic’ with regard to the Jesus traditions, combined with his openness to the conceptual category of memory, questioned many of the presuppositions of what is often labelled Third Quest scholarship and has had a foundational impact on the development of the memory approach.

Fourth, it was argued that, despite the anecdotal nature of evidence and the lack of socio-anthropological support, Kenneth Bailey’s analogy between Middle-Eastern village communities and early Jesus communities is stronger than some of the previous analogies, such as Homeric epics and folklore studies, for the transmission of the Jesus traditions. The Middle-Eastern context probably brings his case closer to the first-century situation than the modern West. Even with the contested idea of the actual context of preservation of the tradition, *the haflat samar*, the model of informal controlled tradition creates a link between Bailey and Kelber, as well as the memory approach to the historical Jesus, by emphasizing both the stability and flexibility of the transmission of the Jesus traditions. Nevertheless, if it were not for James D. G. Dunn and N. T. Wright, Bailey’s case, which is largely based on anecdotal evidence, would probably have received much less scholarly attention.

These four distinct views on the transmission of the Jesus traditions prepare the way for the discussion on the memory approach to the Jesus traditions and the historical Jesus in the next chapter. Understanding these four views, and their distinctive approaches to the Jesus traditions, is important for the discussion on the more recent scholarship which more heavily employs the conceptual categories of oral performance, individual memory, and social memory in the study of the historical Jesus.

3 THE MEMORY APPROACH – A WAY FORWARD?

An informed view of historical Jesus research and the nature and transmission of the Jesus traditions in early Christianity cannot avoid the topic of memory after the rise and development of the memory approach.⁶³⁹ While memory as such has become less central for intellectual life since the Middle Ages⁶⁴⁰ (to the extent that some say ‘modern societies suffer from amnesia’⁶⁴¹), the concepts of individual memory (the psychological understanding of memory) and social or collective memory (the sociological understanding of memory) have gained great traction within historical Jesus research. Psychological literature on these aspects of memory, as well as the study of the role of memory in the transmission of oral tradition and performance, have provided the discussion on the Jesus traditions with a perspective that cannot be ignored.⁶⁴²

639 Cf. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, p. 50: ‘the Jesus-Memory Approach’; ch. 3.5 below; also, Bird, *Gospel*, pp. 95-111 (95): ‘Jesus in Social Memory’. Bird’s title for the chapter in question is telling: ‘II. A New Paradigm: Jesus in Social Memory’.

640 Eve, *Behind*, p. 86. On ‘memory’ in pre-modern era, see the references in Eve, *Behind*, p. 86, n. 1: Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn, 2008); David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablets of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Jocelyn Penny Small, *Wax Tablets of the Mind: Cognitive Studies of Memory and Literacy in Classical Antiquity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1997).

641 Barbara A. Mitzal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (ed. L. Ray; Theorizing Society; Maidenhead and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2003), p. 12.

642 For memory studies in the NT and Gospels studies and historical Jesus research, see e.g. G. M. Keightley, ‘The Church’s Memory of Jesus: A Social Science Analysis of 1 Thessalonians’, *BTB* 17 (1987), pp. 149-56; J. Schröter, ‘The Historical Jesus and the Sayings Tradition: Comments on Current Research’, *Neot* 30/1 (1996), pp. 151-68; *idem*, *Erinnerung an Jesu Worte. Studien zur Rezeption der Logienüberlieferung in Markus, Q und Thomas* (WMANT, 76; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1997); Kelber, ‘The Case of the Gospels: Memory’s Desire and the Limits of Historical Criticism’, pp. 55-86; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*; *idem*, *The Oral Gospel Tradition*; Kirk and Thatcher (eds.), *Memory, Tradition and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*; Tom Thatcher, *Why John Wrote a Gospel: Jesus – Memory – History* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006); Stephen C. Barton, Loren T. Stuckenbruck, and Benjamin G. Wold (eds.), *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity: The Fifth Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium* (WUNT, 212; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007); Scot McKnight and Terence Mournet (eds.), *Jesus in Early Christian Memory* (LNTS, 359; London: Clark, 2007); April D. DeConick, ‘Human Memory and the Sayings of Jesus: Contemporary Exercises in the Transmission of Jesus Tradition’, in T. Thatcher (ed.), *Jesus, the Voice and the Text: Beyond the Oral and the Written Gospel* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2008), pp. 135-79; Anthony Le Donne, *Historiographical*; *idem*, *Historical Jesus*; Allison, *Constructing*; J. Redman, ‘How Accurate Are Eyewitnesses? Bauckham and the Eyewitnesses in the Light of Psychological Research’, *JBL* 129/1 (2010), pp. 177-97; Rodríguez, *Structuring*; *idem*, *Oral Tradition*; R. K. McIver, *Memory, Jesus, and the Synoptic Tradition* (SBLRBS, 59; Atlanta: SBL, 2011); Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*; *idem*, *Jesus against the Scribal Elite: The Origins of the Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014); P. J. J. Botha, *Orality and Literacy in Early Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012); Keith

Based on the previous chapter's discussion on the form-critical understanding of the Jesus traditions and its alternatives, it will be explored in this chapter whether the memory approach to the study of the Jesus traditions can be conceived as a coherent methodological shift in historical Jesus research. Does the memory approach constitute a viable path forward for the study of the historical Jesus? Does the memory approach constitute a methodologically coherent school of thought in historical Jesus research?

The individual and social aspects of memory are first introduced as far as they are relevant for the study of the nature and transmission of the Jesus traditions and the historical Jesus. Most of the chapter is devoted to an analysis and critique of the studies that apply the conceptual category of memory (3.2: James D. G. Dunn; 3.6: Dale C. Allison), social memory theory (3.3: Richard A. Horsley; 3.4: Rafael Rodríguez; 3.5: Chris Keith; 3.7: Anthony Le Donne), and various studies on orality and oral tradition (esp. Dunn, Horsley, Rodríguez) to the question of the transmission of the Jesus traditions. Also, the studies of the question of eyewitness testimony and the role of early Christian eyewitnesses by Samuel Byrskog and Richard Bauckham, as well as the specific category of individual memory, eyewitness memory (especially, in Bauckham's work), are addressed in this chapter (3.8).

While seeking to address the main research problem of the dissertation, namely, whether the memory approach constitutes a methodologically coherent approach to the historical Jesus, the different viewpoints are discussed in this chapter with regard to (1) how source-critical hypotheses, such as the Two-(or Four-)Source theory, are viewed within the memory approach, (2) what the role of the criteria of authenticity is, if they have any, within the memory approach to the Jesus traditions and historical Jesus scholarship, (3) whether the memory approach sheds new light on the question about the distinction between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith, (4) and whether the memory approach should be construed as a new beginning or a dead end for historical Jesus research. At the

and Le Donne (eds.), *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*; Kelber and Byrskog (eds.), *Jesus in Memory*; Eve, *Behind*, pp. 86-107, 108-134; *idem*, *Writing the Gospels: Composition and Memory* (London: SPCK, 2016); R. A. Horsley, *Text and Tradition*; Bird, *Gospel*; Christine Jacobi, *Jesusüberlieferung bei Paulus? Analogien zwischen den echten Paulusbriefen und den synoptischen Evangelien* (BZNW, 123; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015); Ehrman, *Jesus Before the Gospels*; Byrskog, Hakola, and Jokiranta (eds.), *Social Memory and Social Identity in the Study of Early Judaism and Early Christianity*.

end of the chapter, some conclusions are derived concerning how the memory approach attempts to distinguish itself from earlier scholarship, namely, form criticism and its alternatives, with regard to the question of the transmission of the Jesus traditions and the task of reconstructing the historical Jesus.⁶⁴³

3.1 INDIVIDUAL MEMORY AND SOCIAL MEMORY

INDIVIDUAL MEMORY

As indicated above, memory can be thought of in terms of the mental capacity of an individual.⁶⁴⁴ Individual memory concerns first the memory of events that an individual has personally experienced; this is labeled personal, or *autobiographical* memory, which refers to ‘the way we tell others and ourselves the story of our lives’; these memories are not always accurate, although they usually do cohere with one’s self-knowledge, life themes, and sense of self.⁶⁴⁵ There is a difference between autobiographical *knowledge* about one’s personal life (for instance, the date of birth) and *episodic* memory, in other words, ‘remembering an experience

643 Cf. Ch. 1.2.

644 Misztal, *Theories*, pp. 9-10; Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (ed. J. Dunn, J. Goody, E. A. Hammel and G. Hawthorn; Themes in the Social Sciences; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 21-23; also Geoffrey Cubitt, *History and Memory* (ed. G. Cubitt; Historical Approaches; Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 67-68; William F. Brewer, ‘What is Recollective Memory?’ in D. C. Rubin (ed.), *Remembering Our Past: Studies in Autobiographical Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 19-66; Martin A. Conway, ‘Autobiographical Knowledge and Autobiographical Memories’, in Rubin (ed.), *Remembering*, pp. 67-93; cf. Eve, *Behind*, pp. 87-91 (88 n. 2, 3); also, on cognitive neuroscience of memory, see Daniel L. Schacter, Kenneth A. Norman and Wilma Koutstaal, ‘The Cognitive Neuroscience of Constructive Memory’, *Annual Review of Psychology* 49 (1998), pp. 289-318; Daniel L. Schacter and Donna Rose Addis, ‘The Cognitive Neuroscience of Constructive Memory: Remembering the Past and imagining the Future’, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B* 362 (2007), pp. 773-86; Daniel L. Schacter, ‘The Seven Sins of Memory: Insights from Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience’, *American Psychologist* 54.3 (1999), pp. 182-203; on false memory, J. Deese, ‘On the Prediction of Occurrence of Particular Verbal Intrusions in Immediate Recall’, *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 58 (1959), pp. 17-22; Henry L. Roediger and Kathleen B. McDermott, ‘Creating False Memories: Remembering Words Not Presented in Lists’, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory and Cognition* 21 (1995), pp. 803-14; Hans F. M. Crombag, Willem A. Wagenaar and Peter J. Van Koppen, ‘Crashing Memories and the Problem of “Source Monitoring”’, *Applied Cognitive Psychology* 10 (1996), pp. 95-104; Tom Smeets et. al., ‘What’s Behind Crashing Memories? Plausibility, Belief and Memory in Reports of Having Seen Non-Existing Images’, *Applied Cognitive Psychology* 23 (2009), pp. 1333-41; cf. Kloppenborg, ‘Memory, Performance, and the Sayings of Jesus’, pp. 97-132 (99-101); also see DeConick, ‘Human Memory and the Sayings of Jesus’, pp. 135-79.

645 Misztal, *Theories*, p. 10.

by partly reliving it in our imagination.⁶⁴⁶ Individual memory also concerns the memory of facts gathered from different sources; this kind of memory has to do with remembering, for example, the dates of historical events, such as significant battles, and facts like ‘a bicycle has two wheels’. This category is called *cognitive, declarative* or *semantic* memory.⁶⁴⁷ Further, individual memory has to do with the memory of how to do things; it concerns *habit* or *procedural* memory. *Procedural* memory has to do with remembering how to perform activities that demand attention, for example, operating a computer or riding a bicycle. *Habit* memory refers to one’s capacity to reproduce a certain performance, denoting the ability to habitually recall the signs and skills of everyday life.⁶⁴⁸

The human mind has specific ways of storing and retrieving memories of events. In his classic 1932 book, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology*, the British psychologist Frederick C. Bartlett (1886–1969) studied memory distortions and laid the foundation for schema theory.⁶⁴⁹ On the basis of various perception and memory experiments, Bartlett named the general form that people used to make sense of their experiences a *schema*, which refers to the general organization of a story of a typical event. In order to make sense of memories, the human mind employs specific cognitive *schemata*, in other words, the typical narrative patterns to describe an event.⁶⁵⁰ A *schema* is, for instance, the typical *script*, which defines a situation like a visit to the dentist or a meal at a restaurant.⁶⁵¹ While one’s cognitive *schemata* can help in the recollection and reconstruction of events, the human mind tends to reshape the memories of one’s experiences to better fit these frameworks. Bartlett’s phrase ‘effort after meaning’ referred to human attempts to convert elements that are difficult to perceive into understandable forms. His famous experiment with the Native American tale of the ‘War of the Ghosts’ illustrated, for example, that the English subjects unfamiliar with Native American culture used a schema of a fairy tale, a genre

646 Eve, *Behind*, p. 88.

647 Eve, *Behind*, p. 88; Misztal, *Theories*, p. 9.

648 Eve, *Behind*, p. 88; Misztal, *Theories*, p. 9-10; Connerton, *How Societies*, pp. 22-23.

649 Frederick C. Bartlett, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995 [1932]).

650 Bartlett, *Remembering*, pp. 199-214; Eve, *Behind*, pp. 89-90; James L. Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (New Perspectives on the Past; Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1992), pp. 32-36; Cubitt, *History and Memory*, pp. 81-82, 96-106; Crossan, *Birth*, p. 82; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 326-29, 335-38; Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, p. 27.

651 Eve, *Behind*, p. 90.

to which they were accustomed; some even came up with a moral at the end of the story.⁶⁵² For Bartlett, remembering was ‘not the re-excitation of innumerable fixed, lifeless and fragmentary traces’, but rather ‘an imaginative reconstruction, or construction, built out of the relation of our attitude towards a mass of organized past reactions or experiences’.⁶⁵³

A few further cautions regarding individual memory are necessary. First, despite the fact that schematization does not always and automatically equate to falsification, the human mind is capable of creating *schemata* that cause one to remember what one expected to see. Also, subsequent reflection and narrativizing of an event may distort the memory towards one’s expectations. This cannot be completely avoided, as one’s memories can only be understandable to oneself and others as parts of larger narratives.⁶⁵⁴

On the one hand, successive acts of remembering can, besides fixing an event in memory in a memorable form, establish a distorted version or even introduce new distortions. The human mind tends to narrate an event in a self-justifying way, making one’s own actions appear either more praiseworthy or less culpable depending on the situation.⁶⁵⁵ On the other hand, an event which is less frequently rehearsed does not get as easily distorted, although it is more likely to be forgotten. While some distortions are deliberate fabrications, often the details of one incident are accidentally conflated with another.⁶⁵⁶

Finally, even the most private remembering has a social dimension.⁶⁵⁷

652 Bartlett, *Remembering*, pp. 63-64. See the discussion on *narrativization* in relation to social memory below, esp. in ch. 3.7 on Anthony Le Donne’s view.

653 Bartlett, *Remembering*, p. 213. Kloppenborg, ‘Memory, Performance, and the Sayings of Jesus’, pp. 97-132 (99-102) notes that these conclusions are largely confirmed by more recent studies of brain function. See e.g. Schacter, Norman, and Koutstaal, ‘The Cognitive Neuroscience of Constructive Memory’, pp. 289-318; also Schacter, ‘The Seven Sins of Memory’, pp. 182-203, which speaks of transience (memories fading), absent-mindedness, blocking, misattribution, suggestibility, bias, and persistence as ‘seven sins of memory’ that affect the cognitive processes of memory construction.

654 Eve, *Behind*, p. 90; Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, pp. 26-28.

655 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 90-91; Daniel Schacter, *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind, and the Past* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), pp. 111-12; Cubitt, *History and Memory*, pp. 96-97.

656 Eve, *Behind*, p. 91; Schacter, *Searching for Memory*, pp. 114-18; Cubitt, *History and Memory*, pp. 83-84.

657 Eve, *Behind*, p. 91; Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (tr. Lewis A. Coser; Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 53; Bartlett, *Remembering*, pp. 237-300; Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, pp. 7, 25; Richard A. Horsley, ‘Prominent Patterns in the Social Memory of Jesus and Friends’, in Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher (eds.), *Memory, Tradition and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity* (SBLSS, 52; Atlanta: SBL, 2005), pp. 57-78 (65).

Remembering is a social activity, as it is influenced by the social forces operating in communities, movements, and societies.⁶⁵⁸ Although one's personal idiosyncrasies are a factor in the process, the language, concepts, world-view and *schemata*, which are employed to 'encode, retrieve and interpret' one's memories, stem from the social environment. Memories are often subject to external pressure from a group or groups with which one identifies closely; conforming to the socially acceptable way of remembering within a specific group is a significant factor, especially in remembering 'matters of considerable group significance'.⁶⁵⁹

Within historical Jesus scholarship that employs psychological studies on memory, there are two trends regarding the reliability of individual memory which may appear opposite at first glance. On the one side, Dale C. Allison begins his construction of the historical Jesus by accounting for the unreliability of certain aspects of individual memory.⁶⁶⁰ Allison reminds that '[p]ersonal reminiscence is neither innocent nor objective'⁶⁶¹ and the memories of early Christian leaders, who were the originators of the Jesus tradition, 'must have been subject to all the failures and biases that modern science has so helpfully if disturbingly exposed'.⁶⁶² Before Allison, citing psychological literature on memory, John Dominic Crossan argued that an individual's memory can be very unreliable and should be viewed, more than anything else, as a selective reconstruction of the past: 'Memory is as much or more creative reconstruction as accurate recollection, and, unfortunately, it is often impossible to tell where one ends and the other begins'.⁶⁶³ On the other side, Richard Bauckham argues for the reliability of a specific kind of individual memory, in particular, eyewitness memory.⁶⁶⁴ With the help of psychological studies on memory, Bauckham intends to demonstrate that eyewitness memory, in other words, the testimony of first-hand witnesses to a given event, cannot be deemed unreliable; this means, according to Bauckham, that the Jesus tradition, which he argues is based on the recollections and testimony of the eyewitnesses of

658 Horsley, 'Prominent Patterns', in Kirk and Thatcher (eds.), *Memory*, pp. 57-78 (65); Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, p. 25.

659 Eve, *Behind*, p. 91; see the discussion on social memory below.

660 Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 1-30. Allison's work is discussed in more detail below in ch. 3.6.

661 Allison, *Constructing*, p. 1.

662 Allison, *Constructing*, p. 30.

663 John Dominic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately after the Execution of Jesus* (San Francisco, Harper, 1998), pp. 59-84 (59).

664 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 319-57. Bauckham's theory of eyewitness memory, which diverges in many ways from the scholars discussed in this chapter, is addressed in detail in ch. 3.8.2.

Jesus' ministry, is historically reliable.

Comparing Crossan and Bauckham, Eve points out that, while both sides find support for their viewpoints in psychological literature, the difference 'is as much one of emphasis as one of substance'.⁶⁶⁵ Crossan admits that memory is hardly completely unreliable, whereas Bauckham acknowledges, at least, an element of reconstruction in the process of remembering.⁶⁶⁶ These two emphases lead to important observations about individual memory. First, the reliability of individual memory is variable; while the human memory works well for many practical purposes (such as giving access to one's individual past), it is nevertheless prone to many failures that warn against naïve trust (for instance, error, forgetting, distortion, unconscious invention, reinterpretation, self-interest, suggestibility and social pressure).⁶⁶⁷ Second, recollection involves an element of reconstruction, which means that one cannot simply reactivate a stored image from one's memory; one's general understanding of things and the world at large, as well as one's present needs, inform the process of recollection and interpretation of past events. Remembering is an attempt to make sense of what is recalled for the present.⁶⁶⁸ Thus, individual memory 'is a combination of past recollection and present imposition'.⁶⁶⁹ Social memory is discussed next, as the process of the transmission of the Jesus traditions was essentially communal in nature.

SOCIAL MEMORY

'Social memory', 'collective memory' and 'cultural memory'⁶⁷⁰ are all terms used to describe the social aspects of memory, in other words, the sociological reality that a group preserves, rehearses, shapes and transmits memories that are significant to that group's identity.⁶⁷¹ The French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1877–1945) is

665 Eve, *Behind*, p. 89.

666 Eve, *Behind*, 89; cf. Crossan, *Birth*, p. 84; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 325-30.

667 Eve, *Behind*, p. 89.

668 Eve, *Behind*, p. 89, as well as the references in n. 9: Schacter, *Searching for Memory*, pp. 69-71, 88-97; Todd Tremplin, *Minds and Gods: The Cognitive Foundations of Religion* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 152; Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, p. 31.

669 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 47.

670 See Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (trans. David Henry Wilson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

671 On the definitions of the three terms, see Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 42 n. 8: the pioneer of social memory theory Maurice Halbwachs used *sociaux* to describe how individual memories are informed by group ideologies; with collective memory, he referred to memories shared and passed down by groups. Currently, these terms are often used synonymously. More recently, 'cultural memory' is often used to broaden the scope of collective memory into a long-term cultural tradition.

widely considered the pioneer and father of social memory theory.⁶⁷² Halbwachs' classic work, *Les Cadres sociaux de la memoire*,⁶⁷³ was inspired by the ideas of Henri Bergson (1859–1941), who discussed the relationship between memory and time, and Emile Durkheim (1858–1917), who studied the relationship between society and individual.⁶⁷⁴ Halbwachs argued, first, that the past is not preserved in the memories of individuals, but is reconstructed on the basis of the present in social interaction and, secondly, that the cognitive reconstruction of the past is essentially spurred by 'social frameworks'.⁶⁷⁵ Halbwachs emphasized that all remembering is necessarily social in nature, regardless of the fact that individuals do the remembering.⁶⁷⁶ Social groups provide the frameworks – and the very language – used to frame one's thoughts and perceptions; all recollections are placed within these frameworks. Acts of remembering are social in nature, as memories are shared in social interaction.⁶⁷⁷

For Halbwachs, 'collective memory' functioned to maintain group identity, values and cohesion.⁶⁷⁸ Bearing a resemblance to the concept of *homeostasis* in oral tradition, Halbwachs' notion of collective memory refers to the idea that society reshapes its memories to meet present needs, forgetting anything that would threaten group cohesion.⁶⁷⁹ Memories do not usually outlast the group to which they are significant, except maybe the memories of some former members of a defunct group.⁶⁸⁰ While admitting that one's 'impressions [or 'individual memories'] perdue for some time', Halbwachs stressed that 'this "resonance" of

672 See e.g. Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 41; Eve, *Behind*, p. 93.

673 Maurice Halbwachs, *Les Cadres sociaux de la memoire* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1925); all references in my study are to the 1992 English translation, Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (trans. Lewis A. Coser; Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

674 Lewis A. Coser, 'Introduction', in M. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (trans. L. A. Coser; Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 3-7.; in Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 41 n. 3.

675 Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, pp. 38-40, 46-51; Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 42. Cubitt, *History and Memory*, pp. 158-59, points out that, like Bartlett, Halbwachs argued that memory was reconstructive rather than reproductive in nature; instead of focusing on the implications on the individual, Halbwachs was interested in the group. Specifically, Halbwachs studied the cohesion and interdependence of individual memory and social frameworks of memory in the context of dreams, family, religion, and social class.

676 Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, p. 53, in Eve, *Behind*, p. 93.

677 Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, pp. 172-73; Cubitt, *History and Memory*, p. 159; Misztal, *Theories*, p. 54; Eve, *Behind*, p. 93.

678 See Misztal, *Theories*, pp. 50-52; Eve, *Behind*, p. 93.

679 Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, pp. 182-83; cf. Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, pp. 114-23; Eve, *Behind*, p. 93; cf. also ch. 2.3 of this study above.

680 Cubitt, *History and Memory*, p. 162; Eve, *Behind*, p. 93.

impressions is not to be confused with the preservation of memories.⁶⁸¹

The process of 'localization' was important for Halbwachs.⁶⁸² It refers to the anchoring of mental images associated with the past to mental frames of reference; as such these frames are incomplete, until they are set in a context of meaning. Complete and cohesive memories are the result of fragmentary ideas being formed by these frames. Le Donne summarizes that the purpose of this process 'is to reinforce images associated with the past by localizing them within imaginative contexts wherein these ideas are meaningful and intelligible to the present state of mind'; images associated with the past can only make sense in the present state of mind, when memories are reinforced with plausibility and integrity.⁶⁸³

According to Halbwachs, there was no way of reaching 'the actual past' in order to verify that which was reinforced. The social group, with its established collective memories, corrects and rejects particular individual memories in social interaction, unless they are properly rendered. The group sets the standards for the formation of individual memories. Collective memory is a complex entity of norms, interpretations, and attitudes 'that spur and constrain' the imaginative process.⁶⁸⁴

Halbwachs gave some examples of how collective memory creates social networks in which individual memories are localized. For example, an adult who reads a book familiar from her childhood completes the incomplete recollection of the book by the present perception of it.⁶⁸⁵ Also, family memories are social in nature, which often makes it impossible to distinguish them from individual recollections; according to Halbwachs, this is evidence of memory being, not only reinforced, but socially reinforced to become entirely social in nature.⁶⁸⁶ Furthermore, Halbwachs did not restrict social dialogue to the external, but argued that the individual's relationship to society is so deep that it affects individual memories even before social dialogue. The notion of 'an internal social dialogue' has subsequently resulted in the argument that every private and

681 Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, p. 40 n. 3.

682 Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, pp. 52-54.

683 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 47.

684 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 47-48.

685 Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, p. 46; Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 48.

686 Halbwachs, *Historiographical*, p. 38; on this example, also see Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992 [1977]), p. 4; Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, p. 22; Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 48-49.

communal memory is social in nature.⁶⁸⁷

Halbwachs' views have received many criticisms. His view is said to downplay the significance of the distinctive memories of individual human beings. While Halbwachs himself did not represent an extreme 'presentist' view, where the past is viewed as a complete fabrication designed to serve present interests,⁶⁸⁸ his view is nevertheless in danger of lapsing into sociological reductionism.⁶⁸⁹ An overemphasis on the influence of the present interests of the group easily leads to ignoring how much the actual past is immanent in the present; the resilience of individual memory should not be undermined.⁶⁹⁰ This kind of 'social determinism' can be avoided when social memory is not viewed as a free invention of history, but as a process of negotiation that allows for fluidity and unpredictability; suppression of alternative interpretations and coercion do not ensure the acceptance of particular interpretations within the group.⁶⁹¹

Halbwachs is also criticized for neglecting how individuals' consciousness of memory relates to the collective memory of the groups to which they belong. His view is said to create 'a concept of collective consciousness' not appropriately connected to any particular person's thought processes.⁶⁹² Further, Halbwachs' view is said to fail to explain the handing on of collective memories from generation to generation; he did not account for the role of individuals, as well as rituals, in this regard.⁶⁹³ In defense of Halbwachs, Rodríguez underscores that group memory was not 'a mystical group mind' for Halbwachs; collective memory is rather a sociological process that 'goes on within the minds of individual group

687 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 49; Michael Schudson, 'Dynamics of Distortion in Collective Memory', in Daniel Schacter (ed.), *Memory Distortion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 346-64 (347).

688 Such a 'presentist' or 'invention of traditions' approach is argued for by others. See Misztal, *Theories*, pp. 56-61; Eve, *Behind*, p. 94: cf. Alan Kirk, 'Social and Cultural Memory', in Kirk and Thatcher (eds.), *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, pp. 1-24 (11-14); Barry Schwartz, 'Christian Origins: Historical Truth and Social Memory' in Kirk and Thatcher (eds.), *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, pp. 43-56 (44-46).

689 Misztal, *Theories*, p. 53; Cubitt, *History and Memory*, p. 162; Eve, *Behind*, p. 94.

690 Kirk, 'Social and Cultural', pp. 1-24 (14-17); Eve, *Behind*, p. 94.

691 Misztal, *Theories*, p. 71, refers to a 'dynamics of memory' view; see Eve, *Behind*, pp. 94-95. Eve, *Behind*, p. 95, points out that although even in Misztal's own estimation this view lacks 'a clear focus', it nevertheless reminds that 'the social memory of a particular group is not necessarily some monolithic set of ideas about the past that all members of the group share without question, but that the contents of collective memory may be debated and contested'.

692 Misztal, *Theories*, pp. 54-55; Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, p. ix; Eve, *Behind*, p. 95.

693 Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, pp. 37-38; Misztal, *Theories*, p. 55; Eve, *Behind*, p. 95.

members.⁶⁹⁴ There is space for the individual in Halbwachs' viewpoint, as society does not completely take over the individual.⁶⁹⁵ Rodríguez stresses the capacity of the individual to process her memories in interaction with the group she belongs to; in Halbwachsian terms, the framework of social memory confines and binds together one's remembrances, the group exerting 'social force' upon individual perceptions and interpretations.⁶⁹⁶

Other criticism against Halbwachs can be listed as follows. Halbwachs' conception of the past has been deemed inconsistent: he gives the impression that the past can be presented by present states of mind, while also indicating at times that the past is mostly unknowable.⁶⁹⁷ Halbwachs is also said to have presented a vague concept of 'collective memory'.⁶⁹⁸ His approach too readily assumes the stability of the image of the past in group memory, not accounting for change.⁶⁹⁹ Finally, as a child of post-WWI disillusionment and suspicion, Halbwachs leaned too heavily towards dogmatic distrust; his view can be seen to take extreme constructivism normatively.⁷⁰⁰ His constructivist view is said to be guilty of circular reasoning.⁷⁰¹

Without assessing each criticism individually, it can be argued that Halbwachs held a conventional positivist approach to historiography. He believed that the objective writing of history was possible only after the vanishing of collective memory, which he deemed an unreliable source for history.⁷⁰² Le Donne aptly summarizes: 'Halbwachs considered memory to be a fluid and active process while history was a more rigid discipline that required the historian to maintain an objective distance from his or her subject matter.'⁷⁰³ Halbwachs' method of writing history became prototypical for later historians of tradition, showing

694 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, p. 45.

695 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 45-46; Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, p. 52.

696 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, p. 46; Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, p. 53.

697 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 47.

698 Cubitt, *History and Memory*, pp. 13-14, 165; see Eve, *Behind*, p. 95.

699 Misztal, *Theories*, p. 55; Eve, *Behind*, p. 95.

700 Schwartz, 'Christian Origins', pp. 43-56 (45-51); Eve, *Behind*, p. 95.

701 Kirk, 'Social and Cultural Memory', p. 13; Eve, *Behind*, p. 95.

702 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 43-45. Halbwachs came to this conclusion through his study in the field of topographical commemoration. See 'The Legendary Topography of the Gospels in the Holy Land', in Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, pp. 193-235, trans. of M. Halbwachs, *La Topographie des Évangiles en Terre Sainte. Étude de mémoire collective* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1941). Some problems in Halbwachs' study, such as his dating of the Gospels to the second century, are pointed out by Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 43-44.

703 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 43, 44-45.

how to write a history of the politics of memory.⁷⁰⁴ His model recognized that the analysis of commemoration helps in understanding the thought world of the commemorators themselves. Halbwachs acknowledged that the way in which a society remembers her origins betrays a significant amount of information about her current stage.⁷⁰⁵

It became clear later on, however, that Halbwachs and the followers of his historiographical method had upheld a false dichotomy between history and memory⁷⁰⁶; specifically, this was shown to be the case by Pierre Nora, who argued that collective memory is the essence of historical inquiry, not a mere building block that precedes the historian's work, and that historiography is about the intentional reconstruction of memory, which is reliable because of its constant evolution and completion of the present.⁷⁰⁷ Most historians who apply social memory theory are said to fall between viewing social memory as the essence of historical inquiry (cf. Nora) and upholding a split between collective memory and history (cf. Le Goff).⁷⁰⁸

The most important conclusions of Halbwachs' work can be summarized as follows: (1) memory is the past reconstructed in light of present needs; (2) 'collective memory' refers to that which is articulated into social communication; (3) no memory is conceived outside social frameworks.⁷⁰⁹ Several Halbwachsian ideas are broadly accepted at least in a modified sense. First, the social dimension of memory is always there no matter what kind of a role the individual dimension plays; memory has to make use of shared language and ideas, as remembering generally takes place in a social context.⁷¹⁰ Second, social memory is important for maintaining social identity and a world of shared meanings; the past is often

704 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 44. Le Donne, p. 44, states that 'it was not until the posthumous publication of *La Mémoire collective* that Halbwachs' historiographical conclusions became known'.

705 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 44.

706 See e.g. Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992 [1977]), whose work benefited from the posthumous publication of Halbwachs' work. So Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 44-45.

707 Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire', *Representations* 26 (1989), pp. 7-25; Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 45-46. Nora, 'Between', pp. 7-25 (8), argued that 'real memory' remains 'unviolated' in the realm of the subconscious.

708 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 46-47; cf. Nora, 'Between', pp. 7-25; Le Goff, *History and Memory*.

709 So Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 42.

710 Eve, *Behind*, p. 96; Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, p. 7; Cubitt, *History and Memory*, pp. 118-20, 125-26; Misztal, *Theories*, pp. 11-12; Kirk, 'Social and Cultural Memory', pp. 1-24 (3-5).

used in the legitimization of a present social order.⁷¹¹ Third, social memory has an element of construction, because it adapts to present needs and conceptions.⁷¹² Fourth, this may lead to the distortion of facts and high selectivity about what is remembered, although this is not necessarily the case.⁷¹³ Finally, as a modification of Halbwachs' viewpoint, it is worth noting that, while present concerns do shape our understanding of the past, both the actual and remembered past also shape our understanding of the present.⁷¹⁴

Social memory theory is relevant for the study of the transmission of the Jesus traditions in early Christianity because most early Christians did not receive their knowledge about Jesus from their autobiographical memory; the Jesus traditions were 'embedded in the social memory of the early church', small house churches, forming a network scattered around the Roman Empire. Regardless of the differences between the collective memories of communities in different locations, one may speak of the early church's collective memory of Jesus; how Jesus was remembered was paramount to their group identity.⁷¹⁵ In the following sections, the studies by eight significant scholars on memory and the transmission of the Jesus traditions are presented and evaluated. James D. G. Dunn, Richard A. Horsley, Rafael Rodríguez, Chris Keith, Dale C. Allison, and Anthony Le Donne apply, in their distinct ways, memory studies and social memory theory to questions related to the study of the Jesus traditions and the historical Jesus, while Samuel Byrskog and Richard Bauckham focus more on the question of eyewitness testimony.⁷¹⁶

Space permitting, other scholars and works could be included; for example,

711 Eve, *Behind*, p. 96; Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, p. 25; Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, p. 3; Misztal, *Theories*, pp. 13-14; Kirk, 'Social and Cultural Memory', pp. 10-12.

712 Eve, *Behind*, p. 96; Misztal, *Theories*, pp. 13; Kirk, 'Social and Cultural Memory', pp. 10-11.

713 Eve, *Behind*, p. 96; Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, pp. xii-xiii.

714 Eve, *Behind*, p. 96; Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, pp. 2-4; Misztal, *Theories*, p. 13; Kirk, 'Social and Cultural Memory', pp. 14-17.

715 Eve, *Behind*, p. 98. Eve argues that some form of a collective memory of Israelite traditions was also important for all or most of both Jewish and Gentile Christian communities, since Jesus was called the Messiah of Israel and the Son of God of Israel.

716 The focus of some of the views (e.g. Keith, Allison, Le Donne) discussed here is more on the study of the historical Jesus than on specific questions regarding the transmission of the Jesus traditions in early Christianity. Yet all the views that are discussed are based on a certain understanding of the dynamics of the Jesus traditions; for example, it can be *roughly* stated that the views that apply social memory theory to the historical Jesus have in common a notion that 'tradition' can or should be thought of in light of the category of memory (i.e., the Jesus traditions can be thought of as the early Christian social memory about Jesus).

Jens Schröter (b.1961) is a seminal figure when it comes to the application of the concept of memory, specifically, *cultural memory*, to the study of the Jesus traditions. After outlining some of his basic methodological points in his 1996 article, Schröter's 1997 monograph, *Erinnerung an Jesu Worte*, applies Jan Assmann's notion of cultural memory to the sayings traditions in Mark, Q, and Thomas, arguing for a presentist view which problematizes the notions of historicity and authenticity.⁷¹⁷ While Schröter's application of the concept of memory comes close to many other scholars discussed below, he emphasizes,

717 See Jens Schröter, 'The Historical Jesus and the Sayings Tradition: Comments on Current Research', *Neot* 30/1 (1996), pp. 151-68; *idem*, *Erinnerung*, pp. 1-12, 462-66; also see, *idem*, 'Markus, Q und der historische Jesus: Methodische und exegetische Erwägungen zu den Anfängen der Rezeption der Verkündigung Jesu', *ZNW* 89 (1998), pp. 173-200; *idem*, 'Jerusalem und Galiläa. Überlegungen zur Verhältnisbestimmung von Pluralität und Kohärenz für die Konstruktion einer Geschichte des frühen Christentums', *NovT* 42/2 (2000), pp. 127-59; *idem*, 'Der historische Jesus in seinem jüdischen Umfeld: Eine Bestandsaufnahme angesichts der neueren Diskussion', *Bib* 83/4 (2002), pp. 563-73; *idem*, 'Von der Historizität der Evangelien: Ein Beitrag zur gegenwärtigen Diskussion über den historischen Jesus', in J. Schröter and R. Brucker (eds.), *Der Historische Jesus: Tendenzen und Perspektiven der gegenwärtigen Forschung* (BZNW, 114; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), pp. 163-212; *idem*, 'Die Bedeutung der Q-Überlieferungen für die Interpretation der frühen Jesustradition', *ZNW* 94 (2003), pp. 38-67; *idem*, 'The Criteria of Authenticity in Jesus Research and Historiographical method', in Keith and Le Donne (eds.), *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, pp. 49-70; most recently, J. Schröter and C. Jacobi (eds.), *Jesus Handbuch* (HdTh; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017).

On Schröter's views, see e.g. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, *passim*; Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 75-76; Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 119-20; Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 51, 63, 66; *idem*, 'The Narratives of the Gospels and the Historical Jesus', pp. 426-55 (442-44); Eve, *Behind*, pp. 131-32; Bird, *Gospel*, pp. 105-6; Hübenal, *Das Markusevangelium*, pp. 19, 24, 30, 35, 42-44, 53-55, 59-60, 62-63, 67; Ernest van Eck, 'Memory and Historical Jesus Studies: *Formgeschichte* in a New Dress?', *HTS Theologesie Studies/Theological Studies* 71/1 (2015), pp. 1-10; Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65; Zimmermann, *Puzzling the Parables*, pp. 76-79; Kirk, *Q in Matthew*, pp. 153, 177, 301.

Also see Jacobi, *Jesusüberlieferung bei Paulus?*, which is a recent study on the relationship between Paul and the Synoptic Jesus tradition from a memory approach point of view. Jacobi, a student of Jens Schröter, argues for a 'minimalist' view on Paul's use of the Jesus traditions, focusing on Rom. 12.14-21, 1 Thess. 5.1-11, 1 Cor. 7, 1 Cor. 11.23a, and Rom. 14.14. She questions a 'maximalist' interpretation that would view too many of the early Christian traditions as 'Jesus traditions' and is critical of positing too fixed a chain of transmission (contra e.g. Gerhardsson). This view, as noted by Kari Syreeni, review of Christine Jacobi's *Jesusüberlieferung bei Paulus? Analogien zwischen echten Paulusbriefen und den synoptischen Evangelien*, *RBL* 12 (2016), pp. 1-5, can be taken, on the one hand, as the Bultmannian ('minimalist') line of reasoning from a social memory perspective or, on the other hand, as an articulation of the way Paul 'receives' Jesus and the Jesus traditions as a hermeneutical sphere and an orientation toward the past, which is not interested in merely studying the repetition of Jesus' words in Paul. On the latter view, which is open to the interpretation as a different kind of 'maximalist' view, see the description of Jacobi's study on the Jesus Blog to which she is a contributor along with three other scholars discussed in this dissertation (Chris Keith, Rafael Rodríguez, Anthony Le Donne). See <http://historicaljesusresearch.blogspot.fi/2015/09/christine-jacobi-joins-jesus-blog.html>. Accessed February 22, 2017.

more than some others, ‘a free and living’ Jesus tradition ‘in which there was not interest in distinguishing the authentic words of Jesus from material drawn from elsewhere.’⁷¹⁸ The current discussion on social memory and the historical Jesus emerges by and large from the background of ancient media studies, which can be well demonstrated with the current selection of scholars and studies.

3.2 JAMES D. G. DUNN

James D. G. Dunn’s (b.1939) vast contribution to the discussion on the Jesus traditions needs to be addressed in relation to the application of social memory theory, although Dunn’s major work on the historical Jesus, *Jesus Remembered*, does not pay close attention to the concept of memory despite its title.⁷¹⁹ His work

718 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 131-32 (132). Eve discusses Schröter only briefly under the title ‘Other contributions’.

719 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*; see also his articles from the past decades republished in J. D. G. Dunn, *The Oral Gospel Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013): Chapter 1, pp. 13-40: Dunn, ‘Prophetic “I”-Sayings and the Jesus-Tradition: The Importance of Testing Prophetic Utterances within Early Christianity’, *NTS* 24 (1977-78), pp. 175-98; Chapter 2, pp. 41-79: *idem*, ‘Altering the Default Setting: Re-envisioning the Early Transmission of the Jesus Tradition’, *NTS* 49 (2003), pp. 139-75 (the reprinted version from J. D. G. Dunn, *A New Perspective on Jesus* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005], pp. 79-125); Chapter 3, pp. 80-108: *idem*, ‘Q¹ as Oral Tradition’, in M. Bockmuehl and D. A. Hagner (eds.), *The Written Gospel* (Festschrift G. N. Stanton; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2005), pp. 45-69; Chapter 4, pp. 109-19: *idem*, ‘Matthew’s Awareness of Markan Redaction’, in F. Van Segbroeck (ed.), *The Four Gospels: Festschrift for Frans Neiryndck* (Festschrift F. Neiryndck; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), pp. 1349-59; Chapter 5, pp. 120-37: *idem*, ‘Matthew as *Wirkungsgeschichte*’, in P. Lampe et al. (eds.), *Neutestamentliche Exegese im Dialog: Hermeneutik – Wirkungsgeschichte – Matthäusevangelium. Festschrift für Ulrich Luz* (Festschrift U. Luz; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2008), pp. 149-66; Chapter 6, pp. 138-63: *idem*, ‘John and the Oral Gospel Tradition’, in H. Wansbrough (ed.), *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition* (JSNTSup 64; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), pp. 351-79; Chapter 7, pp. 164-95: *idem*, ‘John’s Gospel and the Oral Gospel Tradition’, in A. Le Donne and T. Thatcher (eds.), *The Fourth Gospel in First-Century Media Culture* (LNTS 426; London: T&T Clark, 2011), pp. 157-85; Chapter 8, pp. 199-212: *idem*, ‘On History, Memory and Eyewitnesses: In Response to Bengt Holmberg and Samuel Byrskog’, *JSNT* 26 (2004), pp. 473-87; Chapter 9, pp. 213-29: *idem*, ‘Eyewitnesses and the Oral Jesus Tradition’, *JSHJ* 6 (2008), pp. 85-105; Chapter 10, pp. 230-47: *idem*, ‘Social Memory and the Oral Jesus Tradition’, in Barton, Stuckenbruck and Wold (eds.), *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity: The Fifth Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium*, pp. 179-94; Chapter 11, pp. 248-64: *idem*, ‘Bailey’s Theory’, pp. 44-62; Chapter 12, pp. 267-89: *idem*, ‘Two Versions of Remembering Jesus: How the Quest of the Historical Jesus Lost Its Way’, in P. R. Eddy and J. K. Beilby (eds.), *The Historical Jesus: Five Views* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2009), pp. 199-225; also in T. Holmén and S. E. Porter (eds.), *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus* (4 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 1:183-205; Chapter 13, pp. 290-312: *idem*, ‘Between Jesus and the Gospels’, in *Jesus, Paul and the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), pp. 22-44; Chapter 14, pp. 313-60: *idem*, ‘The History of the Tradition: New Testament’, in J. D. G. Dunn and J. W. Rogerson (eds.), *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans: 2003), pp. 950-71; *idem*, ‘Living Tradition’, in P. McCosker (ed.), *What Is It That the Scripture Says? Essays in*

employs oral hermeneutics and sociological viewpoints which foreground the discussion on social memory and the historical Jesus. The basic tenet of Dunn's view is that one cannot objectively access the actual historical Jesus through the Jesus traditions contained in the Gospels, but rather the Gospel material shows how Jesus' *impact* was remembered by his first followers; it is not possible to separate Jesus from his first followers' faith and interpretation in a neutral way. Dunn is interested in how the impact, or impacts, of Jesus became textualized in the tradition, especially the Synoptic tradition, which he believes contains most of what can be known about Jesus. This approach can be viewed as reasserting the central idea of Martin Kähler's *Die sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche, biblische Jesus*, that there is no 'historical Jesus' apart from the Christ of faith provided by the Gospels.⁷²⁰

Dunn argues that Jesus' collective impact, which began to be made on his first followers at the beginning of his ministry, played a major role in the formation of their group identity already before Easter. According to Dunn's sociological logic, the oral Jesus tradition formed a foundation story that helped to explain the distinct identity of Jesus' followers; alongside a Christian interpretation of the Scriptures, early Christian teachers, of whom Paul is a prime example, would teach the oral traditions that would distinguish their communities from other communities, religious or other kind. Dunn remarks that Jesus was regarded and remembered as a 'teacher' and his closest followers as 'disciples' or 'those taught, learners', who understood it to be their task to remember their teacher's teaching. Witnessing and remembering are New Testament motifs, important for identity formation.⁷²¹

Dunn's views are said to be largely consistent with social memory theory, although he lacks broader discussion on and explicit reference to the theory.⁷²²

Biblical Interpretation, Translation and Reception in Honor of Henry Wansbrough OSB (LNTS 316; London: T&T Clark, 2006), pp. 275-89.

720 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 125-27, 128-33, 242, 335-36; also see Eve, *Behind*, pp. 108-9; Rodríguez, *Structuring*, p. 5 n. 5. See Martin Kähler, *Die sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche, biblische Jesus*; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 126-27 (126 n. 99); cf. Syreeni, 'The Identity', p. 1-16 (12).

721 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 174-80.

722 Eve, *Behind*, p. 109. It is fair to point out, nevertheless, that Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 178 n. 32 refers to A. Assmann, *Das Kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich: Beck, 1992), via Schröter, *Erinnerung*, pp. 462-63, and speaks of 'teachers reinforcing their church's corporate memory of Jesus tradition' in Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 186.

Holding that ‘the church-founding apostles’ passed on Jesus traditions, teachers reinforced the ‘corporate memory of Jesus tradition,’ and that early authors of letters alluded to that tradition, Dunn rejects the theory that early Christian prophecy was often added to the Jesus tradition, resulting in the prophets’ words being mixed up with Jesus’ words.⁷²³

Turning to the dynamics of oral tradition, Dunn reviews and critiques the views of J. G. Herder, Rudolf Bultmann, C. F. D. Moule, Helmut Koester, Birger Gerhardsson, Werner Kelber, Richard Horsley and Jonathan Draper, and Kenneth Bailey.⁷²⁴ Dunn is appreciative of Kelber’s notions of oral epic and oral characteristics in Mark, but criticizes his idea of a rupture with the oral tradition caused by the writing of the Gospel. Dunn also deems some of Horsley’s and Draper’s views useful, as they employ John Miley Foley’s work on oral performance. Dunn finds Foley’s idea of ‘metonymic referentiality’ especially helpful.⁷²⁵

As discussed above in Chapter 2.4, Dunn is, nevertheless, most impressed with Bailey’s view of the ‘informal controlled oral tradition,’ which he interprets at least partly through Jan Vansina’s theory on oral tradition⁷²⁶ and couples with the following notions about oral performance:

[I]n oral tradition one telling of a story is in no sense an editing of a previous telling; rather, each telling starts with the same subject and theme, but the retellings are different; each telling is a performance of the tradition itself, not of the first, or third, or twenty-third ‘edition’ of the tradition.⁷²⁷

723 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 186-92; contra e.g. Bultmann, *History*, pp. 127-28.

724 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 192-210.

725 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 204-5; R. A. Horsley and J. A. Draper, *Whoever Hears You Hears Me: Prophets, Performance, and Tradition in Q* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 1999); J. M. Foley, *Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1991), chs 1, 2; *idem*, *The Singer of Tales in Performance* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1995), chs 1-3. With regard to the performance of oral traditional texts, ‘metonymic reference’ denotes ‘a mode of signification wherein the part stands for the whole’ (Foley, *Immanent*, p. 7; in Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 205), and a text ‘is enriched by an unspoken context that dwarfs the textual artifact’ (Foley, *Immanent*, pp. 40-41; in Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 205). Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 205, sums Foley’s point: ‘Oral traditional texts imply an audience with the background to respond faithfully to the signals encoded in the text, to bridge the gaps of indeterminacy and thus to “build” the implied consistency.’

726 Vansina, *Oral Tradition*; esp. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 207.

727 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 209; contra e.g. Bultmann, *Eve, Behind*, p. 110, notes that this insight could just as well be from Lord, Foley, Kelber, or Horsley.

Dunn gives Bailey credit specifically for recognizing that (1) a community would exercise some control over its traditions, and (2) the degree of control would vary both in regard to form and in regard to the relative importance of the tradition for its own identity. These quite non-controversial points, which are actually not original to Bailey,⁷²⁸ are followed by the third claim derived from Bailey, namely, that (3) the element regarded as the core of the story or key to its meaning would be its most fixed element.⁷²⁹ Dunn aims to illustrate this from the Synoptic tradition, discussing examples from the double tradition and Mark; he rejects the theory of direct literary copying on the grounds that the differences between accounts betray evidence of oral retellings of an oral tradition common to the different authors, or one author's recollection of another's account, rather than literary redactions of one another. Dunn argues that Matthew, Luke and their communities would have been familiar with the material of Mark and Q even before they received it in a written form; this means that the authors of the later Gospels would have known both the oral traditions and the parallel written material.⁷³⁰

Dunn emphasizes the communal nature of the transmission of the Jesus tradition, while attempting to acknowledge the role of eyewitnesses as important authoritative figures.⁷³¹ The Jesus tradition had its beginnings in Jesus' ministry, words and actions, but the remembered impact was based on a synthesis of the impacts made on several occasions, precise recollections of individual occasions being beyond one's reach. The material was used and molded constantly in early communities, a point made by early form criticism; also, the Easter event, as well as the transitions from Aramaic to Greek and from Galilean village to Hellenistic city, shaped the tradition for the changing circumstances.⁷³²

728 So Eve, *Behind*, p. 110.

729 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 209.

730 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 210-38; *idem*, 'Altering the Default Setting', pp. 139-75. Dunn's examples include Mt. 8.5-13/Lk. 7.1-10; Mt. 8.23-27/Mk 4.35-41/Lk. 8.22-25; Mt. 15.21-28/Mk 7.24-30; Mt. 17.14-18/Mk 9.14-27/Lk. 9.37-43; Mt. 18.1-5/Mk 9.33-37/Lk. 9.46-48; Mk 12.41-44/Lk. 21.1-4; Mt. 6.7-15/Lk. 11.1-4; Mt. 5.13/Lk. 14.34-35; Mt. 5.25-26/Lk. 12.57-59; Mt. 5.39b-42/Lk. 6.29-30; Mt. 6.19-21/Lk. 12.33-34; Mt. 7.13-14/Lk. 13.24; Mt. 7.24-27/Lk. 6.47-49; Mt. 10.34-38/Lk. 12.51-53, 14.26-27; Mt. 18.15, 21-22/Lk. 17.3-4; Mt. 22.1-14/Lk. 14.15-24.

731 E.g. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 178 n. 28 cites the importance of the concept of autopsy in Byrskog, *Story as History*; also, see Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 180-81, 242-43: 'Nor should we forget the continuing role of eyewitness tradents, of those recognized from the first as apostles or otherwise authoritative bearers of the Jesus tradition.'

732 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 239-45. Eve, *Behind*, p. 113, notes that these viewpoints are largely in accordance with social memory theory. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 313-14; *idem*, *The Oral Gospel Tradition*, pp. 41-79 (51 n. 34) basically accepts the low estimates of literacy (as low as

While learning ‘from postmodernism’s emphasis on the reception rather than composition of the text’ and arguing for an active living oral tradition that did not cease to exist when the Gospels were written, it is clearly the continuity provided by the oral Jesus tradition itself and its stability from its inception that Dunn wishes to emphasize.⁷³³ In accordance with his use of Bailey, Dunn posits that, despite the reality that the oral retellings of the traditions resulted in variations in details and emphases, the core of the tradition remained stable.⁷³⁴ Dunn’s view challenges three assumptions or conceptions of oral tradition: first, that the oral Jesus tradition initially circulated in isolated individual units, an assumption of the early form critics; second, that oral tradition can be viewed as a series of layers rather than a sequence of performances; and third, that there was a sharp shift from orality to writing with the composition of the Gospels.⁷³⁵

In sum, paying attention to oral hermeneutics, Dunn proposes that the characteristics of the Jesus tradition are by and large explainable through the impact of Jesus on his first followers.⁷³⁶ Dunn approaches the Jesus traditions with no interest in the ‘authenticity’ of individual sayings and deeds, while holding a rather optimistic view of the continuity and stability of the Jesus traditions.

CRITIQUE & EVALUATION

Dunn’s view has been warmly welcomed by some and fiercely criticized by others.⁷³⁷ The first main criticism of Dunn’s position has to do with his inattention

3 percent) for Roman Palestine in Second Temple times, referring to e.g. William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989); Heszer, *Jewish Literacy*, and others.

733 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 245: ‘But the oral Jesus tradition itself provided the continuity, the living link back to the ministry of Jesus, and it was no doubt treasured for that very reason.’

734 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 249.

735 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 245-53; also Eve, *Behind*, pp. 113-14, for context and evaluation of Dunn’s notions.

736 The importance of the impact of the historical Jesus on his first followers has been addressed by other scholars. See e.g. Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003), pp. 53-55 (53): ‘The only reasonable factor that accounts for the central place of the figure of Jesus in early Christianity is the impact of Jesus’ ministry and its consequences, especially for his followers.’ Cited in Keith, *Jesus’ Literacy*, p. 49.

737 See e.g. B. Holmberg, ‘Questions of Method in James Dunn’s *Jesus Remembered*’, *JSNT* 26.4 (2004), pp. 445-57; Gerhardsson, ‘Secret’, pp. 1-18; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 252-63; Rodríguez, *Structuring, passim*; Allison, *Constructing, passim*; R. Stewart, ‘From Reimarus to Dunn: Situating James D. G. Dunn in the History of Jesus Research’, in R. Stewart and G. Habermas (eds.), *Memories of Jesus: A Critical Appraisal of James D. G. Dunn’s Jesus Remembered* (Nashville: B&H, 2010), pp. 1-30; M. Bockmuehl, ‘Whose Memory? Whose Orality? A Conversation with James D. G. Dunn on Jesus and the Gospels’, in Stewart and Habermas (eds.), *Memories of Jesus*, pp. 31-44;

to the concept of memory. Markus Bockmuehl puts it quite mildly in his assessment: ‘Dunn has left his welcome stress on remembrance somewhat starved of theoretical definition.’ Dunn’s theoretical focus on the workings of memory, and its relation to orality and oral history, is not clear in *Jesus Remembered*, as he does not address the most important theorists in these fields, such as Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora, Jan Assmann, and others.⁷³⁸ While in Dunn’s defense it can be pointed out that he occasionally refers to the concept of memory in *Jesus Remembered*,⁷³⁹ and has subsequently engaged the theory, recognizing for instance the importance of Halbwachs,⁷⁴⁰ the lack of a theoretical framework on

S. McKnight, ‘Telling the Truth of History: A Response to James D. G. Dunn’s *Jesus Remembered*, in Stewart and Habermas (eds.), *Memories of Jesus*, pp. 45-57; Byrskog, ‘A New Perspective on the Jesus Tradition’, pp. 459-71; *idem*, ‘A New Perspective on the Jesus Tradition: Reflections on James D. G. Dunn’s *Jesus Remembered*’, in R. Stewart and G. Habermas (eds.), *Memories of Jesus*, pp. 59-78; C. L. Blomberg, ‘Orality and the Parables: With Special Reference to James D. G. Dunn’s *Jesus Remembered*’, in Stewart and Habermas (eds.), *Memories of Jesus*, pp. 79-127; J. Schröter, ‘Remarks on James D. G. Dunn’s Approach to Jesus Research’, in Stewart and Habermas (eds.), *Memories of Jesus*, pp. 129-43; C. A. Evans, ‘Jesus’ Dissimilarity from Second Temple Judaism and the Early Church’, in Stewart and Habermas (eds.), *Memories of Jesus*, pp. 145-58; B. Warren, ‘The Transmission of the Remembered Jesus: Insights from Textual Criticism’, in Stewart and Habermas (eds.), *Memories of Jesus*, pp. 159-72; C. L. Quarles, ‘Why Not “Beginning from Bethlehem”? A Critique of James D. G. Dunn’s Treatment of the Synoptic Birth Narratives’, in Stewart and Habermas (eds.), *Memories of Jesus*, pp. 173-96; B. Witherington III, ‘“Christianity in the Making”: Oral Mystery or Eyewitness History?’, in Stewart and Habermas (eds.), *Memories of Jesus*, pp. 197-226; P. R. Eddy, ‘Remembering Jesus’ Self-Understanding: James D. G. Dunn on Jesus’ Sense of Role and Identity’, in Stewart and Habermas (eds.), *Memories of Jesus*, pp. 227-53; S. T. Davis, ‘James D. G. Dunn on the Resurrection of Jesus’, in Stewart and Habermas (eds.), *Memories of Jesus*, pp. 255-66; G. R. Habermas, ‘Remembering Jesus’ Resurrection: Responding to James D. G. Dunn’, in Stewart and Habermas (eds.), *Memories of Jesus*, pp. 267-85; for Dunn’s response, J. D. G. Dunn, ‘In Grateful Dialogue: A Response to My Interlocutors’, in Stewart and Habermas (eds.), *Memories of Jesus*, pp. 287-323; Keith, *Jesus’ Literacy, passim*; *idem*, *Scribal, passim*; McIver, *Memory, Jesus, and the Synoptic Tradition*, pp. 117-20; J. S. Kloppenborg, ‘Variation and Reproduction of the Double Tradition and an Oral Q?’, ETL 83 (2007), pp. 53-80; *idem*, ‘Memory, Performance, and the Sayings of Jesus’, pp. 97-132 (104, 112-17); Eve, *Behind*, pp. 108-15; Bird, *Gospel*, pp. 97-99; Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 48-49, 64-66, *passim*.

738 Bockmuehl, ‘Whose Memory?’, pp. 31-44 (38-39).

739 See e.g. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 173 n. 1: ‘Expressed in very general terms, “tradition” denotes both content and mode of transmission: the content is typically beliefs and customs which are regarded as stemming from the past and which have become authoritative; the mode is informal, typically word of mouth. At one end of its spectrum of usage “tradition” has to be distinguished from *individual memory*, though it could be described as *corporate memory* giving identity to the group which thus remembers.’ Also, Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 178 n. 32, references Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, and Schröter, *Erinnerung*; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 186 talks about ‘[early Christian] teachers *reinforcing* their church’s *corporate memory* of Jesus tradition’; and Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 241, mentions ‘the tradition as *shared memory*’. All italics are mine. Despite the few mentions, references to memory are scarce.

740 Dunn, ‘On History, Memory and Eyewitnesses’, pp. 473-87 (481-82); *idem*, ‘Social Memory and the Oral Jesus Tradition’, pp. 179-94.

memory, and sufficient treatment of important concepts like reconstruction and distortion, easily conveys the impression that Dunn treats memory as a rather simple ‘guarantor of continuity’ from the time of Jesus to the Gospel authors.⁷⁴¹

Dunn’s initial inattention to memory studies has broader implications for his position, which leads to another major criticism. Dunn’s notion that the variations between the Synoptic Jesus traditions cannot be explained through the idea of direct literary copying (or as literary redactions), as one must account for oral retellings, is in need of some revision. First, Dunn himself accepts that Matthew and Luke could have freely edited and reworked the traditions found in Mark; if the two authors knew Mark from memory, they would have had no need to attend Mark’s text closely.⁷⁴² Secondly, the examples of the Synoptic parallels that Dunn gives in support of his theory do not deviate from how ancient authors would have used literary sources; thus, to refer to ‘oral retellings’ in such cases may not be necessary.⁷⁴³

Unlike indicated by Dunn (and subsequently his student Terence Mournet), it cannot simply be assumed that Matthew and Luke, or any given author, would adopt and follow a consistent way of verbatim repetition or paraphrase; this undermines, for example, the notion that Matthew and Luke are relying on ‘oral tradition’ when the degree of verbatim agreement is low in their reproductions of the Q material.⁷⁴⁴ John S. Kloppenborg points to April D. DeConick’s study on human memory and Jesus’ sayings, which not only suggests caution against too optimistic claims about the infallibility of memory but also indicates that even when a person has visual contact with a given source material, he or she easily departs from the exact wording of the sources.⁷⁴⁵

It is no wonder that Bockmuehl, who is in many ways sympathetic towards Dunn’s approach, indicates that Dunn’s emphasis on orality (as derived from

741 Eve, *Behind*, p. 114. Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 1-30, who derives conclusions similar to Dunn’s approach about ‘a synthesis of impact made by Jesus on several occasions’, is much more nuanced in his treatment of memory and its fallibility.

742 Eve, *Behind*, p. 111.

743 Kloppenborg, ‘Variation and Reproduction of the Double Tradition and an Oral Q?’, pp. 53-80; Eve, *Behind*, p. 111.

744 Kloppenborg, ‘Memory, Performance, and the Sayings of Jesus’, pp. 97-132 (104); cf. Dunn, ‘Q¹ as Oral Tradition’, pp. 45-69; *idem*, *The Oral Gospel Tradition*, pp. 80-108; Mournet, *Oral Tradition and Literary Dependency*.

745 Kloppenborg, ‘Memory, Performance, and the Sayings of Jesus’, pp. 97-132 (102-4); DeConick, ‘Human Memory and the Sayings of Jesus’, in Thatcher (ed.), *Jesus, the Voice and the Text*, pp. 135-79.

the notion of ‘oral retellings’) makes the work of traditional Synoptic critics, concerned with sources and redaction, difficult if not impossible.⁷⁴⁶ While Dunn may not, of course, be concerned about this, as he argues for a paradigm shift from an illusion of literary precision and quest for ‘authentic’ material, his view makes one wonder how exactly is any certainty to be had about, say, the hypothetical Q source and the whole two-source theory, which Dunn seems to accept as given. One may legitimately ask whether Dunn’s method is negligent of and does cohere with the literary remains – the actual memory – that is available to all.⁷⁴⁷ One may explain any variation between the Jesus traditions through oral retellings, but such explanations easily appear arbitrary.

Dunn’s explanation of variation is further challenged by a notion of stability in oral tradition. According to David C. Rubin’s multiple-constraint theory of stability, some forms of oral tradition can be treated with more flexibility than some written sources. This means that the degree of verbatim agreement between the Synoptic Jesus traditions may not indicate whether the relationship between the variants is textual or oral.⁷⁴⁸

As a result of the lack of theoretical nuance, Dunn seems to have placed too much emphasis on the stability of the Jesus tradition during the early years of the Jesus movement. Eve states that even if ‘the tradition was relatively stable’ when the Synoptic Gospels were written (according to Eve, 70–100 CE), it is neither sure that the tradition remained equally stable during the 40 years before the writing of Mark’s Gospel, nor is it guaranteed that there was only one ‘stable’ version of the Jesus traditions. Dunn’s notion of stability and variation, based on Bailey’s idea of ‘stable core or key in a story’, does not take into account the fact that the changing circumstances and needs of the community may result in a reshaping of the tradition quite quickly, even if the tradition later becomes stable.⁷⁴⁹

746 Bockmuehl, ‘Whose Memory?’, pp. 31-44 (41-42).

747 See Kari Syreeni, ‘Eyewitness Testimony, First-Person Narration and Authorial Presence as Means of Legitimation in Early Gospel Literature’, in S. Byrskog, R. Hakola, and J. Jokiranta (eds), *Social Memory and Social Identity in the Study of Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, pp. 89-110 (89): ‘...our principal evidence from the early Jesus tradition is written texts. Any hypothesis concerning pre-Gospel developments, no matter on how advanced sociological, cognitive or other models they are based, must cohere with the literary remains – the memory that we actually have.’

748 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 100-1, 111; D. C. Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions: The Cognitive Psychology of Epic, Ballads, and Counting-out Rhymes* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

749 Eve, *Behind*, p. 111-12. While criticizing Dunn for his neglect of the ‘oral history’ approach, Witherington, ‘Oral Mystery’, pp. 197-226 (206-7), further criticizes Dunn’s use of Bailey: how is

Dunn's notions of stability of the tradition have a close relationship with his understanding of the early Christian controllers of the tradition. Especially those who emphasize 'oral history' and the role of eyewitnesses have deemed Dunn's picture of the early Christian movement problematic; his notion of the 'apostolic custodians' and references to Peter, James, and John as these 'principal witnesses', is not considered to be enough, or in fact in accordance with Dunn's idea of anonymous *communal* traditioning process.⁷⁵⁰ Dunn's attempt to adhere to both an idea of anonymous community and a notion of individual controllers of the tradition creates a tension that may not be easily reconciled with his notion of 'living tradition'.⁷⁵¹

In light of the criticisms of his view, Dunn does not seem to present sufficient argumentation for his confidence in the continuity of the Jesus traditions. It is noteworthy, however, that he seems to constantly argue against what he considers faulty assumptions and misconceptions of oral tradition in more skeptical earlier scholarship. Regarding the Synoptic Jesus traditions' relationship to historical fact, Dunn's rhetoric hardly leads to naïve conclusions; his treatment of Jesus' trial and death are examples of this.⁷⁵² Read along with his explicit criticism of classic form criticism's tendency to emphasize the creativity of early Christian communities in *Jesus Remembered*, Dunn's later comments, made after engaging social memory theory, indicate that he envisages his own view as a corrective of more skeptical positions; in his criticism, Dunn sees an overemphasis on 'creative, rather than

it that Dunn, who does not believe that clear guidelines for oral traditioning in the ancient world can be drawn (Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 210), nevertheless refers to Bailey's 'anachronistic' and 'anecdotal' model as reliable? Cf. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 209-10. On Dunn's use of Bailey, also see Kloppenborg, 'Memory, Performance, and the Sayings of Jesus', pp. 97-132 (112-17).

750 Bockmuehl, 'Whose Memory?', pp. 31-44 (40-41); Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 257-63 (262-63); Byrskog, 'A New Perspective on the Jesus Tradition', pp. 459-71; also Gerhardsson, 'Secret', pp. 1-18 (17), is very critical of Dunn's viewpoint, concluding, for example, that it is neither 'easy to find evidence for the thesis that *celebrations and other performances* following Bailey's rural model were in fact customary in the Jewish and Hellenistic world to which Jesus and his early adherents belonged', nor 'to produce any evidence showing that Jesus or his disciples and other leading adherents were tellers of the orality type'. Cf. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 180-81.

751 Also, see the perspective of Schröter, 'Remarks on James D. G. Dunn's Approach to Jesus Research', pp. 129-43 (137-141), who argues that Dunn posits a naïve view of early Christian uniformity. According to Schröter, Dunn is not clear about how the Jesus tradition was transmitted during the early decades and how it is possible to refer to a uniform 'faith' of early Christians or the 'impact' of Jesus on early Christians, given the traces of diversity and conflict about Jesus within the Jesus traditions themselves.

752 Cf. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 774-81; Eve, *Behind*, pp. 114-15.

retentive function of memory' and 'interpretative reinforcement' (or distortion) in social memory studies as somewhat reminiscent of classic form criticism.⁷⁵³

Dunn's reassertion, through his notion of the *impact* of Jesus, of Kähler's idea that there is no 'historical Jesus' apart from the Christ of faith is also subject to criticism.⁷⁵⁴ Syreeni argues that Dunn's hermeneutic 'excludes in principle the possibility of reconstructing any "historical" Jesus other than one seen through faith.'⁷⁵⁵ Dunn's position, if taken as an attempt to tie history and faith together *in general*, is thus at risk of fideism. Does Dunn mean to indicate that all interpretations of the Jesus traditions are equal when it comes to knowing anything about the historical figure of Jesus? Surely, this would raise the question as to whether anything can be known of him in the first place. Or does he simply mean to argue that the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith are merged *at the level of the Jesus tradition*? While the notion of Dunn and others is quite plausible, that the historical actuality of Jesus is beyond one's reach – all we have is the historical data to be interpreted – and that the faith of Jesus' first followers needs to be accounted for, the usefulness of Kähler's notion for contemporary scholarship needs to be questioned.⁷⁵⁶ Historical research is always in need of some commonly shared historical criteria if it is to remain meaningful for scholars with different perspectives and faith persuasions; while Dunn would hardly disagree, it may not be helpful to reassert a statement that can easily lead to the charge of fideism.

No matter how one views Dunn's overall argument that the Synoptic Jesus traditions preserve the original memory of Jesus, his work moved the discussion further toward a different paradigm which is not concerned about the historical authenticity of individual sayings or deeds of Jesus. Consequently, it has been suggested that in light of memory studies it is plausible to take Dunn's idea that whatever is characteristic (or relatively distinctive) of the Synoptic Jesus traditions originates from the impact Jesus made on his first followers as a starting point.⁷⁵⁷ Despite its shortcomings and neglect of subtle discussion on the functions of

753 Dunn, 'Social Memory and the Oral Jesus Tradition', pp. 179-94 (180); *idem*, *The Oral Gospel Tradition*, pp. 246; cf. Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 64. Bird, *Gospel*, p. 97, also points out that Dunn argues against any notion of the objective writing of history and against historical skepticism.

754 Cf. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 126-27 (126 n. 99).

755 Syreeni, 'The Identity', p. 1-16 (12).

756 Admittedly, Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 126-27 (126 n. 99), asserts that this is the only point he adopts from Kähler.

757 So Eve, *Behind*, p. 114; cf. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 327-36; Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 10-26.

memory, Dunn's view is important for understanding the larger discussion on social memory and the Jesus traditions.

3.3 RICHARD A. HORSLEY

Richard A. Horsley (b.1939) is one of the first scholars to comprehensively apply social memory theory to the Jesus traditions. He has written extensively on the subjects of oral tradition and performance, social memory, and the socio-political circumstances of first-century Palestine.⁷⁵⁸ Combining John Miles Foley's work on oral performance with social memory theory, Horsley studies the Jesus traditions particularly in the Gospel of Mark and the hypothetical written source Q.⁷⁵⁹ While starting with standard source-critical presupposition, Horsley's work is intended to challenge what he frequently calls 'the assumptions of print-culture'.⁷⁶⁰

758 R. A. Horsley, 'Innovation in Search of Reorientation: New Testament Studies Rediscovering Its Subject Matter', *JAAR* 62/4 (1994), pp. 1127-66; Horsley & Draper, *Whoever Hears*; R. A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001); *idem*, 'Oral Tradition in New Testament Studies', *Oral Tradition* 18/1 (2003), pp. 34-36; R. A. Horsley, J. A. Draper, and J. M. Foley (eds.) *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory, and Mark. Essays Dedicated to Werner Kelber* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006); R. A. Horsley, *Jesus in Context: Power, People, & Performance* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), from which Chapter 6 (pp. 126-45) was previously published as Horsley, 'Prominent Patterns in the Social Memory of Jesus and Friends', in Kirk and Thatcher (eds.), *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, pp. 57-78; *idem*, *Text and Tradition*, from which Chapter 1 (pp. 1-30) was originally published as Horsley, 'Oral Communication, Oral Performance, and New Testament Interpretation', in A. B. McGowan and K. H. Richards (eds.), *Method and Meaning: Essays on New Testament Interpretation in Honor of Harold W. Attridge* (Resources for Biblical Study 67; Atlanta: SBL, 2011), pp. 125-56; Chapter 9 (pp. 198-219) as Horsley, 'The Languages of the Kingdom: From Aramaic to Greek, Galilee to Syria', in Z. Rodgers et al. (eds.), *A Wandering Galilean: Essays in Honour of Sean Freyne* (JSJSup 132; Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 401-25; Chapter 10 (pp. 220-45) as Horsley, 'Oral Performance and Mark: Some Implications of *The Oral and Written Gospel*, Twenty-Five Years Later', in T. Thatcher (ed.), *Jesus, the Voice, and the Text: Beyond "The Oral and Written Gospel"* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008), pp. 45-70; and Chapter 12 (pp. 279-301) as Horsley, 'Oral and Written Aspects of the Emergence of the Gospel of Mark as Scripture', *Oral Tradition* 25 (2010), pp. 93-114; also, for Horsley's overall view of the historical Jesus, see e.g. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003); *idem*, 'Jesus and Empire', in R. A. Horsley (ed.), *In the Shadow of Empire: Reclaiming the Bible as a History of Faithful Resistance* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2008), pp. 75-96; *idem*, 'Jesus and the Politics of Palestine under Roman Rule', in Charlesworth (ed.), *Jesus Research*, pp. 335-60. For helpful recent accounts of Horsley's contribution to the discussion on the transmission of the Jesus traditions, see Eve, *Behind*, pp. 115-23, and more briefly Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 50-51.

759 On Q, initially esp. Horsley and Draper, *Whoever Hears*; on Mark, esp. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*. Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, p. 50, points out that, instead of the questions of the composition of texts, Horsley is more focused on their function 'in their specific sociocultural environments'.

760 E.g. Horsley, *Text and Tradition*, p. 208, and pp. 221-24, where he recognizes the importance of

Reminiscent of Werner Kelber's view, Horsley maintains that the Jesus traditions had their beginnings in an oral culture where the upper classes of society were literate, including some servants and educated slaves, the peasantry being non-literate, including Jesus and the early Galilean Jesus movement.⁷⁶¹ In this culture, most communication was oral, even within the literate elite circles; among peasants written texts were often viewed with suspicion (for instance, as instruments of domination). Generally, written texts' function was to aid memory; they were performed orally.⁷⁶² Horsley argues, based on the work of William V. Harris and Catherine Hezser, for a low level of literacy not only in ancient Greece and Rome (5 to 10 percent), but also in Roman Palestine (only around 3 percent), the birthplace of the earliest Jesus movement and the Jesus traditions.⁷⁶³

Horsley recognizes that knowledge of Israel's sacred traditions was quite widespread among the Jews. This was not, however, due to them possessing sacred scrolls, namely, the written artifacts of which the Hebrew Bible would later be comprised. The scrolls would have been so expensive, complex and difficult to handle that even the Israelite elite would recite and cultivate sacred traditions mainly orally. Horsley argues that not only did many Judean and Galilean village assemblies (synagogues) in second-temple times not own Torah scrolls,⁷⁶⁴ but there was also 'a general lack of scribes in towns and villages'⁷⁶⁵. Horsley finds no unambiguous evidence for the presence of the Pharisees in Galilee (or Galilean synagogues) before or during the time of Jesus.⁷⁶⁶ Since writing was not common in everyday life, most people would become familiar with the contents of Israel's traditions through hearing them recited orally.⁷⁶⁷

Kelber, *Oral and Written*, for challenging 'the dominant orientation toward print culture in the field of biblical studies' by utilizing methods that study the relation between orality and writing, oral tradition, and oral performance.

761 It is central to Horsley that Jesus was *outside* the Jewish scribal elite. Cf. e.g. Gerhardsson's view.

762 See e.g. Horsley, *Jesus in Context*, pp. 89-95; *idem*, *Text and Tradition*, pp. 208-9, 210-12.

763 Horsley, *Jesus in Context*, p. 5; cf. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*; Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*. Especially in his later work, Horsley refers to Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*. See Horsley, *Text and Tradition*, pp. 208: 'the extensive recent survey by Catherine Hezser documents beyond the possibility of continuing denial that in late second-temple and early rabbinic times literacy was limited mainly to scribal circles, and limited in use to documents used by the wealthy and powerful.'

764 Horsley and Draper, *Whoever Hears*, pp. 136-37; cited also in Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, p. 50.

765 Horsley, *Text and Tradition*, p. 214, refers to Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, pp. 118-26, who argues that scribes were rare in rural areas until the third century. On the 'village scribes' with 'little or no education'; also Horsley and Draper, *Whoever Hears*, p. 126.

766 Horsley, *Text and Tradition*, pp. 163-64, 210; for similar points and the historical context of Mark, pp. 257-64 (260).

767 Horsley and Draper, *Whoever Hears*, pp. 125-44; Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, pp. 53-61;

According to Horsley, it was customary to cite tradition from memory in an oral culture. Israelite social memory is displayed in the Gospel allusions and quotations of ‘Scripture’. To illustrate that writing had a symbolic meaning in Israelite oral culture, he considers it likely that, instead of being indications of direct scribal copying, ‘the references to “it is written” or “Scripture” in Judean texts and early “Christian” texts [esp. Mk and Q] are to the *authority* and not to the wording of such a written text.’⁷⁶⁸ Arguing against ‘print-culture’ misconceptions of memory (such as ‘the textual model of memory’, ‘the copy-and-save concept of memory’, and ‘memory as individual’) and the use of the criteria of authenticity,⁷⁶⁹ Horsley applies the sociology of conflict and the anthropology of marginal and oppressed cultures to Galilean village life; he borrows the distinction between the ‘great tradition’ of the official educated dominant elite and the ‘little tradition’ of the oppressed uneducated masses from James C. Scott (b.1936), who has studied the social distribution of power specifically in colonialist contexts of Southeast Asia.⁷⁷⁰ Horsley suggests that the distinction is applicable in ‘traditional agrarian societies [like ancient Galilee] in which urban-based elites rule over and expropriate the produce of peasants who live in semi-self-governing village communities.’⁷⁷¹

Regarding the two strands of tradition, Horsley maintains that, whereas the diverse, complex, and not fixed, ‘great tradition’ of the Israeli elite was at least in part written tradition, the competing ‘little tradition’ was only cultivated orally and existed in the social memory of the illiterate village communities. In ancient Palestine, on the one hand, the ‘great tradition’ would have been used to support the interests of the dominant elite, for example, the power structures

idem, *Jesus in Context*, pp. 57-62, 89-95; *idem*, *Text and Tradition*, pp. 101-2, 109, 125-26, 208-9, 210-12, 214.

768 Horsley, *Jesus in Context*, p. 93-95 (95). Italics original. Also, Horsley and Draper, *Whoever Hears*, pp. 140-44.

769 See Horsley, *Jesus in Context*, pp. 132-34; *idem*, ‘Prominent Patterns’, in Kirk and Thatcher (eds.), *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, pp. 57-78. Horsley takes these flawed models of memory as representative of much of form-critical Jesus scholarship, including the Jesus Seminar (e.g. Crossan), and counters them for instance with Halbwachs’ notion that memory is social in nature; therefore, ‘the memory involved in oral tradition was not a text-like container but a social process’ (Horsley, *Jesus in Context*, p. 132).

770 Horsley frequently refers to the following works: J. C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976); *idem*, ‘Protest and Profanation: Agrarian Revolt and the Little Tradition’, *Theory and Society* 4 (1977), pp. 1-38, *idem*, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); *idem*, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

771 Horsley, *Text and Tradition*, p. 100.

of the Temple system; on the other hand, the 'little tradition' would express the values and concerns of the oppressed peasant community, for instance, through the recitation of relevant parts of Israel's covenant (such as the prophet Elijah's opposition to the oppressive rule of King Ahab). Horsley contends that the 'great tradition' corresponds with the official social memory and transcripts, while the 'little tradition' reflects the anti-hegemonic social memory and hidden transcripts. Nevertheless, the two traditions are parallel in certain ways and in interaction, as, for example, illiterate peasants could become familiar with parts of the 'great tradition' through hearing and recitation.⁷⁷²

Albeit complex and not unitary due to the social diversity of Jewish groups, Horsley asserts that the 'great tradition' can be accessed through the Hebrew Bible and other written texts from the second-temple period, such as some of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Judean texts like *Psalms of Solomon*. However, these texts offer only a limited access to the 'little tradition', as the elite would not have paid much attention to it; in addition to these writings, Horsley posits that the Gospels (esp. Mk and Q) refer to the 'little tradition', and Josephus' accounts of contemporary uprisings in *Jewish War* and *Antiquities of the Jews* indicate what kind of cultural scripts were influential. By way of deduction, Horsley locates the *messianic* and *prophetic* cultural scripts (or patterns of expectation and interpretation)⁷⁷³ among peasants; for example, the stories of Moses' deliverance of Israel from Egyptian slavery and Joshua's conquest of the land provided 'a popular prophetic script', while David's resistance to Philistine oppression functioned as 'a popular messianic script'.⁷⁷⁴

Not dissimilarly to Kelber, Horsley uses Foley's work on oral performance

772 Horsley and Draper, *Whoever Hears*, p. 98-103, 128-32; Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, pp. 156-61 (157-59); *idem*, 'Prominent Patterns', in Kirk and Thatcher (eds.), *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, pp. 57-78 (60-61); *idem*, *Jesus in Context*, pp. 28-30, 146-56, 169-223; *idem*, *Text and Tradition*, pp. 99-122, 125-26, 135, 145, 147-48, 154-55, 163, 211-12, 217-19, 231-32, 265-73, 286-87, 288; also, Eve, *Behind*, p. 116.

773 Horsley understands these cultural scripts in correlation with *framing* and *keying* in social memory theory. E.g. Horsley, *Jesus in Context*, pp. 119-23; also, Eve, *Behind*, p. 117; ch. 3.1 above.

774 Horsley and Draper, *Whoever Hears*, pp. 95-98, 104-22; Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, pp. 231-53; *idem*, *Jesus in Context*, pp. 36-42, 67-71, 119-25, 139-45, 156-61; *idem*, *Text and Tradition*, pp. 99-122.

regarding ‘text’ (or message)⁷⁷⁵, performance arena (or context)⁷⁷⁶, register⁷⁷⁷, and especially metonymic referencing⁷⁷⁸ which refers to ‘a mode of signification wherein the part stands for the whole’ in an oral performance⁷⁷⁹. A central question to Horsley is how the Israelite ‘little tradition’ is metonymically referenced by the Jesus tradition, particularly in Q (for which Horsley suggests a prophetic register) and Mark, both of which originated among the Galilean village peasantry and portray Jesus as the prophetic leader of a covenant renewal movement and a certain type of popular messianic figure. Horsley maintains that the prophetic script of the entire tradition (as it relates to resistance to oppressive rule in particular) is metonymically referenced in those parts of the Q tradition (for him, a sequence of ‘Q speeches’, rather than a series of sayings compiled by a literary redactor)⁷⁸⁰ which present Jesus as ‘accomplishing the prophetically articulated longings of Israel’, for example, by performing healings and exorcisms, and preaching good news to the poor. Also, the allusions to parts of the covenant, for instance, covenantal traditions in Luke 6.20-49, metonymically reference the covenantal renewal.⁷⁸¹

775 Horsley, *Text and Tradition*, p. 159: ‘The first step is to figure out what the shape and content of the [orally-derived] “text” or message communicated [orally] was...in antiquity texts were “inscribed” on the heart (memory) even of the literate (e.g., scribes, Pharisees, rabbis) as much or more than on scrolls.’

776 Horsley, *Text and Tradition*, p. 159: ‘in order to understand a message or communication properly it is necessary to hear it in the appropriate *context*. Context determines the expectation and the appropriate hearing of the message.’

777 Horsley, *Text and Tradition*, p. 160, 161: ‘In order not to be “taken out of context” the message/text must then fit the context, that is, must be in the appropriate *register*...The appropriate register depends on three factors: the subject matter being communicated, who is participating in the communication, and the mode of communication...A certain set of language...is often “dedicated” to a certain context of communication...A particular register of speech is often activated by certain cues, sounds or phrases that set up expectations in the listeners.’

778 Horsley, *Text and Tradition*, pp. 161-64 (162): ‘The traditional oral performer...thoroughly grounded in standard strategies long familiar to his or her collective audience, summons conventional connotations of conventional structures evoking a meaning that is *inherent*...A performance of Jesus’ speeches or of the Gospel of Mark, therefore, would have depended much more heavily on extra-textual factors as meaning was evoked metonymically from the tradition with which the listeners were familiar.’

779 ‘Metonymic reference’ denotes ‘a mode of signification wherein the part stands for the whole’ (Foley, *Immanent*, p. 7), and a text ‘is enriched by an unspoken context that dwarfs the textual artifact’ (Foley, *Immanent*, pp. 40-41). See also Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 205, who sums Foley’s point: ‘Oral traditional texts imply an audience with the background to respond faithfully to the signals encoded in the text, to bridge the gaps of indeterminacy and thus to “build” the implied consistency.’

780 See Horsley, ‘Appendix: Q speeches’, in *Jesus in Context*, pp. 229-45. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 204-5, embraces this notion of Q espoused by Horsley and Draper, *Whoever Hears*.

781 Horsley and Draper, *Whoever Hears*, pp. 160-74, pp. 195-227; Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*,

Horsley avoids any religious or theological readings of Q and Mark, especially such that would view them as foundational documents for the new religion of ‘Christianity’ against ‘Judaism’; he believes, viewed in their proper social context, they address the socio-economic concerns of Galilean village peasants, who were oppressed, for instance, through heavy taxation by Roman and Jewish rule and threatened by the urbanization of Galilee. In this context, Q and Mark emphasize a covenantal renewal through the coming of the ‘kingdom of God’, which Jesus was preaching to the Galilean villagers.⁷⁸² Against this background, Horsley bolsters an image of Jesus the prophetic leader, conveyed by the Jesus tradition in Mark and Q, whose message was inherently political; referring to Scott’s work on the popular politics of resistance, he speaks of ‘Jesus’ bold declaration of the hidden transcript in the face of power’, his confrontation with the Temple and high priesthood in particular, which resulted in his crucifixion and led to the expansion of the earliest Jesus movement from Galilee. Horsley posits that neither would the Jesus traditions have been remembered, nor would Jesus have had any significant historical impact without his program of societal renewal being cultivated by his earliest followers.⁷⁸³

Both Q and Mark are viewed as transcripts of performance, or oral-derived texts, by Horsley.⁷⁸⁴ The speeches in Q record in written form the ‘prophetic’ speeches delivered orally within the earliest Jesus movement in and around Galilee; according to Horsley, the originally Aramaic speeches were put into writing in Greek either through the expansion of the Jesus movement to the Galilean cities of Sepphoris or Tiberias, where Greek was a more prevalent language, or through

pp. 177-210; *idem*, *Jesus in Context*, pp. 65-71, 156-61; *idem*, *Text and Tradition*, pp. 78-79, 123-155 (137-41), 156, 157-64, 249-51; also Eve, *Behind*, pp. 117-18.

782 Horsley contends Galileans to be descendants of the northern kingdom of Israel, brought back under Jerusalem rule and ‘the laws of the Judeans’ as a result of the ‘re-socialization’ by the Hasmonean high priestly regime during the first century BCE. See e.g. Horsley, *Text and Tradition*, pp. 126-27, 163, 209-10.

783 Horsley and Draper, *Whoever Hears*, pp. 46-60; Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, pp. 27-52, 99-148; *idem*, *Jesus in Context*, pp. 1-3, 20-28, 45-47, 54-55, 190-222; *idem*, *Text and Tradition*, pp. 126-27, 163, 209-10.

784 Horsley and Draper, *Whoever Hears*, pp. 6, 166-68. Foley, *Singer*, p. 63, has warned about direct equation of ‘oral derived’ texts with ‘transcripts of oral performance’. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, pp. 61-62, is more careful. J. M. Foley, ‘The Riddle of Q: Oral Ancestor, Textual Precedent, or Ideological Creation?’, in R. A. Horsley (ed.), *Oral Performance, Popular Tradition, and Hidden Transcript in Q* (Atlanta: SBL, 2006), pp. 123-40 (138), repeats the warning against ‘committing to the gospels as transcribed oral performances [which] we cannot responsibly do’. Cited in Rodríguez, *Structuring*, p. 111 n. 74.

the movement's expansion into villages and towns of the surrounding countries (e.g. in Tyre, Sidon, Caesarea Philippi), where Greek was spoken more.⁷⁸⁵

Horsley and Draper analyze parts of Q with the help of Dell Hymes' and Richard Bauman's notions on ethnopoetics, as well as with Foley's views on oral-derived texts.⁷⁸⁶ According to Horsley and Draper, the oral Jesus tradition can be partly accessed through Q; for instance, Draper's analysis of Q 12.49-59⁷⁸⁷ and Horsley's analyses of Q 6.20-49 and Q 12.2-12⁷⁸⁸ illustrate this.⁷⁸⁹ With regard to the contexts of oral Jesus traditions preserved in Q, Horsley indicates that the individual Q speeches, which were delivered on various occasions, can be placed in specific contexts (or performance arenas), for example, covenant renewal (Q 6.20-49), mission and sending of envoys (Q 10.2-16), the arrest and trial of community members (Q 12.2-12), and prophesying against rulers (Q 13.28-29, 34-35). The context of oral performance for the whole Q would have been 'the periodic community and movement meetings'.⁷⁹⁰

Aligning himself with a recent emphasis on performance in the scholarship of the Gospel of Mark, Horsley attempts to strengthen the case made by, for instance, Antoinette Wire that Mark's Gospel was *composed* in oral performance.⁷⁹¹

785 Horsley, *Jesus in Context*, pp. 68-69; *idem*, *Text and Tradition*, pp. 213-15, as well as pp. 215-19, where Horsley attempts to present evidence for 'Aramaic features Discernible in the Greek text of Q 7:18-35'.

786 Foley, Singer, pp. 60-98. Horsley refers to D. Hymes, "In Vain I Tried to Tell You": *Essays in Native American Ethnopoetics* (Studies in Native American Literature 1; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981); *idem*, 'Ways of Speaking', in R. Bauman and J. Sherzer (eds.), *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking* (Studies in the Social and Cultural Foundations of Language 8; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn, 1989), pp. 433-74; Richard Bauman, *Verbal Art as Performance* (Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland, 1977). See e.g. Horsley, *Jesus in Context*, pp. 72-73; *idem*, *Text and Tradition*, p. 167.

787 Horsley and Draper, *Whoever Hears*, pp. 175-94. For instance, alliteration, assonance, rhyme, tonal repetition, parallelism, rhythm and metonymic referentiality are viewed as markers of oral performance.

788 Horsley, *Jesus in Context*, pp. 71-88; *idem*, *Text and Tradition*, pp. 156-74.

789 On the discernment of patterns of oral performance in the 'Q speeches', i.e. the arranging in lines and stanzas (as largely derived from Dell Hymes), see Horsley and Draper, *Whoever Hears*, chs 7-8; Horsley, *Jesus in Context*, pp. 229-45.

790 Horsley and Draper, *Whoever Hears*, p. 169; Eve, *Behind*, p. 119. On Q 12.2-12, also see Horsley, *Text and Tradition*, pp. 169-70.

791 Horsley, *Text and Tradition*, pp. 246-78; cf. Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Case for Mark Composed in Performance* (BPCS 3; Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011). A similar conclusion was presented by Whitney Shiner, 'Memory Technology and the Composition of Mark', in Horsley, Draper and Foley (eds.), *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory, and Mark*, pp. 147-65. Eve, *Behind*, p. 120, is not aware of Horsley's later work in *Text and Tradition*, as he states that 'Horsley himself does not actually claim this [that Mark was composed in oral performance] (so far as I know)...'

Already in his earlier work, Horsley had held that Mark was performed orally from memory by members of early Jesus movements who knew the whole of the Jesus tradition.⁷⁹² In his 2013 text, he goes a step further to argue for the oral-composition and development of Mark on the basis of three basic steps, which can be viewed as a logical result from his earlier work. First, Horsley asserts that what he considers the ‘main plot’ of the Gospel, namely, the dominant conflict between Jesus and the ruling elite, indicates the oral development of the Gospel within the early Jesus movement, despite the complexity of the full Gospel. Secondly, he posits that the story of Jesus’ mission (including the characters, settings, sequence of events) depicted in Mark fits ‘the history of Galilean and Judean people under Roman rule.’ Thirdly, Horsley points to how Mark’s story of Jesus mission of covenantal renewal was rooted in Israelite cultural tradition, particularly Israelite popular tradition ‘as carried in the people’s social memory’, which was sometimes in opposition to ‘the official Judean tradition’ (cf. the notion of metonymic referencing). Mark’s Gospel would have resulted from oral performances by multiple performer-composers in the Markan Jesus movement, which itself was a result of the interaction between Jesus and his followers and opponents.⁷⁹³ By his account of Mark’s oral composition, Horsley attempts to underline the ongoing nature of the oral Jesus tradition; neither Q nor Mark are the end result of oral tradition.

CRITIQUE & EVALUATION

Horsley’s view has attracted both critical and appreciative reactions from other scholars.⁷⁹⁴ To begin with the critical points, Horsley has been taken to task for downplaying the presence of written texts in rural contexts of first-century Judea and Galilee. Rodríguez remarks that, despite Horsley’s acknowledgement that biblical scrolls were available to some Jewish assemblies, he ‘ought to take greater account of the potential for the social function and cultural currency not just of

792 Horsley and Draper, *Whoever Hears*, pp. 157-60; Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, pp. 61-62; *idem*, *Jesus in Context*, pp. 96-102; cf. Eve, *Behind*, p. 120.

793 Horsley, *Text and Tradition*, pp. 246-78 (249-50, 256-73)

794 See e.g. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 56-57, 204-5, *passim*; *idem*, *The Oral Gospel Tradition*, pp. 41-79 (59 n. 65); J. Dewey, ‘The Survival of Mark’s Gospel: A Good Story?’, *JBL* 123/3 (2004), pp. 495-507 (498); Mournet, ‘The Jesus Tradition as Oral Tradition’, in Kelber and Byrskog (eds.), *Jesus in Memory*, pp. 39-61 (51 n. 45, 49, 58 n. 81); Allison, *Constructing, passim*; Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 21-23, 33-34 n. 85, 54 n. 28, 111, 129, 188 n. 48; *idem*, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 50-51; Keith, *Jesus’ Literacy*, pp. 62, 65, 72-73, 74, 79, 189; *idem*, *Scribal*, p. 138; *idem*, ‘Early Christian Book Culture’, pp. 22-39 (34 n. 56); Eve, *Behind*, pp. 120-23.

written *tradition* but of actual written *texts* “to render the actual presence of a text superfluous”.⁷⁹⁵ Horsley’s notion of the symbolic meaning of writing within the Israelite oral culture seems not to do full justice to the picture that emerges from the Jesus traditions, where on occasion the presence, reading, and study of texts is presupposed.⁷⁹⁶ For example, in John 7.15 on Jesus teaching in the Temple, ‘the Jews’ are depicted as amazed at the fact that Jesus ‘knows letters’, indicating that he was thought to have read and studied the biblical texts.⁷⁹⁷

This criticism has to do with Horsley’s view of the early texts of the Jesus movement, particularly Mark and Q, raising the question whether he minimizes the difference between written and oral texts too much. While Horsley’s notion of the symbolic meaning carried by written documents, especially biblical scrolls, is plausible enough, given the oral nature of the culture and low-literacy rates,⁷⁹⁸ he follows Kelber in underestimating the influence of texts and textuality within early Christianity. Early Christian manuscripts of the Gospels, unlike the scrolls of the sacred Scriptures with great symbolic significance, were circulated in the convenient form of codices; this suggests a more significant role for the use of actual *written texts* within the early communities than Horsley allows.⁷⁹⁹ The manuscripts were important for maintaining and articulating the early Christian group identity, which questions Horsley’s notion of treating Mark and Q as mere transcripts of oral performance.⁸⁰⁰

Regarding the ‘oral composition’ of the Gospel of Mark, Horsley’s conclusions are far-fetched.⁸⁰¹ It is one thing to recognize the continuity between Mark’s

795 Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, p. 50-51 (51). Rodríguez’s quotation is from Brian Stock, *The Implication of Literacy*, p. 7. Italics original.

796 Cf. Horsley, *Jesus in Context*, p. 93-95 (95); also, Horsley and Draper, *Whoever Hears*, pp. 140-44.

797 So, despite evidence pointing toward Jesus’ lack of formal education. See Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, p. 51, referring to C. Keith, ‘The Claim of John 7.15 and the Memory of Jesus’ Literacy’, *NTS* 56/1 (2010), pp. 44-63.

798 Here Horsley is on firm ground. See e.g. Keith, *Jesus’ Literacy*, pp. 71-123; *idem*, ‘Early Christian Book Culture’, pp. 22-39 (35-36); Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*; also, Eve, *Behind*, pp. 10-11.

799 Eve, *Behind*, p. 120: ‘Given that Horsley minimizes the difference between oral and written texts to the extent he does, it becomes hard to see why anyone would have bothered to write down Mark or Q in the first place...’ See also Hurtado, ‘Oral Fixation’, pp. 321-40.

800 Keith, ‘Early Christian Book Culture’, pp. 22-39 (34-35, 37); cf. ch. 2.3.3 above.

801 See e.g. Myllykoski, ‘Mark’s Oral Practice’, pp. 97-113 (102-7, 106, 107), who, while sympathetic to many aspects of Horsley’s ideological reading of Mark, argues that ‘[t]he plot of Mark reveals tensions and discrepancies, which speak for the presence of different traditions that originally made sense in different contexts. These signs of discontinuity in the gospel hint at the literary character of its making, since there is no seamless orality behind the text.’ Albeit presupposing ‘a strong output of orality’, the production of Mark’s main plot was probably a literary process.

textuality and oral narrative, namely, the profound influence of orality on the Gospel of Mark,⁸⁰² and another thing to argue for the *oral composition* of the entire text within an anonymous community of multiple performer-composers, as Horsley does.⁸⁰³ That the narrative of the Gospel of Mark exhibits an ‘oral register’ and was composed with an audience of oral performance in mind does not mean that the text itself originated in ‘performance’.⁸⁰⁴

Horsley’s view of Q raises further critical questions. His explanation for the inclusion of what he argues was an Aramaic oral tradition, which employed Israel’s popular or ‘little tradition’ in the Greek text of Q, is found wanting. It is far from clear why the ‘Q speeches’ would have been performed in settings, such as Sepphoris or Tiberias, which differed greatly from rural Galilee, or how well the ‘metonymic referencing’, upon which Horsley places significant emphasis, would have functioned in non-Israelite regions unfamiliar with ‘the Israelite popular tradition’. Horsley produces no sufficient evidence for the suggestion that the Greek-speaking non-Israelite regions in question did adopt Israelite traditions.⁸⁰⁵ To be sure, arguing for a non-fixed composition of Q, namely, that the Q speeches’ development in oral performance happened first ‘in Aramaic in Galilee before continuing in Greek in Syrian villages’, Horsley does point to Aramaic features in the Greek text of Q/Luke 7.18-35 (such as words and phrases with Aramaic background and ‘local color’), but this is hardly enough to confirm the accuracy of his specific reconstruction.⁸⁰⁶

Horsley’s view of Q is further weakened by the vagueness of the settings or contexts that he proposes for the different ‘speeches’. It may be possible to place, for example, Q 6.20-49 in the performance arena of ‘a covenantal renewal ceremony’ and Q 10.2-16 in a context of ‘the commissioning of missionaries’.

802 See Dewey, ‘Oral Methods’, pp. 32-44; Hurtado, ‘Greco-Roman Textuality’, pp. 91-106 (98-99); *idem*, ‘Oral Fixation’, pp. 321-40; cf. ch. 2.3.3 above.

803 Cf. Horsley, *Text and Tradition*, pp. 246-78. Hurtado, ‘Oral Fixation’, pp. 321-40 (322 n. 2) points out that, in addition to Wire, *The Case for Mark Composed in Performance*, this view has been embraced e.g. by J. Dewey, ‘The Survival of Mark’s Gospel’, pp. 495-507 (500); P. J. J. Botha, ‘Mark’s Story as Oral Traditional Literature: Rethinking the Transmission of Some Traditions about Jesus’, *HvTSt* 47 (1991), pp. 304-31, republished in Botha, *Orality and Literacy in Early Christianity*, pp. 163-90 (166).

804 Hurtado, ‘Oral Fixation’, pp. 321-40 (335). Also, Rodríguez, *Structuring*, p. 111, who notes ‘that our gospels are not transcriptions of actual performances, written records of an oral presentation... neither were the gospels intended to function as scripts to facilitate subsequent performances.’ Rodríguez’s specific viewpoint is discussed below in ch. 3.4.

805 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 120-21; cf. Horsley, *Jesus in Context*, pp. 68-69.

806 Cf. Horsley, *Text and Tradition*, pp. 215-19 (215).

However, Horsley's other suggestions seem to simply describe the contents of the speeches, not shedding much light on their possible contexts of performance. The notion of 'periodic community or movement meetings' as the social context of the oral performance of all the speeches one after another is also very vague; it is not supported by any evidence.⁸⁰⁷

Furthermore, it may well be that in his confidence in the hypothetical written Q document, Horsley (and Draper) undermines his very own paradigm which builds so much on orality. Eve is helpful here:

One may also question the propriety of reconstructing an oral performance from a hypothetical reconstructed text such as Q, particularly where a putative tradition of Aramaic-language oral performance in Galilean villages is being proposed on the basis of linguistic features (such as 'alliteration, assonance, rhyme, tonal repetition, parallelism and rhythm') of a reconstructed Greek text.⁸⁰⁸

Unlike Dunn, who at least attempts to recognize the consequences of 'an oral paradigm' for the nature of Q, Horsley's use of a hypothetical Q may undermine his own interest in questioning assumptions of print-culture. It needs to be asked whether it is logically possible, given an orality mindset which argues for primarily oral use of texts in the first-century context, to simply hold on to Q as a *written source* and to the standard Two-Source-Hypothesis.⁸⁰⁹

Horsley's reconstruction of social context surely has its merits, but his view of Mark and Q as fundamentally 'non-theological' texts has been viewed as problematic. While Horsley legitimately pays attention to the presence of the socio-political and economic circumstances of the first-century context, Eve challenges him for reducing the religious element almost completely to politics and economics.⁸¹⁰ As an example of such reductionism, Rodríguez also points to Horsley and Draper's interpretation of Q, which assumes that Q addresses concrete

807 Eve, *Behind*, p. 121.

808 Eve, *Behind*, p. 121.

809 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 121-22; Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 21-23, 33-34 (21): 'Horsley and Draper, too, feel no obligation to even discuss the Two-Source-Hypothesis and, instead, immediately proceed to critique standard approaches to Q (both as a document and as a collection of traditions).' Cf. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 147-49; *idem*, 'Q¹ as Oral Tradition', in *The Oral Gospel Tradition*, pp. 80-108.

810 Eve, *Behind*, p. 122.

socio-economic life, as opposed to Matthew's 'more spiritual and metaphorical perspective'; this view is more asserted than based on argumentation.⁸¹¹ The different perspectives to the traditions may not be mutually exclusive.

Moreover, Horsley's account of 'a Galilean renewal movement' fails to offer any plausible explanation for the transition from the earliest rural Jesus movement(s) to the subsequent early Christianity of Paul and later periods.⁸¹² Horsley seems to alienate Jesus the Jewish prophet of covenantal renewal movement, as portrayed in Mark and Q, from other early Christian beliefs to the extent that the methodological validity of his approach can be questioned.⁸¹³ Horsley asserts rather than argues persuasively that Mark and Q only had 'minimal continuity with later developments' through being absorbed and transformed into Matthew and Luke's gospels.⁸¹⁴

An overemphasis on discontinuity may at least in part result from Horsley's notion of 'great tradition' and 'little tradition', where the Israelite 'old' traditions are heavily stressed. Dunn has argued that Scott's distinction, utilized by Horsley, which is based on Southeast Asian contexts, is not relevant for a Jewish Galilee ruled by a client Jewish king.⁸¹⁵ The possible implausibility or anachronism of Horsley's application of Scott's work has not been addressed by other scholars like Eve, and one cannot help but notice a certain irony in the fact that this criticism comes from Dunn, who himself bases his own view of the transmission of the Jesus traditions on Bailey's 'anecdotal model' which has been fiercely criticized for anachronism.⁸¹⁶ Nevertheless, Dunn's criticism is not entirely without basis, considering the sharp discontinuity in Horsley's model. Is Horsley's use of Scott's model, while certainly consonant with the elite/peasant situation in Roman Palestine,⁸¹⁷ enough to account for both the persistence of old Israelite tradition

811 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 33-34 n. 85; cf. Horsley and Draper, *Whoever Hears*, pp. 195-227 (216-220). Horsley and Draper take, for example, the 'blessings and curses' in Q 6.20-49 as references to concern for 'economic viability' and judgment 'against the rich'.

812 As pointed out by Eve, *Behind*, p. 122, this is admitted by Horsley himself. See Horsley, *Jesus in Context*, pp. 53-54 (53): 'There is no obvious reason to imagine much continuity between any of the early Jesus movements or Christ-believers and what later became established Christianity...'

813 In this sense, Horsley's position does not differ from the approach in Theissen and Winter, *The Plausible Jesus*.

814 Cf. Horsley, *Jesus in Context*, p. 53.

815 Dunn, *The Oral Gospel Tradition*, pp. 41-79 (59 n. 65).

816 Of course, one may wonder if the charge of anachronism can be avoided by anyone attempting to find more recent points of comparison for the first-century situation and transmission of the Jesus traditions. Cf. Gerhardsson's rabbinic model in ch. 2.2.

817 I do not find Horsley's basic application of Scott's notions of 'hidden transcript' and 'discourse of

and the emergence of new Jesus tradition, even if much of the latter should be viewed as reconfiguration of older tradition?⁸¹⁸

Turning to the positive contributions of Horsley's view, despite the overly minimized role Horsley gives to written texts, his reconstruction of the literacy situation of first-century Palestine is generally plausible. This allows him to pay proper attention to the oral nature of the first-century culture. A paradigm shift from a literary mindset which considers the Gospels as literary texts, 'composed at a desk in a scholar's study lined with texts and open to discourse with other intellectuals',⁸¹⁹ in a limited sense, is needed.⁸²⁰ Whether Horsley's emphasis on the rejection of the criteria of authenticity as a way of discussing what parts of the Jesus traditions go back to the historical Jesus is reasonable, is discussed in more detail in connection with other scholars who make similar points.⁸²¹

Horsley's application of social memory to Israel's traditions and the Jesus traditions is also plausible, as it points to a reality where 'the broader social memory of first-century Jews provided categories for their initial reception/remembering of Jesus'.⁸²² Horsley's careful attention to the social, economic, and cultural conditions also allows him to emphasize the importance of Israel's cultural traditions, as far as his use of Scott's work is tenable, as the metonymic referent of much of the Jesus traditions; his notions of cultural ('messianic', 'prophetic', 'covenantal') scripts are also useful for the interpretation of the cultural traditions.⁸²³ Horsley's emphasis on Israelite traditions does not exclude the possibility that parts of Jesus traditions (for instance, a miracle story) may metonymically

dignity' to the Gospels (esp. Mark and Q) to be implausible. See e.g. Horsley, *Jesus in Context*, pp. 187-90; cf. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*.

818 Cf. Dunn, *The Oral Gospel Tradition*, p. 59 n. 65.

819 As phrased by B. Mack, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), pp. 322-323; cited in Rodríguez, *Structuring*, p. 23 n. 54, and R. A. Horsley, 'A Prophet Like Moses and Elijah: Popular Memory and Cultural Patterns in Mark', in R. A. Horsley, J. A. Draper, and J. M. Foley (eds.), *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory, and Mark: Essays Dedicated to Werner Kelber* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), p. 234 n. 5.

820 Eve, *Behind*, p. 122.

821 Cf. the views of Rafael Rodríguez, Chris Keith, Dale Allison and Anthony Le Donne below.

822 Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, p. 62; cf. Horsley, *Jesus in Context*, pp. 140-44; Kirk, 'Memory', in Kelber and Byrskog (eds.), *Jesus in Memory*, pp. 155-72 (168-69); regarding Jesus as 'Son of David', see Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 65-189.

823 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 122-23; the primary reservation for applying Foley's idea of metonymic referencing to the relationship between the Israelite traditions and Jesus traditions is the fact that Foley's performance traditions were different in nature. Horsley and Draper, *Whoever Hears*, pp. 173-74, recognize this.

reference the Jesus tradition as a whole.⁸²⁴

3.4 RAFAEL RODRÍGUEZ

In his 2010 work, *Structuring Early Christian Memory: Jesus in Tradition, Performance and Text*, which is based on his earlier PhD dissertation at the University of Sheffield, Rafael Rodríguez outlines a theoretical framework for studying the New Testament and the Jesus traditions, especially Jesus' healings and exorcisms in the sayings traditions.⁸²⁵ Rodríguez's view, like Horsley's, is informed by both social memory theory and research on oral tradition, the ideas of John Miles Foley in particular. Rodríguez distances himself from the views of Shiner, Horsley and Draper in arguing that the Gospels were not dictated in oral performance, and focuses on how '[o]ral performances installed the Jesus tradition in early Christian collective memory and became vital parts of the traditional milieu in which Jesus' earliest followers lived.'⁸²⁶ Rejecting Kelber's notion of contradiction between written Gospel and oral performance, Rodríguez maintains that the oral Jesus tradition was not silenced by writing, but it continued in memory.⁸²⁷ He speaks of 'the installation of Jesus' in early Christian memory, which is close to Dunn's concept of the impact of Jesus on his earliest followers, only more nuanced, and provides a continuity between oral performances and the written gospels. Further, Rodríguez refers to Samuel Byrskog's notion of *oral history*, namely, that the oral transmission of the Jesus traditions was not a dispassionate and distanced exercise, but rather one where the actual past and the

824 Eve, *Behind*, p. 123. Eve expresses slight skepticism toward 'how much the apparatus of metonymic referencing really adds to what could be said from the perspective of social memory'. He speculates that it may help to recognize aspects of the traditions (such as the phrase 'scribes and Pharisees' or the way miracle stories are narrated) that are metonymically referencing similar phrases or narrative patterns of a performance tradition that is now lost. Albeit speculative, Eve's notion that, instead of a direct allusion to 2 Kings 1.8, the description of John the Baptist's clothing in Mark 1.6 may be a metonymic reference to a typical way of describing prophetic attire in a performance tradition, is possible.

825 Rodríguez, *Structuring*; more recently and strongly from the viewpoint of oral tradition, Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*; see also R. Rodríguez, 'The Embarrassing Truth About Jesus', in Keith & Le Donne (eds.), *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, pp. 132-51; on orality and literacy, *idem*, 'Reading and Hearing in Ancient Contexts', *JSNT* 32.2 (2009), pp. 151-78. Also, see the account by Eve, *Behind*, pp. 123-31.

826 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 3-9 (4); cf. Whitney Shiner, *Proclaiming the Gospel: First Century Performance of Mark* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003); Horsley and Draper, *Whoever Hears; Horsley, Text and Tradition*.

827 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, p. 4-5; *pace* Kelber, *Oral and Written*.

present experience of the tradents were weaved together, as they spoke of Jesus.⁸²⁸

Rodríguez builds his view of the Jesus traditions upon the historical hypotheses that the traditional milieu of development for the earliest Christian movements was oral in nature, with low literacy rates, that the Jesus tradition was robust ‘despite the inaccessibility of its written texts to the majority of the people’, and that the tradition had the potency ‘to foster and sustain social critique among non-/semi-literate groups.’⁸²⁹ Deeming Gerhardsson’s historical model of ‘memorization’ too rigid, Rodríguez refers to Dunn’s view of oral tradition, based on Bailey’s model of ‘informal controlled oral tradition’, as a viable starting point for the discussion on what kind of oral tradition is preserved in the extant texts.⁸³⁰ He does not attempt to study the pre-Gospel oral traditions, or individual oral performances, based on linguistic features (such as formulae, repetitions, rhythmic patterns etc.) but is interested in how the written Gospels, being embedded in and surrounded by the Jesus tradition, as ‘oral-derived texts’, function as *instances* of the Jesus tradition, not as *editions* or *versions* of one another.⁸³¹ Rodríguez views the tendency in Gospel scholarship to utilize textual methods such as redaction criticism, despite the fact that the oral nature of the first-century culture is widely recognized, as problematic.⁸³²

Rodríguez begins his discussion on social memory and the Jesus tradition by noting that the criticisms by Gerhardsson and Byrskog against the ‘collective’ nature of memory (especially, as a reaction to Dunn’s work), while not entirely without warrant, ‘evinced an unfamiliarity with sociological discussions of memory’; memory is often wrongly considered in individual terms.⁸³³ Based

828 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 5-6; cf. Byrskog, *Story as History*.

829 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, p. 23-26 (26); cf. Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 2-10 (3, 4, 5): ‘Scholars estimate that literacy rates in the ancient world were shockingly low... Inhabitants of Roman Judea and Herodian Galilee lived in the shadow of written texts... Even in the shadow of written texts, the earliest Christians continued to place a high value on orally expressed tradition... The earliest Christians nevertheless exhibited a keen interest in written texts from the very beginning... These four points – (1) the low literacy in antiquity, (2) the robust textuality of Hellenistic and Roman Judaism, (3) the preference for direct (oral) authority, and (4) the broad range of early Christian text-production – demonstrate the complexity of the question of communications media (oral, written, and others) among the early Christians.’

830 Cf. the sympathetic discussion of Bailey’s view in Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 47-50.

831 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, p. 25-26, 35-37.

832 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, p. 26-35.

833 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 41-42; cf. Gerhardsson, ‘Secret’, pp. 1-18 (8-9); Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 255; *idem*, ‘A New Perspective on the Jesus Tradition’, pp. 459-71, which react to Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*.

on the work of Maurice Halbwachs, Jeffrey Olick and Richard Jenkins on social memory and social identity, Rodríguez argues that all remembering is social in nature, individual and collective memory being two sides of the same coin, not different phenomena. Individual and social identity and memory are in a constant process of negotiation, being established and shaped in social interaction; neither individual and social memory, nor individual and social identity can be neatly separated from each other and analyzed on their own terms.⁸³⁴

Regarding the relationship between individual and social memory, the social nature of human beings is a fundamental starting point. Even when doing the remembering alone, people do it with reference to their social identities.⁸³⁵ Contrary to the claim that individual and social memory are separate entities to be analyzed apart from each other, Rodríguez reminds that 'both individual and social identity – and memory – are established, shaped and perpetuated in the dynamics of social interaction'; both are being constantly negotiated, resulting from 'a dialectic between the individual and the collective.'⁸³⁶ This means that the memorial narratives the individual tells herself are under constant construction; they interact with feedback and narratives that are received from other people.⁸³⁷ While the synthesis between individual and collective memory and identity must be maintained, the distinction between the two must not be done away with altogether: neither is what goes on in one person's mind obvious to others, nor does the way one person sees herself necessarily match how she is seen by others.⁸³⁸ One must bear in mind Halbwachs' notion of memory as a sociological process, where there is space for the individual.⁸³⁹ Rodríguez summarizes,

834 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 42-50 (42-43); cf. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*; Jeffrey K. Olick, 'Products, Processes, and Practices: A Non-Reificatory Approach to Collective Memory', *BTB* 36.1 (2006), pp. 5-14; *idem*, 'Collective Memory: The Two Cultures', *Sociological Theory* 17/3 (1999), pp. 333-48; Richard Jenkins, *Social Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1996). While viewing Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, as in some ways useful in mapping the discussions on memory, Rodríguez distances himself from Bauckham's way of separating individual and collective memory from each other. See e.g. Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 42-43, 58 n. 41; *pace* Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 312.

835 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, p. 42; Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, p. 38: 'It is in society that people acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories.' Cf. Olick, 'Products, Processes, and Practices', pp. 5-14 (11).

836 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, p. 43, referring to Jenkins, *Social Identity*, p. 20.

837 The references in Rodríguez, *Structuring*, p. 44 n. 8, to the objectivization of knowledge and one of its subsets, memory, through language, discussed by Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction*, pp. 26, 66, 67-68, are specifically helpful for understanding this process.

838 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, p. 44-45; Jenkins, *Social Identity*, p. 30.

839 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 45-46.

‘memory – like identity, religion, economics and politics and so on – is a social phenomenon; collective memory cannot be analyzed as a ‘thing’ over against ‘personal memory’...Social memory is not just a new field within memory studies; it is an approach to memory itself.’⁸⁴⁰

Rodríguez outlines two ways in which memory distortion has been understood in Jesus research. First, there is the view which suggests that the past is derivative of the present and reflects and serves present interests and ideological conflicts; this view is heavily influenced by form-critical perspectives. Second, there is the view which emphasizes the stability and continuity of the past with the present, underestimating the influence of the social realities of the present on the tradition.⁸⁴¹ Rodríguez views the relationship between the past and the present as more complicated, rejecting both a radically constructivist view and any naïve notion about the actual past being preserved; the past is always expressed – and all remembering is rooted – in the present, which means that there is no access to an uninterpreted actual past. Sometimes fabrication and deception in the present, for example, as part of an ideological struggle, even lead to a complete divorce of the present from the actual past. Nevertheless, Rodríguez argues that the past ‘in its pastness’ retains connections to the present to a degree that one should understand distortion ‘in a weak sense’ as ‘transformation,’ having more to do with ‘actualizing the past’s potential than with exerting power over competing images of the past.’⁸⁴²

Rodríguez utilizes Barry Schwartz’s double model of framing and keying to explain how both the past and the present are ‘transformed’ in the process of remembering. The past provides frames in which present experiences can be located and explained as meaningful. Keying links together the present events with the group’s ‘sacred narrative,’ matching the public (or symbolic) models of the past to the present experiences. In collective memory, the past and present are dialectic, as memory distortion works both ways; in other words, a transformation of the meaning of both the past and the present results from processes of framing

840 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, p. 46.

841 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 50-51; cf. A. Kirk and T. Thatcher, ‘Jesus Tradition as Social Memory’, in Kirk and Thatcher (eds.), *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, pp. 25-42 (30, 35). Rodríguez cites Kirk and Thatcher’s treatment of Bultmann as an example of the first view, and Gerhardsson’s view as an example of the second view. As noted above in this study, both views suffer from a shallow treatment of the sociological dynamics of memory.

842 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 51-56 (55-56).

and keying.⁸⁴³

According to Rodríguez, the study of the historical Jesus has often underestimated the stability of social memory in the face of social change. While the past is not preserved in memory in a way that would allow for the separation of historical fact from subsequent interpretation (or investigation of 'objective history'), Schwartz's model indicates that collective memory holds a stable core (a persistent historical reputation or image) which peripheral historical elements are added to or subtracted from. In other words, 'the past persists', even if not always and never perfectly, 'across fluctuations in the present'.⁸⁴⁴

Rodríguez illustrates the point with the three respects, outlined by Schudson, in which the past is resistant to being rewritten by the present interests. First, there are convenient or inconvenient features of the available pasts that become installed in social memory and, despite the passing of time, attract power to themselves; these features resist 'efforts to displace the memory' of an event, even against 'the interests of official power centres'. Second, the past has a psychological impact on individuals and groups, restricting how much present interests can reconstitute the past. Rodríguez appeals to Schudson's dynamics of 'trauma'⁸⁴⁵, 'channel'⁸⁴⁶, and 'commitment'⁸⁴⁷. Third, the existence of rival definitions of the past sets limits to the rewriting of the past; people and groups with alternate and competing definitions of reality and the past constrain each other's efforts to portray the past in self-interested ways.⁸⁴⁸

Rodríguez discusses the social and historical *reputation* of a person as an example of the interpenetration of the past and the present, implying that a persistent historical reputation may constitute a stable historical image or core

843 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 56-57; cf. B. Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 18-19, 225-226 etc.

844 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 59, 62-64. Rodríguez, p. 63, also refers to Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, p. 59: '...Social memory is not stable as information; it is stable, rather, at the level of shared meanings and remembered images'. This statement is balanced by Rodríguez, p. 63 n. 54, with the notion that social memory can be very exact, when it is found socially relevant by people to remember an event in the way it was originally experienced (so Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, p. xi).

845 That is, personally and vicariously experienced, not always negative, consequential events that cannot be ignored without causing anxiety, fear, pain.

846 Or the 'inertial pull' of historical precedent, namely, how earlier, even rare, events are summoned to inform our response to the present issues.

847 Namely, the attachment of an individual or group to identity, character or social reputation.

848 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 59-61; Michael Schudson, 'The Present in the Past Versus the Past in the Present', *Communication* 11 (1989), pp. 105-13 (107-12).

in social memory. Rodríguez laments the shallow treatment of 'Jesus' reputation' by Jesus scholars (especially, in relation to Jesus' healings and exorcisms),⁸⁴⁹ and proceeds to discuss reputation sociologically in light of the works of Schwartz, Fine, and others.⁸⁵⁰ Reputations are socially constructed and shared personas which are embedded within social relations, dependent on social contexts, and 'arise in relation to established images of the past', shaping and constraining 'future images of the past'.⁸⁵¹

Rodríguez observes that the dynamics of *reputational entrepreneurship* are at work when a reputation is being established. 'Reputational entrepreneurs' need to have (1) *self-interest* to construct, propose and defend a historical reputation, (2) the ability to construct a *resonant narrative* to a wider audience, and (3) an *institutional placement*, that is, they 'must occupy an authoritative social position to have their proposal taken seriously by their audience'.⁸⁵²

According to Rodríguez, 'strict constructionism' is not a fruitful approach to social construction and its constraints, as this view, while addressing how a reputation can be manipulated for present purposes, most importantly for the study of the historical Jesus, does not explain why a person becomes a model for the present to begin with.⁸⁵³ Rodríguez emphasizes a contextual constructivist approach, observing that *reputation* 'develops in the nexus of "historical facts" and discursive manoeuvring'; the influence of 'objective factors' should not be downplayed. Rodríguez writes: 'Images of the past are always selective, always interested, but the mediation, selection, and interest of historical events is, usually, *rooted in actual history*'.⁸⁵⁴

While Rodríguez recognizes that the historical reputations of heroic and villainous people are not problematic, he points out that there are difficult pasts and difficult reputations of ambiguous or incompetent people and failures. In such cases, the reasons of failure are remembered and installed in collective

849 Cf. e.g. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 670-94.

850 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 64-80; esp. Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln*; Gary Alan Fine, 'Reputational Entrepreneurs and the Memory of Incompetence: Melting Supporters, Partisan Warriors, and Images of President Harding', *American Journal of Sociology* 101/5 (1996), pp. 1159-93; *idem*, *Difficult Reputations: Collective Memories of the Evil, Inept, and Controversial* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001). Fine, 'Reputational Entrepreneurs', was republished in Fine, *Difficult Reputations*, pp. 60-94.

851 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, p. 64.

852 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 65-67.

853 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 68-69; cf. Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln*, pp. 253-55.

854 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 69-70. Italics are original.

memory, while the individuals themselves may be forgotten; here the dynamics of *social forgetting* come into play. Rodríguez only indicates what this might mean for the study of the historical Jesus in his footnote discussions: Jesus, a Galilean τέκτων, who was executed as a political subversive, had first become the object of collective forgetting due to his presumably difficult reputation, but was later installed as a central feature of collective remembering.⁸⁵⁵

Rodríguez argues that sometimes people with reputations of failure manage to shake off the anonymity and are remembered. Changes in social circumstances and cultural logic can lead to a broad acceptance of what previously seemed a difficult past. Abraham Lincoln and the events of Masada serve as examples. According to Rodríguez, historical reputations are symbolic in nature and often function like rites; they do not forge consensus on what the object of commemoration means, while still promoting social solidarity. There must always be some link between historical reputations and ultimate social values and beliefs that are widely accepted.⁸⁵⁶

Rodríguez turns to the study of oral tradition, arguing that the focus on 'orality', and not so much on social memory theory, in NT studies has caused some confusion. Rodríguez rejects the interpretation of Kelber's work that would take his emphasis on the convergence of transmission and composition in oral performance to mean that oral performance creates tradition *de novo* or *ex nihilo*. The stabilizing role of memory in oral performance must not be downplayed. Yet the Jesus tradition lacked a fixed textual form, as the verbal forms and words necessary for the actualization of the tradition in performance were of secondary importance. Written versions of the Jesus tradition (including the written gospels) were initially received in performance as actualizations of the tradition among other such actualizations.⁸⁵⁷

According to Rodríguez, the variability and stability of the tradition is rooted in early Christian memory, in both the memory of Jesus' teaching and healing activity and the memory of various performances, that is, retellings of that activity. Rodríguez portrays the tradition as the story and memory, which is able to transmit the same thing over and over again despite verbal and structural variability due to the tradition not being confined to the shape of any particular performance. The

855 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 71-76 (74 n. 85, 76 n. 89).

856 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 77-79.

857 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 81-84.

multiplicity of performances, namely, the experience and memory of previous performances, functions as a constraint of future performances; the tradition 'becomes institutionalized over time' through an interplay of stability and fluidity. While certain words and phrases may become important over time, this does not downplay the tradition's multiformity.⁸⁵⁸

Rodríguez applies Foley's work on oral performance, word-power and metonymic referencing to his discussion of the Jesus tradition. He approaches the similarities and differences between the Synoptic Gospels, not as a way of understanding 'the evangelists' editorial practices', but as expressions of the tradition with multiform and variegated instantiation. Foley's notion that in oral performance one part stands for the whole tradition (*'pars pro toto'*) is applicable to the Gospels, which are 'actualizations of the abstract corpus of the Jesus tradition'. Rodríguez argues that the evangelists were not merely authors but tradents and performers of the Jesus tradition, speaking and living within a traditional idiom, before authoring the Gospels.⁸⁵⁹

Rodríguez pays close attention to the engagement of the audience with the tradition in oral performance. In line with Foley, he recognizes that context and words together generate meaning, which means that the audience cannot apprehend the metonymic meaning of the 'words' performed, and the text as a whole, if it is not conversant in the traditional idiom. Rodríguez recognizes Foley's use of Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser's receptionist theory, which emphasizes the multiformity and instability of oral-derived texts in performance when meaning is sought through interpretation, and balances this with Foley's notion that interpretation is constrained by the unifying role of performance and the tradition itself (namely, 'the body of immanent meaning').

This is all theory that works for actual oral performances of a living oral tradition; what about the Gospels, which are *written texts*? Rodríguez employs Foley's 'typological spectrum', which spans from the transcribed performance to 'literary' texts still rooted in oral tradition, arguing that the dynamics of verbal art are at play in all categories along the spectrum. A process of consistency-building is important for understanding verbal art, namely, the audience must be capable

858 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 85-88. An individual healing story, such as the straightening of the 'bent' woman in Luke 13.11-13, would evoke both the contextualizing of Israelite tradition and the whole tradition of Jesus as healer and exorcist. Cf. Horsley's view above.

859 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 89-92.

of both attending to the text's metonymic references and to fill out the lacunae in the text-in-performance through its knowledge of the tradition. Rodríguez emphasizes that research must not only focus on the *composition* of the Gospels but also on their *reception*, as 'the evangelists and their audiences would have been familiar with and participants in oral performances of the Jesus tradition.'⁸⁶⁰

In accordance with Foley's ideas of performance arena and register, Rodríguez argues that the Gospels preserve traces of the traditional register of oral performance. Based on this hypothesis, he attempts to inquire, first, 'how that register incorporates traditional metonymic signification', and second, 'how the texts relate to the oral performative practices of the early communities of Jesus' followers', who performed the Jesus tradition regularly.⁸⁶¹

Rodríguez holds that, while the reception of, for example, Mark's Gospel was not monolithic in nature, there was a continuity between the images of Jesus presented in the written Gospel traditions and the images already established through multiple oral performances.⁸⁶² The early wide-spread acceptance of the written Gospels begs a reasonable explanation, if the texts broke from how Jesus was represented in the earliest Christian communities. Based on this notion of continuity, Rodríguez hypothesizes that the rhetoric of the written Gospel text must signal its context of performance in order to preserve anything of its performance arena; it is, then, the task of the scholar to study how the texts' register 'invokes the performance arena' in a way that its phraseology maintains its metonymic character.⁸⁶³

Rodríguez places the Gospels into the third category of 'Voices from the Past' in Foley's fourfold typology of oral-derived texts, the first two categories being 'Oral Performance' and 'Voiced Texts', and the last one being 'Written Oral Poems'. First, regarding the first category, analyzing the Gospel *texts* differs from analyzing oral performances; second, the Gospels cannot be 'voiced texts' because the Jesus tradition could be orally performed without the presence of the texts;

860 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 93-96 (96); cf. Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance*, pp. 45-46: 'The single performance of a traditional oral work is both something unique, a thing in itself, and the realization of patterns, characters, and situations that are known to the audience through prior acquaintance with other performances.'

861 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 97-102 (101).

862 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, p. 107, notes 'the gospel texts, in their original contexts, would have been read aloud or reperformed in the same or similar contexts in which oral traditions were performed...'

863 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 102-4 (103); cf. Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance*.

third, with regard to the last category, ‘written oral poems’ were ‘written by an author and read by readers’; their word-power is not dependent on oral performance. Rodríguez follows Foley, who also viewed the Gospels as ‘voices from the past’ by which he refers to the Gospels dependence upon oral tradition and their interaction with the written word. According to Rodríguez, this category does justice to the diversity of Gospel composition, performance and reception: these texts were composed for the actualization of the Jesus tradition in oral performance. While, negatively, the category of ‘voices from the past’ does not guarantee much certainty regarding the texts’ composition, performance and reception, it does, positively, enable one to appreciate their complexity and diversity and contexts of origin.⁸⁶⁴

Before moving on to his concrete analysis of the Synoptic materials, Rodríguez draws certain conclusions regarding the continuity between the oral Jesus tradition and the written Gospels. He rejects the notion of the written Gospels subverting the oral Jesus tradition, as the written texts needed to be accepted by the audience; the oral-performative tradition sets limits to the flexibility, while allowing for the presentation of ‘differing, even conflicting, images of Jesus’ by the tradents. The canonical Gospels present traditional performances that were widely accepted; they should be approached as expressions of a living tradition which was formed in multiple contexts through the interaction between performers and audiences, not as literary redactions of one another, although some literary relationship between them is possible.⁸⁶⁵

In light of his detailed discussion on social memory theory, reputation, oral tradition, and the Gospels, Rodríguez analyses three instances from the Synoptic Gospels: the account of Jesus’ response to John the Baptist’s inquiry (Mt. 11.2-6/Lk. 7.18-23), Jesus’ appearance and sermon in Nazareth (Lk. 4.16-20), and the Beelzebul controversy (Mk. 3.20-26/Mt. 12.22-28/Lk. 11.14-20). He is not interested in studying the ‘authenticity’ of these Jesus traditions, namely, whether

864 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 104-6; cf. J. M. Foley, *How to Read an Oral Poem* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), pp. 38-53; *idem*, ‘The Riddle of Q: Oral Ancestor, Textual Precedent, or Ideological Creation?’, in R. A. Horsley (ed.), *Oral Performance, Popular Tradition, and Hidden Transcript in Q* (Atlanta: SBL, 2006), pp. 123-40 (137-38).

865 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 107-13 (112-13). Rather than attempting to make the evangelists’ editorial practices more accessible, Rodríguez aims to ‘suggest something of the tradition of which the individual accounts are singular instances’ (p. 112). An example of this posture is found in Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 32-35, where the parallel accounts in Mt. 5.3/Lk. 6.20 and Mt. 7.11/Lk. 11.13 are compared.

or to which extent they correspond to historical fact; he rather attempts to find out how images of Jesus were utilized by the tradents, and how Israel's traditions functioned for Jesus and his 'reputational entrepreneurs'; how were the events of Jesus' life and his teachings used in contexts where 'Israel's traditions had to make sense'? This model is not concerned about the 'distortion' of Jesus in terms of Israelite traditions or vice versa; emphasis is placed upon the continuity of the presentation of Jesus' reputation.⁸⁶⁶

Rodríguez conducts his analysis on the basis of the notion, also presented by Horsley, that the Gospels are 'little tradition' that metonymically reference Israelite traditions (especially, the Exodus, Isaianic, Elijah/Elisha traditions). First, regarding Jesus' response to John the Baptist's inquiry (Mt. 11.2-6/Lk. 7.18-23), Rodríguez argues that the text portrays Jesus' followers' need to emphasize Jesus' reputation as John's ὁ ἐρχόμενος; their memory of Jesus was in a dialectic interplay with their present concerns, for example, a concern to subordinate John's ministry to that of Jesus.⁸⁶⁷ Second, Rodríguez does not view Jesus' appearance in the synagogue in Nazareth (Lk. 4.16-20) as an actual event in history; rather, the instance is an example of Luke's creative use and reworking of the traditional material found in Luke 7.18-23, a process in which Luke has, for example, paired the image of Jesus reading in the synagogue with the Israelite traditions of restoration in Isaiah 61.⁸⁶⁸ Third, Rodríguez takes the Beelzebul controversy (Mk. 3.20-26/Mt. 12.22-28/Lk. 11.14-20) as an indication about the reality that Jesus' exorcisms were an integral part of the early Christian memory of Jesus; oral-performative dynamics are at play in all three different accounts of the controversy that evince the development of Jesus' reputation as a healer and exorcist in light of Isaianic, Mosaic, and Elijah/Elisha traditions.⁸⁶⁹

In sum, Rodríguez suggests that historical Jesus research has to give up attempts to study the 'authenticity' or 'inauthenticity' of the Jesus traditions found in the Gospels; the criteria of authenticity do justice to neither the Gospel texts in their contexts nor to the nature of the Gospels as oral-derived texts. Social memory theory and study of oral tradition imply that it is illegitimate to view the oral Jesus tradition as a source to be studied as any other (literary) source; the oral dynamics

866 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 117-20.

867 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 120-37.

868 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 138-73. Cf. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 142-45, for another treatment of Luke 4.16-20 from a social memory perspective.

869 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 174-210.

have a bearing on how – or whether – source criticism can be conducted. For example, Rodríguez indicates that Matthew could have used Mark without access to a written copy of Mark's text. Finally, Rodríguez does not find it culturally and historically appropriate to atomize, decontextualize, and then re-contextualize little pieces of the Gospel tradition, an exercise that constitutes an entire scholarly program in the field of the study of the 'historical Jesus'.⁸⁷⁰

CRITIQUE & EVALUATION

In addition to the sympathetic references and evaluations by some,⁸⁷¹ there have been other rather strong general reactions against Rodríguez and others' application of social memory theory to the study of the Jesus traditions and the historical Jesus.⁸⁷² To start with the criticisms, first, some of the same points that were leveled against Dunn's view of the variants of the Synoptic Jesus tradition as 'oral retellings' apply to Rodríguez's view of 'variant instantiations' of the oral Jesus tradition. While Rodríguez's view of the Jesus traditions in the Gospels is more nuanced than Dunn's due to his theoretical emphasis on oral tradition, it can be asked whether Rodríguez also downplays the role of the Gospel authors as *writers of texts*; for example, it is one thing to reject the old notion of oral tradition as one source among many, and another to suggest that the degree of verbatim

870 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 213-25. For Rodríguez's critique of the criteria of authenticity, see Rodríguez, 'Authenticating Criteria: The Use and Misuse of a Critical Method', pp. 152-67; *idem*, 'The Embarrassing Truth About Jesus', in Keith & Le Donne (eds.), *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, pp. 132-51.

871 See e.g. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, *passim*; *idem*, *Scribal*, *passim*; McIver, *Memory, Jesus, and the Synoptic Gospels*, pp. 108, 157, 182; Eve, *Behind*, pp. 123-131; *idem*, *Writing*, pp. 114-19 (esp. on the concept of 'reputation'); Bird, *Gospel*, *passim*; Kirk, *Q in Matthew*, pp. 18, 19, who is both sympathetic and somewhat critical of Rodríguez's view.

872 See e.g. Paul Foster, 'Memory, Orality, and the Fourth Gospel: Three Dead-Ends in Historical Jesus Research', *JSHJ* 10 (2012), pp. 191-227; Tobias Hägerland, 'The Future of Criteria in Historical Jesus Research', pp. 43-65; van Eck, 'Memory', pp. 1-10; Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, V, pp. 17-18, 27-28 (n. 28), 50, 77-78 (n. 57, 58). Since these evaluations mainly concern the views of the other scholars presented and analyzed in this chapter (in particular, Chris Keith, Dale C. Allison, and Anthony Le Donne), the bulk of their critique is discussed in Chapters 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7 respectively. Here it is sufficient to limit the discussion to only a few specific points with regard to Rodríguez's view as presented in *Structuring Early Christian Memory*. To be sure, Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (56-57, 60-61), discusses and criticizes Rodríguez's critique of the criterion of embarrassment in Rodríguez, 'The Embarrassing Truth About Jesus', pp. 132-51; this critique is discussed briefly below in conjunction with the discussion on Dale Allison's view (ch. 3.6). Van Eck, 'Memory', pp. 1-10, also places Rodríguez in the category of the memory approach to the historical Jesus and occasionally refers to his work, but his critique is mainly focused on the views of Chris Keith, Anthony Le Donne, and Jens Schröter.

agreement and agreement in order between Mark and Matthew can be explained without allowing Matthew to access a written copy of Mark. Matthew may have known Mark's text by heart, but this would have required access to the written text at some point.⁸⁷³ This is not to be taken as a dismissal of Rodríguez's application of the study of oral tradition to the Jesus traditions (and the possible need for addressing source critical questions anew),⁸⁷⁴ but rather as a factor which balances one's historical view of the Gospel authors as authors who used literary sources despite being embedded in the oral Jesus tradition.⁸⁷⁵ Despite the relevance of the question, Rodríguez chooses not to pursue whether the standard Two Document Hypothesis should be reformulated or abandoned altogether on the basis of his views, which leaves his view vulnerable to the criticism. Worth mentioning here is Sandra Hübenal, who argues that one cannot approach the historical Jesus simply with sociological approaches to memory, but rather traditional methods of exegesis are to be employed beside a hermeneutical framework of social memory theory in order to study the biblical text as an artifact of social remembering.⁸⁷⁶ Also, there are other scholars who apply theories of orality, oral tradition, and social memory theory extensively to the Jesus traditions but do not share Rodríguez's deemphasis on the source-critical discussions, as is at length demonstrated, for example, by Alan Kirk in his monograph *Q in Matthew: Ancient*

873 So also Eve, *Behind*, pp. 111, 130-31; *pace* Rodríguez, *Structuring*, p. 223; cf. Eve, *Writing*, pp. 39-42, 81-102. However, Eve, *Writing*, p. 39, concludes: 'Given what is known of the ancients' use of texts and their reliance on memory, compositional dependence on memory may well be a better default assumption than visual dependence on a written text constantly consulted during the process of composition.' On the use of sources by ancient authors, also see the critique of Dunn above; Kloppenborg, 'Variation and Reproduction of the Double Tradition and an Oral Q?', pp. 53-80; *idem*, 'Memory, Performance, and the Sayings of Jesus', pp. 97-132 (102-4); DeConick, 'Human Memory and the Sayings of Jesus', in Thatcher (ed.), *Jesus, the Voice and the Text*, pp. 135-79.

874 Cf. Eve, *Behind*, p. 131: 'So perhaps what needs questioning is not so much the fact of literary dependence between the Gospels as what literary dependence might actually mean in this context'. The question is discussed in more detail in Eve, *Writing*, pp. 39-42; cf. Andrew Gregory, 'What Is Literary Dependence?', in Paul Foster, Andrew Gregory, John S. Kloppenborg and J. Verheyden (eds.), *New Studies in the Synoptic Problem* (BETL, 139; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2011), pp. 87-114.

875 Also see Hurtado, 'Oral Fixation', pp. 321-40 (339), who argues that texts were read from manuscripts in early Christian circles; while passages could be recited from memory, actual manuscripts played an important role when entire works were performed.

876 Hübenal, *Das Markusevangelium*; also, *idem*, 'Reading the Gospel of Mark as Collective Memory', in S. Byrskog, R. Hakola & J. M. Jokiranta (eds.), *Social Memory and Social Identity in the Study of Early Judaism and Early Christianity* (NTOA, 116; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), pp. 69-87.

Media, Memory, and Early Scribal Transmission of the Jesus Tradition, which looks ‘for the setting for Synoptic writing among ancient media and memory practices.’⁸⁷⁷ Kirk does, nevertheless, share Rodríguez’s and others’ criticism of the criteria of authenticity.⁸⁷⁸

Second, while Rodríguez’s rejection of the categories of ‘authentic’ and ‘inauthentic’ as well as of the program of ‘atomizing’ the Jesus tradition, which is similar to the views of Kelber, Dunn, Horsley and others that emphasize an ‘orality mind-set’, is in many ways consonant with studies on memory and oral tradition, it suffers from vagueness when it comes to studying the historical Jesus. It is understandable that Rodríguez attacks, for instance, the atomistic use of the criteria of authenticity to access ‘actual history’, but in *Structuring Early Christian Memory* he does not attempt to offer a comprehensive alternative and concrete means for reconstructing the Gospels’ function ‘within their originative contexts,’⁸⁷⁹ or assessing their ‘testimony to the historical Jesus’⁸⁸⁰, both of which he deems important tasks of Gospel and historical Jesus scholarship. It is more than reasonable to bring the contribution of social memory theory and oral tradition to the table. Yet a disinterest in older ways of conducting research does not shed much light on *how* the questions of historical authenticity or actuality should be addressed in Rodríguez’s estimation; it may be that he considers these questions to be of secondary or almost no importance at all for historical Jesus research. These questions require a more clearly focused and theoretically nuanced discussion.⁸⁸¹

Despite these critical points, Rodríguez’s picture of the historical situation in first-century Palestine with relatively low literacy rates, and of Jesus and his

877 Kirk, *Q in Matthew*, p. 1. On Rodríguez, Kirk, *Q in Matthew*, p. 19, states: ‘The problem is that Rodríguez’s pronounced oral/written binary prevents him from finding a place for *written tradition* in the traditional memorial register. Accordingly, while he is able to deliver a robust account of variation in the synoptic tradition, he struggles to explain, and therefore is forced to marginalize, its patterns of agreement, and his case studies are mostly of low-agreement parallels... This criticisms [sic] ought not to overshadow how much Rodríguez gets right.’ Kirk, *Q in Matthew*, p. 19 n. 92 gives more credit to Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, for his ‘more interactive media approach.’

878 See e.g. Kirk and Thatcher, ‘Jesus Tradition as Social Memory’, in Kirk and Thatcher (eds.), *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, pp. 25-42 (33): “[t]radition” and “memory” are not elements of the Gospels that can be pried apart through the application of particular criteria.’

879 Cf. Rodríguez, *Structuring*, p. 221.

880 Cf. Rodríguez, *Structuring*, p. 224.

881 See the discussion below; cf. e.g. Hågerland, ‘The Future of Criteria’, pp. 43-65, who evaluates the recent attempts by e.g. Rodríguez, Keith and Allison to move the discussion on ‘historical actuality’ beyond the criteria of authenticity. Also, see the critical response to Hågerland, in Keith, ‘The Narratives of the Gospels and the Historical Jesus’, pp. 426-55 (430-33).

followers as steeped in an oral culture, is plausible.⁸⁸² Rodríguez is able to avoid the pitfalls of some who overemphasize the oral nature of the culture: unlike Horsley, Shiner and others, Rodríguez does not underestimate the cultural role of written texts for the formation of early Christian identity; he does not argue for the ‘oral composition’ of the Gospels, but rather employs a conception of ‘performance’ that is not limited to ‘oral performance’, but can, as Hurtado notes, ‘encompass practically any conveyance of Jesus tradition in any form.’⁸⁸³ Furthermore, Rodríguez’s focus on oral dynamics, specifically on metonymic referencing, can shed light on how the Jesus traditions relate to Israel’s wider tradition and in what kind of a context the Jesus traditions were performed; in light of his own theoretical framework, Rodríguez’s analyses of the three instances are plausible.⁸⁸⁴

Finally, Rodríguez’s discussion of social memory theory and historical reputation provides a useful framework for addressing the questions of the continuity and discontinuity of the Jesus traditions. While Rodríguez could be more specific about how he relates the discussion on historical reputation to the historical Jesus, the idea of competing historical images (or reputations) of Jesus is a useful category for discussing Jesus of Nazareth.⁸⁸⁵ Rodríguez’s discussion does not underestimate the past’s influence on the present, but recognizes that the past is always an interpreted past. Whatever one’s take is on matters such as the criteria of authenticity, Rodríguez attempts to lay out a conception which overcomes, on the one hand, strict constructivism and presentism, and on the other hand, naïve trust in ‘historical reliability’ or preservation of ‘actual history’ in the Jesus traditions of the Gospels.

3.5 CHRIS KEITH

In his article (2011) and two books on the historical Jesus (2011, 2014), based

882 Again, e.g. Keith, *Jesus’ Literacy*, pp. 71-123; *idem*, ‘Early Christian Book Culture’, pp. 22-39 (35-36); Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*; also, Eve, *Behind*, pp. 10-11.

883 Hurtado, ‘Oral Fixation’, pp. 321-340 (322 n. 1); cf. Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 81-113. Such conception may, of course, raise the question whether Rodríguez’s view is too vague in this regard.

884 Here one needs to remain cautious, bearing in mind that the performance tradition which Foley had in mind differed from the Jesus traditions; also, it is reasonable to ask whether the notion of metonymic referencing is necessary from the viewpoint of social memory theory. Cf. Eve, *Behind*, p. 123.

885 Eric Eve adopts the notion of the construction of reputation in his more recent work on the writing of the Gospels, referring to both Rodríguez and the theorists of historical reputation such as Fine, Ducharme, and Schwartz. See Eve, *Writing*, pp. 114-19.

on social memory theory, Chris Keith outlines an approach to the study of the nature and transmission of the Jesus traditions and the historical Jesus, with a special focus on the question of historicity.⁸⁸⁶ Keith states unequivocally that he joins the 'Jesus-memory approach' to the historical Jesus, as opposed to the dominant 'criteria approach' which attempts to authenticate individual traditions before reconstructing the historical Jesus. It is central to Keith's argument that the latter approach is questionable in its indebtedness to form criticism: the criteria approach, which has been the dominant approach in Jesus studies for over a hundred years, has employed a misguided notion of the nature and development of the Jesus tradition, which results in an inadequate view of the historicity of the tradition. Keith proceeds to show both the indebtedness of this traditional way of doing Jesus scholarship to form criticism and the superiority of the Jesus-memory approach due to its different conception of the Jesus tradition and the task of the historian.⁸⁸⁷

Starting with a rebuttal of what he considers a flawed approach to the Jesus tradition since at least the beginning of the Third Quest, Keith chooses not to treat the criteria of authenticity in detail; he rather focuses on (1) the criteria approach's conception of the composition of the Jesus tradition, (2) the alleged form-critical influence on that conception, and (3) how the historian's task is erroneously defined by such a conception as a method of getting 'behind' the text. Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann serve to demonstrate the form-critical influence on this method. Keith notes, for example, that a central tenet of classical form criticism was that the pre-textual oral tradition ought to be identified in the written Gospel tradition; this notion was based on a sharp distinction between the assumed pre-literary history of the Gospel tradition among early

886 Chris Keith, 'Memory and Authenticity: Jesus Tradition and What Really Happened', *ZNW* 102 (2011), pp. 155-77, which was modified and expanded in Chapter 2 of Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 27-70; also see *idem*, *Scribal*, pp. 67-84; further, *idem*, 'The Claim of John 7.15 and the Memory of *Jesus' Literacy*', *NTS* 56 (2010), pp. 44-63 (55-63); *idem*, 'The Indebtedness of the Criteria Approach to Form Criticism and recent Attempts to Rehabilitate the Search for an Authentic Jesus', in Keith & Le Donne (eds.), *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, pp. 25-48; *idem*, 'The Fall of the Quest for an Authentic Jesus: Concluding Remarks', in Keith & Le Donne (eds.), *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, pp. 200-5; *idem*, 'Social Memory Theory and Gospel Research: The First Decade (Part One)', *EC* 6 (2015), pp. 354-76; *idem*, 'Early Christian Book Culture', pp. 22-39; *idem*, 'The Competitive Textualization of the Jesus Tradition in John 20:30-31 and 21:24-25', *CBQ* 78 (2016), pp. 321-37; also importantly, *idem*, 'The Narratives of the Gospels and the Historical Jesus', pp. 426-55.

887 Keith, 'Memory and Authenticity', pp. 155-77 (155-56); *idem*, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 27-29; also, *idem*, *Scribal*, pp. 73-74.

Palestinian Christians and later textualization of the tradition among Hellenistic Christians.⁸⁸⁸ Keith outlines the primary assumptions of Dibelius' and Bultmann's form criticism that attempted to extract the 'pre-literary Jesus traditions from the written Gospels', concluding that, for the form critics, it was central to the identification of the pre-literary Jesus tradition of the early Palestinian Church to remove 'individual traditions from their narrative contexts in written texts' and reorganize 'them under categories of forms', thereby attempting to get 'through' or 'behind' the text. According to Keith, this methodological assumption has influenced generations of Jesus scholars who have been searching for an entity of tradition that existed prior to the written Gospels, as the assumption was inherited by the criteria approach to the written Jesus tradition.⁸⁸⁹

Regarding the criteria approach, Keith notes that the categories of 'inauthentic' and 'authentic' Jesus tradition correspond 'roughly' to the notions of the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith. These categories are used to indicate whether the sayings and deeds attributed to Jesus in the Gospels originated from the historical Jesus or the theology of the early Christians. The criterion of dissimilarity, for

888 Keith, 'Memory and Authenticity', pp. 155-77 (156-58); *idem*, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 29-32. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 41-50, discusses three 'trends' in Jesus scholarship, which in their own ways reflect 'a return to the written tradition', and have attempted to address the problems related to the criteria of authenticity: (1) those who modify the traditional criteria: for example, instead of using the criterion of dissimilarity which is guilty of the severance of Jesus from both Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity, some would rather positively apply 'the criterion of double similarity/dissimilarity' (e.g. Wright, *Victory of God*, pp. 132-33), and others propose a criterion of plausibility in place of the criterion of dissimilarity (Theissen and Winter, *The Plausible Jesus*, p. 212; Theissen and Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, pp. 116-17); (2) those who reject the criteria altogether because they 'simply do not work', propose a return to the Gospel narratives as they stand, and apply memory studies to the question of the historical Jesus (e.g. D. C. Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth*; *idem*, *Constructing*). Keith views Allison as aligning with the Jesus-memory approach; (3) those who employ memory as an important analytical category and emphasize the impact of Jesus and thus shift critical discussion from Jesus' self-understanding onto others' reception of him (e.g. E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus and the Politics of Interpretation* [London: Continuum, 2000]; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*; *idem*, *A New Perspective*; Hurtado, *Lord Jesus*, pp. 53-54; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*). On what Keith considers 'the demise of authenticity', see Keith, *Scribal*, pp. 78-81; Keith and Le Donne (eds.), *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*.

889 Keith, 'Memory and Authenticity', pp. 155-77 (158-60); *idem*, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 32-35; also, *idem*, *Scribal*, pp. 74-77. These assumptions include the following: first, the Synoptic Gospels are a mix of earlier oral traditions and later early Christian traditions; second, the Gospel tradition developed evolutionarily; third, the interpretations of Jesus in the written tradition originated from later Christians, not from the earliest stages of oral tradition; fourth, the form critic is able to connect Jesus traditions (pericopae, sayings, etc.) in the written Gospels to forms that reflect various *Sitze im Leben* via a circular process; fifth, the present theological convictions of early Christian communities shaped the Jesus tradition; finally, the pre-literary oral Jesus tradition can be separated from the later interpretive work of the Evangelists and their communities. Cf. Dibelius, *From Tradition*; Bultmann, *History*.

example, ‘passes as authentic any tradition that does not comport with the early Church (or Second Temple Judaism)’. Keith acknowledges that the criteria approach does not exclude the possibility that some traditions reflect both the historical Jesus and early Christian identity; the approach is, nevertheless, invalid, as it does not deliver what it promises, namely, authenticity.⁸⁹⁰

Keith argues that it is the task of the criteria to get ‘behind’ the written Gospel texts in order to access the historical Jesus who existed before the later interpretation of him; the material of the Gospels can be connected to the historical Jesus only as far as it passes the criteria of authenticity. This primary task of the criteria approach is based on certain assumptions about the Gospel tradition. First, the Gospel tradition is viewed as a mix of authentic and inauthentic tradition. Second, the earlier authentic traditions absorbed later early Christian interpretive inauthentic traditions. Third, the interpretations of Jesus in the written tradition originate from early Christian communities and elsewhere, not from the historical Jesus; albeit not always stated, the criteria approach (especially, the criterion of dissimilarity) deems authentic only the traditions that are distinct from both early Christian and first-century Jewish identity. Fourth, it is possible to distinguish authentic tradition from inauthentic tradition.⁸⁹¹

According to Keith, there is a striking similarity between how form criticism (especially as represented by Bultmann) and the criteria approach view the historian’s task. Whereas the former attempted to separate ‘the original historical tradition’ from the work of the author, for example, Mark, the latter has simply replaced that original tradition with ‘the historical Jesus’. The substitution of the historical Jesus for the pre-literary traditions, argues Keith, is specifically evident in the development of the criterion of dissimilarity. Bultmann used the criterion to access the original traditional material, such as the state of similitudes during Jesus’ life, but subsequently scholars like Käsemann and Perrin have used the criterion to attain the historical figure of Jesus. This is part of Keith’s argument that the criteria approach grows ‘directly from form-critical soil’.⁸⁹²

890 Keith, ‘Memory and Authenticity’, pp. 155-77 (161-62, n. 22, 23); *idem*, *Jesus’ Literacy*, pp. 35-36. As an example of the standard criteria approach, Keith points to, for example, T. Holmén, ‘Authenticity Criteria’, in C. A. Evans (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Historical Jesus* (New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 43-54.

891 Keith, ‘Memory and Authenticity’, pp. 155-77 (162-63); *idem*, *Jesus’ Literacy*, pp. 36-37.

892 Keith, ‘Memory and Authenticity’, pp. 155-77 (163-64); *idem*, *Jesus’ Literacy*, pp. 37-39; *idem*, *Scribal*, pp. 76-77; *idem*, ‘The Narratives of the Gospels and the Historical Jesus’, pp. 426-55 (437-40); cf. e.g. E. Käsemann, ‘The Problem of the Historical Jesus’, in Käsemann, *Essays on*

Keith lists further assumptions about the nature of the Gospel tradition which are shared by the criteria approach and form criticism despite the former seeking the historical Jesus and the latter seeking the pre-literary Jesus tradition. First, the criteria approach categorizes the written Jesus tradition as authentic and inauthentic in a similar way as form criticism assumes the tradition to be a mix of earlier oral traditions and later interpretive categories. Second, the criteria approach assumes the absorbing of inauthentic traditions in the process of transmission by authentic Jesus traditions much like form criticism assumes that the later early Christian interpretive categories were absorbed by the early Jesus tradition. Third, while the criteria approach assumes that ‘inauthentic Jesus tradition represents the theology of the early Church’, not the historical Jesus, form criticism assumes that ‘the written tradition represents the *Sitze im Leben* in which the tradition was transmitted’, not the earliest stages of the oral tradition. Finally, the criteria approach attempts to separate authentic tradition from inauthentic tradition like form criticism attempted to separate earlier oral tradition from later written tradition. Thus, Keith concludes that ‘*the criteria approach borrows its conception of the Gospel tradition from a methodology that New Testament scholarship largely abandoned decades ago*’.⁸⁹³ Keith regards as one of form criticism’s strongest influences on the study of the historical Jesus the way scholars connect the Jesus traditions in the written Gospels to the historical Jesus only after the traditions have been removed from their interpretative frameworks in the Gospel narratives via the application of the criteria of authenticity.⁸⁹⁴

Keith rejects the so-called presentist view of commemoration (that is, ‘the

New Testament Themes (trans. W. J. Montague; SBT, 41; London: SCM, 1964), pp. 15-47 (36); N. Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 39; also, F. Hahn, ‘The Quest of the Historical Jesus and the Special Character of the Sources Available to Us’, in F. Hahn, W. Lohff, and G. Bornkamm, *What Can we Know about Jesus?* (trans. G. Foley; Edinburgh: Saint Andrew, 1969), pp. 69-86; *idem*, ‘Methodological Reflections on the Historical Investigation of Jesus’, in E. Krentz (ed.), *Historical Investigation and New Testament Faith: Two Essays* (trans. R. Maddox; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), pp. 35-105.

893 Keith, ‘Memory and Authenticity’, pp. 155-77 (164-65); *idem*, *Jesus’ Literacy*, pp. 39-40. Italics are original. Keith refers to Byrskog, ‘Introduction’, pp. 1-20 (19): ‘Today form criticism is being challenged on several – if not all – of its basic tenets...’ Keith, *Jesus’ Literacy*, p. 39, also expands the discussion to the Jesus Seminar’s project of ‘dismantling the Gospels’ in a search for the historical Jesus via authentic tradition, which he believes bears resemblance to Bultmann’s work. See R. W. Funk and the Jesus Seminar, *The Acts of Jesus: The Search for the Authentic Deeds of Jesus* (New York: Harper Collins, 1998). Keith, *Scribal*, p. 78, recognizes John P. Meier as one of the most prominent proponents of the criteria approach.

894 Keith, ‘Memory and Authenticity’, pp. 155-77 (165); *idem*, *Jesus’ Literacy*, pp. 40-41.

present in the past'), which is known as revisionism or constructionism and is derived from 'Halbwachs' prioritization of the present in acts of remembrance'. Keith aligns himself with the continuity perspective (or 'the past in the present'), which criticizes the presentist view for undermining historical continuity altogether. This does not mean a rejection of Halbwachs' idea that memory is conditioned by the present; however, the presentist perspective's dismissal of the role of the past in shaping the memory in the present is questioned, and the social nature of memory and its capability to preserve the past beyond individual existence is emphasized. In line with Zelizer, Schwartz, Schudson, Kirk and others, Keith argues for a continuity perspective which views memory as a more complex social process of mutual influence of the past and the present; 'the past...provides the framework for cognition, organization, and interpretation of the experiences of the present'.⁸⁹⁵ Thus, Keith's view attempts to avoid the extremes of both trying to determine the reliability of the Gospels on the basis of social memory theory and dealing only with the tradition, not addressing the historical Jesus at all.

According to Keith, the written Gospels are 'receptions of Jesus-memory'. Adopting the continuity perspective, he studies the preservation, commemoration, and interpretation of the past of Jesus by early Christians in light of that past and their present. Keith stresses that he is not retreating to 'a literalist approach to the Gospels as pure images' of actual history; in his appropriation of collective memory, he rather attempts to take both the role of the present shaping the past and the role of the past shaping the present seriously. This view results in the rejection of the central tenets of the criteria approach: as all tradition and all memory is a mix of the past and the present, memory is selective, and memories are produced and organized by language and thought categories deriving from the individual's present context, the attempt to search 'authentic' Jesus traditions and separate them from 'inauthentic' traditions is doomed to failure; there simply is no memory, preserved past, or access to it, without interpretation, as all of the Jesus traditions belong to the categories of both 'authentic' and 'inauthentic'.⁸⁹⁶

895 Keith, 'Memory and Authenticity', pp. 155-77 (169); *idem*, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 58-61. The direct quotation is from A. Kirk, 'Social and Cultural Memory', in Kirk and Thatcher (eds.), *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, pp. 1-24 (15). Cf. B. Zelizer, 'Reading the Past against the Grain: The Shape of Memory Studies', *Studies in Mass Media* 12 (1995), pp. 214-39; Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln*; *idem*, *Abraham Lincoln in the Post-Heroic Era: History and Memory in Late Twentieth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); E. Shils, *Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Schudson, 'The Present', pp. 105-13; Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*.

896 Keith, 'Memory and Authenticity', pp. 155-77 (169-70); *idem*, *Jesus' Literacy*, p. 61.

Albeit skeptical about the usefulness of authenticity/inauthenticity language, Keith does not deny the basic thrust of two of the other assumptions of the criteria approach,⁸⁹⁷ but he does question their simplicity. It goes without saying for Keith that the transmitters had an impact on the Jesus tradition, as the criteria approach also recognizes based on the form-critical emphasis on the *Sitz im Leben*. Jesus would simply not have been remembered at all, if it were not for the categories in the present contexts of early Christians. Keith thinks, however, that the criteria approach and form criticism with their presentist perspective do not properly account for the origins of those categories; in their vague appeals to the *Sitz im Leben*, both fail to answer from where the social reality and the structures that form it, derive.⁸⁹⁸

According to Keith, it is crucial to consider what the criteria approach and form criticism do not address. First, the social memory of first-century Jews would have provided the initial categories for the reception and remembering of Jesus; the original interpretations of Jesus by his audience were already impacted by the commemorated past.⁸⁹⁹ Second, the interpretative categories that shaped the Gospel narratives were informed by initial and subsequent receptions of Jesus' life. This means that the process of the development of the tradition cannot be viewed as one where 'inauthentic interpretations' were later attached to an authentic core of earlier tradition, the two being still easily separable and identifiable. Instead, in the process of transmission, there were ever only interpretations and memories of the past to which subsequent interpretations, even contradictory ones, were added through a constant dialogue. Keith argues that the supposedly later inauthentic traditions cannot be simplistically and entirely detached from the earlier stages of the traditioning process. Such attempts lead to unjustified removal of later Christologies from their historical trajectories of progression. The presence of the past should not be undermined by confirming the presence of the present.⁹⁰⁰

897 Namely, that 'authentic traditions absorbed inauthentic traditions in the process of transmission' and that 'the interpretations of Jesus in the Gospels are due primarily to those inauthentic traditions and context(s) that produced them'.

898 Keith, 'Memory and Authenticity', pp. 155-77 (170-71); *idem*, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 61-62.

899 As examples of treatments of first-century Jews' social memory, Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, p. 61 n. 151, refers to Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 65-189, (regarding Jesus as 'Son of David'); Horsley, *Jesus in Context*, pp. 145-45; Kirk, 'Memory', pp. 168-69.

900 Keith, 'Memory and Authenticity', pp. 155-77 (171-72); *idem*, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 62-63; cf. e.g. the critique of the presentist perspective by Halbwachs and Bultmann in Schwartz, 'Christian Origins', pp. 43-56 (49).

As portrayed by Keith, the Jesus-memory approach connects earlier stages of the traditioning process to later stages and the actual past to how it was remembered. There is a connection between the historical Jesus and later Christologies. In other words, the real events of Jesus' life and death, which cannot be directly accessed, triggered interpretations and memories of him by the people who encountered him. The present contexts of those people, including the Jewish typologies and categories, did shape the initial impressions of Jesus; this was the case even for eyewitnesses. Keith draws some general limitations that the actual past imposed upon the initial interpretations and memories: Jesus was not remembered as a sailor, Caesar, or an astronaut, but rather as 'a first-century Jew who lived in Palestine, taught, healed, and got into trouble with Jewish and Roman authorities'. The actual life of the historical Jesus did permit these memories to be set into motion. By insisting that the historical Jesus was capable of triggering such memories, Keith attempts by no means to downplay the existence of competing and contradictory memories and interpretations of Jesus' life; all of the memories contained in the Gospels simply cannot be historically accurate, which means that '[e]arly Christians undoubtedly did remember him incorrectly at times.'⁹⁰¹

Furthermore, Keith distances himself from what he views as 'the criteria approach's fragmentation of the written tradition'. He does not attempt to 'neutralize the interpretations of Jesus' in the written tradition, because he believes that '*the interpretations of the past themselves are what preserve any connection to the actual past*'. A removal of these interpretations results in a removal of 'any bridge to the actual past'. Keith emphasizes in line with Schröter that the actual past can be discussed by scholars, but one cannot get closer to it by dismissing the interpretations of Jesus in the written tradition.⁹⁰² In his article, Keith also points out that this approach shares some common ground with redaction criticism, which is interested in the theological interpretations of the Gospel authors.⁹⁰³

The task of the Jesus historian is, according to Keith, 'to explain the existence of the Jesus-memories in the Gospels', namely, to account for the interpretations in the Gospels without dismissing them or fragmenting them. Again, this task is described in terms of a departure from the criteria approach. First, due to the

901 Keith, 'Memory and Authenticity', pp. 155-77 (172); *idem*, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 63-64.

902 Keith, 'Memory and Authenticity', pp. 155-77 (172-73); *idem*, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 65. Italics are original.

903 Keith, 'Memory and Authenticity', pp. 155-77 (173); cf. Schröter, 'Von der Historizität der Evangelien', pp. 163-212 (205); Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 83.

reality that memory is shaped in the present of the remembering community, the contextual factors shaping the Jesus-memory are to be studied; Jesus-memories must be placed within the contexts of first-century Judaism and the early Church, not distanced from these contexts as does the criterion of dissimilarity. Second, Jesus-memories must be interpreted in their narrative contexts; this is another reason to emphasize understanding the Jesus-memories in their historical contexts. Third, one must admit that the actual past of the historical Jesus cannot be accessed in full; however, this does not mean a complete lack of access to the past because the actual past did happen and some of it was preserved in social memory. By this Keith probably refers to the idea that there is no access to an uninterpreted past. These parameters leave the Jesus historian with the task of positing ‘an actual past that best explains the existence of the Jesus-memories in light of the contexts of remembrance in early Christianity.’⁹⁰⁴

Keith compares the way the Jesus-memory approach relates to the actual past to the text critics’ approach to variant readings. The reading that best explains others is viewed as original. This suggestion had not, according to Keith, drawn much attention from scholars, although the Jesus-memory approach ‘provides a fuller methodological basis’ for such an approach to the historical Jesus.⁹⁰⁵

While recognizing that neither rejecting the criteria approach nor referring to mnemonic evidence is anything new in the study of the historical Jesus, Keith outlines several advantages of the Jesus-memory approach. First, based upon a solid conceptual framework for the nature and development of the Jesus tradition, it offers a plausible historiographical method for approaching how ancient people

904 Keith, ‘Memory and Authenticity’, pp. 155-77 (173-74); *idem*, *Jesus’ Literacy*, p. 66-67. Keith adopts Le Donne’s notion of ‘triangulation’ which refers to the process of establishing different interpretive trajectories of an event in Jesus’ life and claims. It is the historian’s responsibility to account for the relationship between those trajectories, but the process does not identify an exact historical reality; rather the purpose is, in Le Donne’s words, to ‘establish the most plausible intersection between the established trajectories’. While accepting Le Donne’s way of describing the historical task as ‘considering what could have happened in the past to produce the different interpretative trajectories’, Keith disagrees with Le Donne’s appeals to and use of the criteria of authenticity. See Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 85-86, on the criteria of authenticity, pp. 87-88, 176, 252 n. 107, 265, 267.

905 Keith, ‘Memory and Authenticity’, pp. 155-77 (175); *idem*, *Jesus’ Literacy*, pp. 67-68. Keith notes that his own *Doktorvater*, Larry Hurtado, has proposed a similar approach. See L. W. Hurtado, ‘A Taxonomy of Recent Historical-Jesus Work’, in W. E. Arnal and M. Desjardins (eds.), *Whose Historical Jesus?* (Études sur le christianisme et le judaïsme, 7; Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1997), pp. 272-95 (295). Keith also recognizes the similarity of Werner Kelber’s approach to the Jesus tradition in Kelber, ‘Conclusion: The Work of Birger Gerhardsson in Perspective’, pp. 173-206 (204).

appropriated and preserved the past. Second, instead of discussing hypothetical tradition-histories, it ‘locates scholarly discussion on the written texts that scholars have’, thus marking a ‘return to the text.’⁹⁰⁶ Third, this leads to the advantage of avoiding the extremes of both Modernity and Postmodernity, as the Jesus-memory approach takes seriously the notion that historical portrayals are representations of the past, not the actual past itself. For Keith this does not mean that scholars are unwarranted to ‘theorize about the actual past based on the commemorations it produced.’⁹⁰⁷ Keith concludes that his approach affirms form criticism and criteria approach’s ‘best aspect’, namely, their recognition of early Christian interpretative activity, while addressing ‘their worst aspect’, which is their exclusion of the impact of Jesus upon the interpretations of him. Keith believes that the overall implications of his approach challenge the clean distinction between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith.⁹⁰⁸ In sum, Keith’s view indicates that there is no Jesus tradition devoid of theological interpretation.

In his book-length study on Jesus’ literacy and the scribal-literate status, Keith argues for low levels of literacy in first-century Greco-Roman world, including first-century Palestine.⁹⁰⁹ In light of his reconstruction of the first-century Palestinian

906 Keith, ‘Memory and Authenticity’, pp. 155-77 (176-77); *idem*, *Jesus’ Literacy*, pp. 68-69; see also, *idem*, Scribal, pp. 81-84. This notion is made repeatedly by Dale Allison; see e.g. Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth*, pp. 27-31. In terms of Paul Ricoeur, Keith, *Jesus’ Literacy*, p. 44 n. 67, labels this return to the text ‘a second naïveté in critical Jesus research’: ‘Ricoeur’s concept of the second naïveté is concerned with philosophical, theological, and hermeneutical approaches to meaning and language as myth (Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil* [trans. Emerson Buchanan; Boston: Beacon, 1967], pp. 347-57; esp. p. 351). He uses it to propose where readers (can) go once the introduction of criticism destroys the ‘primitive naïveté’ of pre-critical textual encounters. Its relevance in the current discussion is not so much due to its theological/philosophical import as its description of the critical enterprise. Jesus studies have paralleled the path Ricoeur describes. After form criticism and the criteria approach disrupted the narratives of the Gospels and their interpretations of Jesus in search of “history”, scholarship returned to the surface level of the text. This return, however, is not to the original pre-critical position vis-à-vis the text, but to a new understanding in light of what the criteria approach has taught scholars.’ Keith takes the quotation from C. Keith and L. Hurtado, ‘Conclusion: Seeking the Historical Jesus among Friends and Enemies’, in Keith and Hurtado (eds.), *Jesus among Friends and Enemies: A Historical and Literary Introduction to Jesus in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), pp. 269-88 (281-88).

907 Keith, ‘Memory and Authenticity’, pp. 155-77 (177); *idem*, *Jesus’ Literacy*, p. 69; cf. Schröter, ‘Von der Historizität’, pp. 163-212 (205); P. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (trans. K. Blamey and D. Pellauer; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 235-38.

908 Keith, ‘Memory and Authenticity’, pp. 155-77 (177); *idem*, *Jesus’ Literacy*, pp. 69-70.

909 Keith, *Jesus’ Literacy*, pp. 71-123. Keith views his work in continuum with Harris, *Ancient Literacy*; Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth*; Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*; H. Gregory Snyder, *Teachers and Texts in the Ancient World: Philosophers, Jews and Christians* (New York: Routledge, 2000); David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (New York: Oxford

scribal culture and context and social memory theory, Keith attempts to explain the different portrayals of the historical Jesus as to his scribal-literate status. He argues that the question of Jesus' scribal-literate status cannot be answered with a simple affirmation or denial of scribal literacy for Jesus. Keith favors the view that Jesus was not a scribal literate teacher, but nevertheless complicates the question by proposing that the answer Jesus' contemporaries would have given would depend upon whom one asked. The different Jesus-memories in the Gospels and other sources are to be explained by various groups and individuals perceiving different literate skills differently in the first-century Palestinian scribal culture.⁹¹⁰

Keith analyses the accounts of Jesus' return to the synagogue in his hometown Nazareth as a central example of his view that the Synoptic Gospels and John witness to explicit first-century Christian disagreement or confusion over Jesus' scribal-literate status. On the one hand, Mark is at one end of the spectrum in claiming that Jesus was 'not like scribes' (Mark 1.22), but rather identified as a τέκτων, a member of the artisan class, and rejected in his hometown as a synagogue teacher due to this identification (Mark 6.3). On the other hand, Luke removes the charge that Jesus is a τέκτων and portrays him as a scribal-literate teacher who is familiar with Hebrew manuscripts and capable of public reading of Scripture in a synagogue (Luke 4.16-20), suggesting that the rejection of Jesus was not due to his teaching in the synagogue but for his refusal to heal in Nazareth (Lk. 4.23-29). Instead of attempting to establish the more 'authentic' or 'true' portrayal of Jesus and his scribal-literate status, Keith argues that the historical Jesus was capable of producing these contradictory portrayals, that the Markan portrayal was closer to historical reality, and that Luke was not merely inventing his image since different perceptions of Jesus would have existed among eyewitnesses.⁹¹¹ In contrast to the Synoptics that evince for 'a debate over Jesus' scribal-literate status between sources', Keith posits that in John the debate takes place within Jesus' life: John 7.15 indicates that Jesus could inspire both the view that he was uneducated like most Galileans and a reassessment of this view by teaching 'as if he had been

University Press, 2005); R. A. Horsley, *Scribes, Visionaries, and the Poetics of Second Temple Judea* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007); and Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007).

910 Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 124-64, 189-90.

911 Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 124-64, 190; also, *idem*, 'Memory and Authenticity', pp. 155-77 (175-76).

educated.⁹¹²

Keith builds his more recent assessment of the conflict narratives between Jesus and the scribal elite upon this work on Jesus' literacy and social memory theory.⁹¹³ According to Keith, the conflict must be viewed in light of the different perceptions of Jesus, a scribal-illiterate carpenter who occasionally took the position of a scribal-literate teacher, by various groups within Second Temple Judaism.⁹¹⁴ Keith argues that this view of the origins of the conflict is not incompatible with other contributing factors, such as Jesus' identity as a miracle worker, a healer, an exorcist, the Messiah, or a prophet. He does, however, emphasize the importance of Jesus' early career, which led to the conflict, more than previous scholarship. While no direct line can be drawn from the origins of the controversy in Galilean synagogues to the resolution of the controversy on a Roman cross in Jerusalem, historians of Jesus must account for how Jesus became worthy of the attention of the scribal elite in the first place. The early conflicts with the scribal elite, taking place publicly in an honor/shame culture, elicited confusion about Jesus' scribal-literate status and launched hostility against him on the part of the elite. In tracing the roots of the conflict to Jesus and his ministry, Keith distances himself from scholarship that argues for fabrication of the controversy narratives by early Christians against non-Christian Jews. He draws attention to what he calls 'the beginning of the end', namely, 'the escalation of the conflict from initial questioning to outright hostility', and perceives irony in the fact that, in engaging Jesus in public debates over Scripture and authority in order to expose him as not truly a scribal-literate teacher, the scribal elite enabled some audiences to perceive Jesus as exactly that. These conclusions are based on Keith's view of social memory and the hermeneutical process of transmitting the Jesus tradition which allegedly does not disconnect the Gospel narrative entirely from the past; the past and the present are connected in complex ways.⁹¹⁵

912 Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 155-56.

913 Keith, *Scribal*, pp. 109-26, addresses, for example, the following instances of conflict: (1) regarding Scripture: *Torah* (Mk. 10.2/Mt. 19.3-10; Mk 12.18-27/Mt. 22.23-33/Lk. 20.27-40), *The Prophets* (Mk. 7.1-13/Mt. 15.1-9), *The Writings* (Mk 12.35-37/Mt. 22.41/Lk. 20.27, 39); (2) regarding authority: e.g. Jesus' demonstration in the temple: Mk 11:15-17/Mt. 21.12-13/Lk. 19.45-46, Mk 11.27-28 cf. Mt. 21.23/Lk. 20.1-2, Mk 11.29-30/Mt. 21.24-25/Lk. 20.3-4 etc.; in John's Gospel, Jesus' conflict against 'the Jews' (e.g. Jn 5, 10).

914 Keith, *Scribal*, pp. 15-37, 39-65, 155.

915 Keith, *Scribal*, pp. 85-108, 109-26, 127-51, 155-57 (157).

CRITIQUE & EVALUATION

As for scholarly reactions to Keith's view of the Jesus traditions and the study of the historical Jesus, there are those who concur with his reconstruction of the first-century literacy situation and view his application of social memory theory to the study of the Jesus traditions as a positive development,⁹¹⁶ and others who do not find his version of the memory approach to the Jesus traditions entirely convincing or helpful.⁹¹⁷ In this critique and evaluation section, the latter critical responses to Keith are first presented and discussed; then, the contribution of Keith's view to the field of historical Jesus research is addressed.

A significant criticism directed against Keith's proposal has to do with how he links the criteria approach to the Jesus traditions with form criticism, proposing as a result – so the critics say – an inadequate view of the history of Jesus research. Tobias Hägerland recognizes that Keith's view reflects a broader tendency to problematize the criteria of authenticity and re-evaluate the notion of authenticity, although few have taken their criticism as far as Keith, who places the criteria in opposition to the concept of memory.⁹¹⁸ After complaining that the criticisms of the criteria tend to attack the whole idea of the criteria approach, regardless of how the criteria are defined, Hägerland explicates why he finds Keith's argument about the indebtedness of the criteria approach to form criticism problematic (as the former is associated with scholars like Bultmann, Käsemann, Perrin, Meier, and Holmén, and consists of the 'stable core' of the criteria of dissimilarity, multiple attestation, and coherence).⁹¹⁹

Hägerland charges Keith's logic for calling for the abandonment of the criteria approach on the basis of a supposed scholarly consensus that form criticism is thoroughly flawed. Keith is taken to task for quoting only parts of Samuel

916 See e.g. Eve, *Behind*, pp. 10-11, 28-29, 129; *idem*, *Writing*, pp. 1-4 (3), 106; Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 3, 22, 120 n. 5, 10, 121 n. 16, 123 n. 26, 128 n. 34, 134-35 n. 45. The views of Allison, *Constructing*, and Le Donne, *Historiographical*; *idem*, *Historical Jesus*, are in many ways consonant with Keith's basic notions regarding social memory theory. Also, Kelber, Horsley, Dunn, Rodríguez, Allison, and several others share Keith's interest in social memory theory and his skepticism toward the criteria of authenticity. See also Keith and Le Donne (eds.), *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*.

917 Esp. Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (45-47, 49-53); more critically, van Eck, 'Memory', pp. 1-10.

918 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (46-47). Keith and Le Donne (eds.), *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, is a prime example of this tendency.

919 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (48-49), argues that, for example, the criticisms by Allison and Schöter are insensitive to the different ways that criteria are used by scholars like Ernst Käsemann, John Dominic Crossan, and the Jesus Seminar.

Byrskog's and Christopher Tuckett's assessments of form criticism in order to give the impression that the two are completely dismissive of form criticism; however, both Byrskog and Tuckett leave open at least the possibility that there are 'insights of lasting validity' even in early form criticism, although the paradigm in its entirety needs to be modified.⁹²⁰ Keith's rejection of form criticism runs deep and is at least partially unfounded: the criteria of authenticity seem to be deemed invalid simply due to their association with form criticism.⁹²¹

Hägerland's objection to Keith's proposal has to do with the notion that the criteria approach stems 'directly from form-critical soil'.⁹²² While Keith is right in noting that some of the criteria of authenticity were defined and approved by Bultmann, and that form criticism and the criteria approach mirror each other at several points, Hägerland argues that the conclusion does not stand critical scrutiny: Keith does not consider the possibility that the similarities are derived from earlier historical Jesus research. The notion of the Gospels as a mix of authentic and inauthentic traditions was prevalent already in the nineteenth century, for example, in the work of David Strauss.⁹²³ In fact, the form critics did not formulate the criteria, while the development of some of them can be linked to form criticism; for instance, the criteria of dissimilarity, multiple attestation, and coherence have a longer history of use.⁹²⁴

920 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (50-51). Keith, 'The Indebtedness', pp. 25-48 (37), quotes Tuckett, 'Form Criticism', pp. 21-38 (37): 'The various challenges and criticism which have been directed against the model of form criticism as developed by Dibelius and Bultmann are serious. That model, in precisely that form, is probably no longer sustainable,' leaving out 'it is doubtful if we can simply turn the clock back nearly one hundred years and pretend that form criticism has contributed nothing'; and Byrskog, 'Introduction', pp. 1-20 (19): 'Today form criticism is being challenged on several – if not all – of its basic tenets. Scholars have abandoned or modified it.' Keith leaves out what Byrskog (p. 19) means by this modification which 'looks at forms and literary types from the perspective of mnemonic signs or textual effect rather than their one-dimensional correlation with the *Sitz im Leben* of the early church'.

921 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (50-51); cf. ch. 2.1 above. It has to be recognized, however, that Keith, 'The Indebtedness' pp. 25-48 (37-40), does discuss the most common criticisms of form criticism.

922 Cf. Keith, 'Memory and Authenticity', pp. 155-77 (163-64); *idem*, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 37-39; *idem*, *Scribal*, pp. 76-77.

923 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (51-52); see David Friedrich Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet* (2. vols.; Tübingen: Ossiander, 4th edn [reprint of 1st edn], 1840), pp. 100-5. Keith, 'The Narratives of the Gospels and the Historical Jesus', pp. 426-55 (437), admits this. See the discussion below.

924 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (51-52); on the criterion of dissimilarity, e.g. G. Theissen and D. Winter, *Die Kriterienfrage in der Jesusforschung: Vom Differenzkriterium zum Plausibilitätskriterium* (NTOA, 34; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), pp. 28-174; Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu*, p. 103; on the criterion of multiple attestation, e.g. F. C. Burkitt, *The*

As a confirmation of this, Hägerland points to the fact that one of the basic tenets of form criticism stands in an irreconcilable conflict with the criterion of dissimilarity. He challenges Keith's claim that the criteria approach follows form criticism in taking a 'presentist' approach to the relationship between the past and the present, based on the form-critical notions of unflinching correspondence between the literary form of the tradition and the *Sitz im Leben* and the bounding of the contents of the tradition to the interests of the transmitters. Hägerland argues that the criterion of dissimilarity 'operates precisely on the principle that some traditions do not reflect the transmitters' interests'.⁹²⁵ The form-critical idea of *Sitz im Leben* stands, therefore, in contradiction to the criterion of dissimilarity,⁹²⁶ which has been recognized by neither those who use the criteria nor those who reject them.⁹²⁷ Hägerland contends that the fact that 'the probably most important authenticity criterion' cannot be reconciled with the early form-critical understanding of memory and tradition indicates that 'the alleged indebtedness of the criteria to form criticism has been severely exaggerated'.⁹²⁸

Interestingly, despite his criticism of the rejection of the criteria approach by Keith and others, Hägerland is nevertheless willing to recognize the value of the memory approach's general emphasis on the nature of the past as always remembered and interpreted. Memory studies have shown that 'authenticity'

Gospel History and Its Transmission (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1906), pp. 147-68; Heinrich Weinel, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments: Die Religion Jesu und des Urchristentums* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2nd edn, 1913), p. 45; on the criterion of coherence, e.g. Johannes Weiss, *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892). See Anthony Le Donne, 'The Criterion of Coherence: Its Development, Inevitability, and Historical Limitations', in Keith and Le Donne (eds.), *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, pp. 95-114 (97-99).
 925 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (52); cf. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 62-63.

926 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (52-53); T. Holmén, 'Knowing about Q and Knowing about Jesus: Mutually Exclusive Undertakings?', in A. Lindemann (ed.), *The Sayings Source Q and the Historical Jesus* (BETL, 158; Leuven: Peeters, 2001), pp. 497-514 (500): '...if the preserved traditions... are bound to exhibit the theological and social dispositions of their bearers... there simply cannot be traditions that are "dissimilar to Christianity"'.
 927 Hägerland argues that both sides are guilty of adopting the early form-critical notion of memory and tradition, namely, that 'commemoration always takes place in order to serve the interests of those who remember'. On one side, Meier, *A Marginal Jew, IV*, p. 174 n. 125, thinks, for example, that 'in Jesus' prohibition of divorce, discontinuity [=dissimilarity] does not apply to the early church's teaching or actions. We know of Jesus' prohibition of divorce only because the early Christians handed on this teaching'. On the other side, Mark Goodacre, 'Critiquing the Criterion of Multiple Attestation: The Historical Jesus and the Question of Sources', in Keith and Le Donne (eds.), *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, pp. 152-69 (165-67), argues that the criteria of embarrassment and multiple attestation are in contradiction with each other, since multiple attestation does not indicate that a tradition was found embarrassing by the transmitters.

928 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (53).

cannot mean ‘a state of non-remembered, non-interpreted hard facts of the past.’⁹²⁹ One may even take this as a reframing of the authenticity/inauthenticity language, albeit not to the degree Keith has in mind.⁹³⁰

Ernest van Eck expresses, in turn, a much more severe criticism of Keith’s position, as well as of the whole enterprise of employing ‘memory studies’ in the study of the historical Jesus, which he views as ‘nothing else than *Formgeschichte* in a new dress.’⁹³¹ While acknowledging that Keith’s basic understanding of form criticism is correct,⁹³² van Eck argues that form criticism cannot be linked with the criteria approach, as Keith does. Rather, the criteria approach, which should be seen in conjunction with the so-called New Quest or the Third Quest, has *Redaktionsgeschichte* as its point of departure; thus, instead of trying to identify the oral traditions within and ‘behind’ the text, the criteria approach focuses on the literary text, the contribution of its final author, and ‘identifying the most probable earliest tradition in the written tradition’ via *Redaktionsgeschichte* and the use of criteria.⁹³³ Van Eck attempts to demonstrate this by an example: based on the Two- (or Four-) source theory as a solution to the Synoptic Problem, the criteria approach would argue in a study of Matthew that ‘the majority of the sources used by the narrator were not oral traditions behind the text, but written sources such as Mark and Q’, although M (Matthean *Sondergut*) could have

929 See Hägerland, ‘The Future of the Criteria’, pp. 43-65 (62).

930 See below; Keith, ‘The Narratives of the Gospels and the Historical Jesus’, pp. 426-55 (432-33): ‘Such softening claims [including those of Hägerland] for the criteria approach do not align with the logic by which the criteria work...’

931 van Eck, ‘Memory’, pp. 1-10 (2). Van Eck associates the views of Zeba Crook, Paul Foster, Chris Keith, Rafael Rodríguez, Anthony Le Donne, and Jens Schröter with the rise of ‘memory studies’ in historical Jesus research. For a blunt rebuttal of van Eck’s criticism of the memory approach and Keith’s own view, see Keith, ‘The Narratives of the Gospels and the Historical Jesus’, pp. 426-55 (430, 432, 442, 449).

932 Namely, that form criticism is a method which studies how the pre-literary oral Jesus tradition was shaped in the earliest communities due to various *Sitze im Leben* and attempts to separate that tradition from the later interpretations by the Gospel authors and their communities. Cf. Keith, ‘Memory and Authenticity’, pp. 155-77 (160).

933 van Eck, ‘Memory’, pp. 1-10 (4-5). On the one hand, van Eck notes that Rafael Rodríguez, ‘An Uneasy Concord: Memory and history in contemporary Jesus research’, paper presented at the SBL Annual meeting, Memory studies in historical Jesus research; Baltimore, 22–26 November (2013), pp. 1-18 (6), has also confirmed that *Redaktionsgeschichte* is the point of departure for the criteria approach. On the other hand, I find the argument of Keith, ‘Memory and Authenticity’, pp. 155-77 (173), that his Jesus-memory approach shares some common ground with redaction criticism, convincing: it is the purpose of the Jesus-memory approach to study the different theological interpretations of Jesus in the final texts of the Gospels.

partially consisted of oral traditions.⁹³⁴

Van Eck detects a further problem in Keith's notion that the written texts are not the only sources of the past, but additionally one needs to account for the 'past interpretations of the past' in order to study the historical Jesus.⁹³⁵ Ironically, van Eck views these 'interpretations' as exactly the oral traditions that form criticism sought to identify 'behind' the written texts. The memory approach is, according to him, guilty of historical positivism, as it supports the evolutionary development of the Gospel tradition wherein the oral tradition (or memory refraction) 'absorbed elements of the early Church's faith on an inevitable path toward the tradition's textualization.'⁹³⁶ Consequently, the memory approach, rather than the criteria approach, believes that earlier oral traditions (or memories) are present in the Gospels; as van Eck contends that these earlier oral traditions, and the earliest phase of oral transmission as a whole, are not accessible by any means, the memory approach is left with no defined sources to work with, unlike the criteria approach, which can use the written texts as sources that can take one 'closer to the earliest layer of the Jesus tradition.'⁹³⁷

In line with Zeba Crook's view,⁹³⁸ van Eck contends, therefore, that the memory approach to the study of the Jesus traditions and the historical Jesus is reminiscent of the *Old Quest* that employed form criticism, and results in 'a new *No Quest*'; as memory is prone to distortion and it is not possible 'to distinguish between real and distorted memories', the historical reliability of the Gospels is completely questioned.⁹³⁹ Van Eck argues that scholars would be better off if they completely ignored memory studies: memory studies are not needed to reach the conclusion

934 van Eck, 'Memory', pp. 1-10 (5), quoting Kloppenborg, 'Memory, Performance, and the Sayings of Jesus', pp. 97-132 (103-5) to argue for the Synoptics' use of written rather than oral sources.

935 van Eck, 'Memory', pp. 1-10 (5); cf. Keith, 'Memory and Authenticity', pp. 155-77 (169): '...the appropriation of collective memory must account not only for the role of the present in shaping the past, but also the role of the past, and past interpretations of the past, in shaping the present.'

936 van Eck, 'Memory', pp. 1-10 (5) quotes the description of form criticism in Keith, 'Memory and Authenticity', pp. 155-77 (159). Italics are original.

937 van Eck, 'Memory', pp. 1-10 (5-6); therefore, '[m]emory studies, when applied to the study of the historical Jesus, are nothing else than *Formgeschichte* in a new dress.'

938 Zeba Crook, 'Memory theory and the evolution to a New Quest', paper presented at the SBL Annual meeting, Memory studies in historical Jesus research, Baltimore. 22-26 November (2013), pp. 1-22 (3, 12, 13).

939 van Eck, 'Memory', pp. 1-10 (6); cf. Crook, 'Memory theory and the evolution to a New Quest', pp. 1-22 (3, 12, 13); also see Zeba Crook, 'Collective Memory Distortion and the Quest for the historical Jesus', *JSHJ* (2013), pp. 53-76, who argues against the view that would grant optimism concerning the historicity of the Gospels (*pace* Dunn, Bauckham, Le Donne, McIver).

which he believes ‘has been the point of view of the criteria approach since its use of *Redaktionsgeschichte* in the *New Quest* and *Renewed* or *Third Quest*’: ‘[t]o address the problems, experiences and needs of [the specific Gospel] audiences, the Gospel writers told (remembered) or constructed the past in light of the needs of the present in the form of narratives (memories) intended for social formation in the present.’⁹⁴⁰ Thus, van Eck rejects Keith’s criticism that the criteria approach does not begin the quest for the historical Jesus from the portrayals of Jesus available in the sources, but rather in spite of them: taking into account the textual world of the Gospels,⁹⁴¹ the criteria approach rather deems it necessary to get *behind* the text *through* the text.⁹⁴²

There is a lot to unpack in these criticisms of Keith’s view. First, with regard to Hägerland’s criticism, some clarification and nuance regarding the relationship between the criteria of authenticity and form criticism is required, as the criteria of authenticity do not stem from form criticism as directly as Keith’s original argument about the criteria approach’s origins can be taken to suggest.⁹⁴³ To be fair, Keith’s 2016 response to Hägerland’s criticisms sheds more light on the issue.⁹⁴⁴ Keith admits that the post-Bultmannian scholars, in particular Käsemann, Bornkamm, and Hahn, who were demonstrably responsible for the emergence of the criteria approach as a coherent methodology, ‘were not the first to use the terms “authentic” or “inauthentic” for the Jesus tradition, just as they were not the first to formulate criteria for determining either category.’⁹⁴⁵ More to the point, Keith argues that his view is concerned with a macro-level criticism of the criteria approach to the historical Jesus more than with addressing individual

940 van Eck, ‘Memory’, pp. 1-10 (7); cf. Keith, ‘Memory and Authenticity’, pp. 155-77 (168). Van Eck (p. 7) also rejects the criticism of the criteria approach by Hooker, ‘On Using the Wrong Tool’, pp. 570-81 (570), namely, that the criteria approach wrongly uses a literary tool, instead of a historical tool, to study the historical Jesus; in contrast, van Eck argues that ‘a literary tool is needed to postulate something about the historical Jesus’, contending that the memory approach is confused in its use of a historical tool to study literary texts.

941 By which he refers to the Gospel narratives as ‘a mix of received traditions, interpreted from a post-Paschal perspective for a specific audience, at a specific time in a specific location and social situation, for a specific reason’. See the discussion in van Eck, ‘Memory’, pp. 1-10 (6-7).

942 van Eck, ‘Memory’, pp. 1-10 (7 n. 26); cf. Keith, ‘The Fall of the Quest’, pp. 200-5 (202).

943 However, see Keith, *Scribal*, pp. 73 n. 12, 82 n. 49, where Keith admits that ‘aspects of the criteria of authenticity stretch back even further than one hundred years’, and ‘...[not] all scholars applying social memory theory to the Gospels agree with my particular argument that the criteria are an outgrowth of form criticism’.

944 Keith, ‘The Narratives of the Gospels and the Historical Jesus’, pp. 426-55 (430-33, 436-37).

945 Keith, ‘The Narratives of the Gospels and the Historical Jesus’, pp. 426-55 (437). Instead, Strauss and other earlier scholars already employed these terms.

criteria.⁹⁴⁶ This leads the discussion to the epistemological difference that Keith detects between his view and that of his critics who are not willing to discard the criteria of authenticity: due to the criteria approach's alleged roots in the form-critical assumptions about the nature and transmission of the Jesus traditions (specifically, their existence as individual units), Keith does not believe it to be epistemologically possible to combine the use of the criteria and the memory approach; for him it is not enough to state that the meaning of 'authenticity' must be redefined in a more cautious way.⁹⁴⁷

Regardless of this, Keith seems to leave some room for the possibility of combining the criteria approach or at least some elements of it with the memory approach. He admits to be open to the possibility that various aspects of the criteria approach, such as the concept of early Christian embarrassment, may be useful for discussing past plausibility as long as one does not imagine to access the actual past, suggesting that further attention be given to this matter.⁹⁴⁸ This at least makes it possible to entertain the question as to whether more of the criteria are useful than Keith allows. After all, Hägerland and (as will be demonstrated below in the discussion on Allison and Le Donne) those who take seriously the contribution of memory studies, but still adhere to the criteria of authenticity in a modified form, do not believe the actual past can be accessed. Surely, as Keith suggests, further attention must be paid to methodological and epistemological matters by those who aim to integrate the criteria approach with the memory approach; this suggestion as such does not invalidate such efforts of integration.

Second, concerning van Eck's attempt at refuting Keith's view, the assumption that Keith's Jesus-memory approach is merely form criticism 'in a new dress' is problematic because it ignores that, rather than building upon a form-critical presentist view of the transmission of the Jesus traditions, Keith argues for a continuity perspective which is based on Halbwachs' notion that memory is

946 Keith, 'The Narratives of the Gospels and the Historical Jesus', pp. 426-55 (430-32).

947 Keith, 'The Narratives of the Gospels and the Historical Jesus', pp. 426-55 (432-33): 'Such softening claims [including those of Hägerland] for the criteria approach do not align with the logic by which the criteria work to recover the historical Jesus and thus pass too easily over a fundamental theoretical and epistemological difference over how Jesus scholars can approach the historical Jesus and how they use the gospels to do so.' Cf. Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (62, 65). Also, Keith, 'The Narratives of the Gospels and the Historical Jesus', pp. 426-55 (448-49): 'When one removes "authenticity" as a goal for the historical endeavor but continues the means of attaining that goal, it raises the question of where the criteria then lead.'

948 Keith, 'The Narratives of the Gospels and the Historical Jesus', pp. 426-55 (448-49).

conditioned by the present, but nevertheless does not dismiss the role of the past in shaping the memory in the present. This perspective, which is ignored in van Eck's pessimistic evaluation of the memory approach, is well argued for by social memory theorists like Zelizer, Schwartz, Schudson, Kirk, and others.⁹⁴⁹ It does not do justice to Keith's view to link it with a constructivist and presentist view of social memory and label it as form criticism. Contrary to van Eck's suggestion, I find it more plausible to consider the overlap between *Redaktionsgeschichte* and Keith's memory approach, which both aim to study the different interpretations of Jesus in the final texts of the Gospels.

Van Eck's ignorance of the continuity perspective results in his claim that the memory approach, including Keith's view, leads to a new *No Quest* and questioning the reliability of the Gospels as historical sources. The fact that van Eck, following Crook,⁹⁵⁰ laments the impossibility of distinguishing between real and distorted memories in the memory approach evinces a misunderstanding of what Keith means by the 'return to the text'. Keith is neither interested in using the authenticity/inauthenticity language nor is he trying to prove the historical reliability of the Gospels; the Jesus-memory approach questions the use of such language, attempts to prove 'historical reliability', and rather proposes a way of doing historiography without the search for 'authentic Jesus traditions' by accounting for the mnemonic evidence, namely, the contradictory portrayals of Jesus in the Gospels, as there is no access to uninterpreted history or 'the non-remembered past'. It is on these terms that Keith's work should be evaluated.

Even if Keith's characterization and rejection of the criteria approach could in some ways be questioned, his overall approach to the Jesus traditions and the reconstruction of the historical Jesus cannot be dismissed. Whatever one makes of Keith's narrative of the history of Jesus scholarship, and specifically, his views about the origin and uselessness of the criteria approach, his Jesus-memory approach manages to place emphasis on the impact of Jesus on the later interpretations of him, namely, on the fact that there is no such thing available as an uninterpreted history of Jesus. In this sense, to borrow Hägerland's statement, 'business as usual

949 See Keith, 'Memory and Authenticity', pp. 155-77 (169); *idem*, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 58-61; cf. Kirk, 'Social and Cultural Memory', pp. 1-24; B. Zelizer, 'Reading the Past', pp. 214-39; Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln*; Shils, *Tradition*; Schudson, 'The Present', pp. 105-13; Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*.

950 Crook, 'Memory theory and the evolution to a New Quest', pp. 1-22.

in Jesus research is over'.⁹⁵¹

Keith's proposal of the nature and development of the Jesus tradition is capable of producing scholarship that takes the different, even contradictory, portrayals of the level of Jesus' scribal literacy/illiteracy – as well as the depictions of conflict in the Gospel narratives – seriously, offering historical explanations, and does this by incorporating insights from social memory theory in the field of the historical Jesus.⁹⁵² Whether the criteria of authenticity can have any place in conducting the job of a Jesus scholar after the rise of the memory approach is further addressed below in conjunction with the works of Dale Allison, who thinks the traditional criteria are beyond any repair, and Anthony Le Donne, who still finds use for the criteria when studying the nature and transmission of the Jesus traditions in early Christianity.⁹⁵³

3.6 DALE C. ALLISON

Dale C. Allison (b.1955) has formulated another significant application of social memory theory to the study of the Jesus traditions in what promises to be his final book-length treatment of the historical Jesus, *Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History* (2010).⁹⁵⁴ Allison begins by addressing the frailty of human memory: misperception and misremembering are unavoidable, and even

951 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (62).

952 A recent example of applying a memory approach similar to that of Keith to the Gospels and, more specifically, to the parables of Jesus is Zimmermann, *Puzzling the Parables*. See esp. Zimmermann, *Puzzling the Parables*, pp. 57-103, on what he labels a paradigm shift from the 'historical' to a 'remembered' Jesus. This way of studying the parables differs radically from Meier, *Marginal Jew, V*, who adheres to the traditional methods, applying the criteria of authenticity to the parables of Jesus rigorously.

953 One may ask whether those critical of the criteria approach, like Keith, also refer to the principles behind the criteria when making judgments about the historical scenarios related to the mnemonic evidence. In other words, besides his careful reconstruction of the first-century literary contexts, to what extent is Keith's contribution to the scholarly discussion on *Jesus' literacy* due to the *originality* of his 'Jesus-'memory approach', and is it, at least partially, based on his use of the entities of Jesus traditions without invoking the authenticity/inauthenticity language while still applying the principles behind the criteria, say, for example, multiple attestation, dissimilarity and coherence? Cf. the discussion below on Allison's view (ch. 3.6).

954 Allison, *Constructing*, p. ix. Allison had previously presented some of his ideas in Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth*; *idem*, *The Historical Christ and the Theological Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009). Also see Allison, 'How to Marginalize the Traditional Criteria of Authenticity', in T. Holmén & S. E. Porter (eds.), *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus* (4 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 1:3-30, which had been prepared several years prior to the publication; *idem*, 'It Don't Come Easy: A History of Disillusionment', in Keith and Le Donne (eds.), *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, pp. 186-99. Eve, *Behind*, does not discuss Allison's view at length.

eyewitnesses give different accounts of events.⁹⁵⁵ Allison employs memory studies extensively to demonstrate the ‘many sins’ of human memory. (1) Memory is reconstructive, reproductive, and involves imagination; (2) a person’s recall can be altered by incorporation of post-event information, retroactive inference, and social pressure; (3) present circumstances and biases are projected onto past experiences, and former selves are assimilated to present selves; (4) memories become less distinct with time’s passage; (5) memories are displaced as temporal judgments are reconstructive; (6) memories are organized into patterns that advance their agendas by both individuals and collectives as remembering is a way of maintaining meaningful self-identity; (7) competing memories are not rehearsed by communities, and approved remembrance lives on; (8) narrative conventions, such as ‘a neat beginning, a coherent middle, and a resolution that satisfies’, as well as fitting characters, impact memory; (9) subjectively compelling memories, which people are inclined to trust, are ‘decidedly inaccurate.’⁹⁵⁶

Allison’s emphasis on the malleability of memory does not lead him to dismiss the hope of accessing anything about the past, including the historical Jesus. While the deficiencies of recall should ‘profoundly unsettle us would-be-historians of Jesus’, he believes ‘a middle way’ between naïve apologetic trust in the Gospels and hyper-skepticism toward the Jesus traditions can be argued; the

955 Allison, *Constructing*, p. 1, immediately rejects the view that ‘eyewitnesses or companions of eyewitnesses composed the canonical Gospels’, held most prominently by Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*.

956 Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 2-8. Allison cites respectively e.g. Henry L. Roediger and Kathleen B. McDermott, ‘Creating False Memories: Remembering Words Not Presented in Lists’, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* 21 (1995), pp. 803-14; Bartlett, *Remembering*; William F. Brewer, ‘What is Recollective Memory?’, in David C. Rubin (ed.), *Remembering Our Past: Studies in Autobiographical Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 19-66; Elizabeth F. Loftus, James A. Coan, and Jacqueline E. Pickrell, ‘Manufacturing False Memories Using Bits of Reality’, in Lynne M. Reder (ed.), *Implicit Memory and Metacognition* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1996), pp. 195-220; Deborah Davis and Elizabeth F. Loftus, ‘Internal and External Sources of Misinformation in Adult Witness Memory’, in Michael P. Toglia et al. (eds.), *Handbook of Eyewitness Psychology: Memory for Events, Volume 1* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2007), pp. 195-238; Norman R. Brown, Lance J. Rips, and Steven K. Shevell, ‘Subjective Dates of Natural Events in Very Long-Term Memory’, *Cognitive Psychology* 17 (1985), pp. 139-77; Steven Rose, *The Making of Memory: From Molecules to Mind* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), p. 307; M. Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (trans. Francis J. Ditter Jr. and Vida Yadzi Ditter; 1950; repr.; New York: Harper & Row, 1980); Kirk and Thatcher (eds.), *Memory, Tradition, and Text*; Le Donne, *Historiographical*; Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*; Helen L. Williams, Martin A. Conway, and Gillian Cohen, ‘Autobiographical Memory’, in Gillian Cohen and Martin Conway (eds.), *Memory in the Real World* (New York: Psychology Press, 3rd edn, 2008), pp. 63-70.

Gospels do indeed preserve memories of Jesus, although there must be much else mixed in their recollections.⁹⁵⁷ Having articulated his strong misgivings about the traditional criteria of authenticity and scholarly attempts to proceed on the basis of pre-authenticated traditions,⁹⁵⁸ Allison argues that, instead of details, scholars should focus on the big picture, the general impressions of the Jesus traditions; since '[t]he first-century traditions about Jesus are not an amorphous mess', scholars should expect to 'find memory' of Jesus in the themes, motifs, and rhetorical strategies which 'recur again and again' and together 'leave some distinct impressions'.⁹⁵⁹

Allison labels this method which looks for 'macrosamples' in the Jesus traditions the principle of recurrent attestation. For example, the numerous traditions that exhibit Jesus as an exorcist and in a successful combat with Satan create a large pattern which is based on generalities rather than the authenticity of individual units and can lead to the conclusion that 'Jesus was an exorcist who thought of himself as successfully combating the devil'. Another example of this principle is the notion that Jesus regularly spoke about ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, which cannot be accounted for through the criteria of double dissimilarity or multiple attestation, but rather is a topic that 'reappears again and again throughout the tradition'.⁹⁶⁰

In response to Tom Holmén's critique about the general nature of information that recurrent attestation can yield, Allison argues that the method can give more than nonspecific or cursory results; it offers more than a minimalist foundation for reconstructing the historical Jesus.⁹⁶¹ Allison admits that some additional

957 Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 8-10 (9). Allison (p. 9 n. 47) does 'not contend that the evangelists were...amnesiacs'. Regarding the role of the evangelists in molding the Jesus tradition, Allison, *Constructing*, p. 160, argues that 'the Jesus tradition was not, at least for Matthew and Luke, a mere peg upon which to hang their own ideas. They did not just look into the well of tradition and narcissistically see only their own reflections. Instead, they were primarily...exegetes, and they typically contributed to the sayings of Jesus and stories about him by way of "abbreviation and omission, clarification and explanation, elaboration and extension of motif." [The quotation is from Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 224] In other words, their business was largely that of contextualizing the tradition.' Allison assumes the existence of Q source and the Markan priority.

958 For Allison's initial reservations about the standard criteria, see Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth*; later he has abandoned any ambition to redeem the criteria: see Allison, *Constructing*, p. 10 n. 51; *idem*, 'How to Marginalize the Traditional Criteria', pp. 3-30; *idem*, 'It Don't Come Easy', pp. 186-99.

959 Allison, *Constructing*, p. 10-17 (15).

960 Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 17-20 (19). Allison (pp. 17-18) lists several passages in the Synoptic tradition where Jesus is depicted as an exorcist and combating the forces of Satan.

961 Allison, *Constructing*, p. 20; cf. Holmén, 'Authenticity Criteria', pp. 43-54 (47), which originally responded to Allison, 'How to Marginalize the Traditional Criteria', pp. 3-30. Interestingly, Allison, *Constructing*, p. 20 n. 85, states: 'Nothing prohibits those less skeptical of the criteria of

considerations about the tradition are necessary; he is, for instance, willing to argue for the historicity of the twelve disciples and Jesus as the originator of most of the sayings in Luke's Sermon on the Plain and elsewhere, and accepts the formulation of certain tradition histories as aids, his belief in the Q source being an example of this. Furthermore, Allison aligns his method with E. P. Sanders' argument in *Jesus and Judaism*, namely, that one ought not to start by the sayings supposedly authenticated by the criteria: it is more fruitful, via abduction, to look for a Jesus who makes sense of what is otherwise known of Judaism and early Christianity.⁹⁶²

Besides Sanders' chief facts about Jesus' life (Jesus was a Galilean preacher and healer who submitted to John's baptism and limited his activity to Israel, etc.),⁹⁶³ Allison suggests with slightly varying confidence that (1) some items (esp. sayings) in the Jesus traditions seem to have been designed to be remembered (such as 'Love your enemies'), (2) Jesus was an itinerant teacher whose committed supporters must have become familiar with his standard teachings, and (3) some of Jesus' sympathizers extended Jesus' ministry through their own missional activities.⁹⁶⁴ Allison suggests throughout his work that, according to the early traditions, Jesus displayed apocalyptic expectations, viewed himself at the centre of God's activity in the world, and anticipated and accepted his coming execution.⁹⁶⁵

Allison also addresses the objection that modern studies on memory cannot be used to draw historical conclusions about the Jesus traditions in ancient contexts. He argues that the 'sins of memory' are not limited to modern times, and 'the distinction between detailed memories and more generalized recall' is applicable to early Christian texts. While admitting that early Christians whose identity was largely dependent upon their view of the Jesus tradition would not have accepted

authenticity from employing them in connection with what I have called "recurrent attestation".
962 Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 21-22; cf. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, pp. 4-5, 15-16, 18-22. Allison (p. 22 n. 93) notes that this final point partially corresponds to 'historical plausibility' in Theissen and Winter, *The Plausible Jesus*.

963 Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, pp. 4-5, 15-16, 18-22.

964 Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 23-25. Allison (p. 23) is in agreement with C. H. Dodd, *The Founder of Christianity* (London: Fontana, 1973), p. 33, who argued that when allowing for the distortions of the tradition, 'it remains that the first three gospels offer a body of sayings on the whole so consistent, so coherent, and withal so distinctive in manner, style, and content, that no reasonable critics should doubt, whatever reservations he may have about individual sayings, that we find reflected here the thought of a single, unique teacher'.

965 Allison, *Constructing*, *passim*; as noted also by Rafael Rodríguez, 'Jesus as his Friends Remembered Him A Review of Dale Allison's *Constructing Jesus*', *JSHJ* 12 (2014), pp. 224-44 (230).

‘major divergencies’,⁹⁶⁶ Allison emphasizes the variability of the tradition. Tradents would introduce changes to the tradition in an oral culture; the differences between the Gospels, the lack of verbatim repetition, or the existence of the Fourth Gospel cannot be accounted for without a notion that each oral performance was to some degree new. Selective recall and distortion would have played a key role even among eyewitnesses, as any retelling of the past would be influenced by (1) the prospect of there being an audience, (2) the aims of a speaker, (3) expectations of the interests and attitudes of the listeners, and (4) the reactions of the audience. It was not the intention of early Christians, concludes Allison, to memorize the Jesus tradition verbatim; and while the tradition had its origins in the acts of recall by early Christian leaders, their memories ‘must have been subject to all the failures and biases that modern science has so helpfully if disturbingly exposed.’⁹⁶⁷

Despite the emphasis on the unreliability of memory, Allison attempts to offer a positive contribution to the study of the Jesus traditions and the historical Jesus on the basis of the principle of recurrent attestation.⁹⁶⁸ Allison spends nearly 200 pages arguing for a historical Jesus who had an ‘apocalyptic eschatology’; he lists thirty-two traditions in support of his argument.⁹⁶⁹ In the two excursuses that follow, Allison argues for the recurrent attestation of some aspects of Jesus’ eschatology. He first rejects the standard lexicographical interpretation of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ presented, for instance, in BDAG as ‘God’s dynamic activity as ruler’; Allison argues that in the Jesus tradition the phrase stands for both rule and realm and ‘refers principally to the future time when and to the future place where the petition “Your kingdom come” will no longer need to be uttered.’⁹⁷⁰ In the latter excursus, Allison argues on the basis of the recurrently attested material

966 Allison, *Constructing*, p. 29; cf. Dunn, ‘Social Memory’, in Barton, Stuckenbruck and Wold (eds.), *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity*, pp. 179-94 (180, 189).

967 Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 27-30.

968 Cf. the summary of Allison’s basic argument in Rodríguez, ‘Jesus as His Friends Remembered Him’, pp. 224-44 (228-35).

969 Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 31-220, for the thirty-two traditions, pp. 33-43. For Allison, *Constructing*, p. 32, ‘apocalyptic eschatology’ stands for themes that were prominent within post-exilic Jewish literature: ‘Although God created a good world, evil spirits have filled it with wickedness, so that it is in disarray and full of injustice. A day is coming, however, when God will repair the broken creation and restore scattered Israel. Before that time, the struggle between good and evil will come to a climax, and a period of great tribulation and unmatched woe will descend upon the world. After that period, God will, perhaps through one or more messianic figures, reward the just and requite the unjust, both living and dead, and then establish divine rule forever.’

970 Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 164-204 (168-69).

that one should not underestimate the points of continuity between Jesus and the John the Baptist; however, one needs to keep in mind at the same time that ‘the forerunner is the darker figure’ of whom little is known due to there being few sources.⁹⁷¹

Allison then turns to discuss the genesis of Christology, namely, ‘what Jesus of Nazareth encouraged others to think about him,’ in light of his earlier methodological considerations. Allison attempts to demonstrate that, regarding Jesus’ status, the notion of recurrent attestation yields results that are significantly different from the common scholarly conclusion that Jesus proclaimed the kingdom, not himself, a conclusion that he believes not to be supported by the general impression of the Jesus tradition. Allison presents as proof a list of twenty-six closely related sayings from the Synoptic Jesus tradition.⁹⁷² Based on the general impressions of the Jesus traditions about how Jesus was remembered by his followers, Allison concludes that, unlike Paul, who was not called divine by any follower of Jesus, ‘Christians did...say astounding things about Jesus, and that from the very beginning.’⁹⁷³ Allison does not arrive at this conclusion through first arguing for the authenticity of a body of material; his way of studying the historical Jesus, and Jesus’ self-awareness, differs from much of previous scholarship that does not address the general impression that Jesus’ followers did proclaim him rather than his message of God’s kingdom.⁹⁷⁴

Allison’s method of studying the Jesus traditions is not solely based on the principle of recurrent attestation. Although Allison begins chapter 4 of *Constructing Jesus* by recognizing a pattern of Jesus giving whole speeches instead of one-liners in the Synoptic Gospels and John,⁹⁷⁵ the focus of his lengthy discussion on the Sermon on the Plain (Q 6.27-42) is to argue that the discourse is largely the work of a single individual and can be viewed as a recollection of what Jesus spoke on more than one occasion.⁹⁷⁶ Allison bases this view of the speech

971 Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 204-20 (205).

972 Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 221-304 (225, 226-27, 231). Allison (p. 231) comments on these traditions: ‘whether they use a formal title or not, are united in one particular: when they look into the future, they see Jesus, and indeed Jesus front and center.’

973 Allison, *Constructing*, p. 304.

974 Cf. Rodríguez, ‘Jesus as His Friends Remembered Him’, pp. 224-44 (232-33)

975 Cf. Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 306-9. Mk 4.1-34; 13.1-37; Mt. 5.1-7.28; 10.1-42; 11.7-19; 18.1-35; 23.1-39; 24.1-25.46; Lk. 6.17-49; 7.24-35; 8.4-18; 10.1-16; 11.37-54; 15.3-32; 16.1-31; 17.22-37.

976 Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 305-86 (312-13): ‘Several considerations suggest, notwithstanding the judgment of so many to the contrary, that most of this material circulated together from the start. In other words, the central part of the Sermon on the Plain is not an anthology made up of

on both the notion of the historical Jesus as an aphorist and rhetorically gifted teacher and an analysis of the thematic coherence of Q 6.27-42 and its interaction with Lev. 19.⁹⁷⁷ Allison's main discussion does not use the principle of recurrent attestation, but it does employ the language of oral performance and memory.⁹⁷⁸

The principle of recurrent attestation is again the focus in Allison's discussion on the passion of Jesus. Allison contrasts his view of the Jesus traditions about Jesus' death with those of Crossan⁹⁷⁹, Bultmann⁹⁸⁰, and Strauss⁹⁸¹, who were all skeptical about the historicity of those narratives.⁹⁸² Allison argues, contrary to the minimalist accounts, that there is much to be known about Jesus' death on the basis of Paul and the Gospel traditions of Jesus' passion. After attempting first to demonstrate what can be known about Jesus' death based on Paul's genuine epistles alone,⁹⁸³ Allison secondly studies Mark and John alongside Paul.⁹⁸⁴ Allison's brief discussion on death and memory returns to the 'sins of memory', and proceeds to remind, for instance, that 'people in all cultures typically respond to death by seeking out and telling stories about a deceased friend or relative', and 'memories and imaginations, shortly after a death, often converge upon a life's end, upon "the events leading up to the loss."⁹⁸⁵ In support of his argument,

smaller anthologies, nor was its history as protracted and complex as often imagined; rather, it represents, by and large, the work of a single individual.'

977 Allison, *Constructing*, p. 380, concludes the argument of the preceding pages: (1) Matthew and Luke attribute Q 6.27-42 to Jesus; (2) Clement and Polycarp attribute 'closely related logia' to Jesus; (3) Pauline parallels demonstrate that at least some sayings in Q 6.27-42 'were already tradition' for the earliest Christian author; (4) Paul's characterization of Jesus (Rom. 15.1-3; 2 Cor. 10.1; Phil. 2.7-8) is in line with Jesus' words in Q 6.27-42; (5) the pre-Markan passion narrative, which 'is not bereft of memory', portrays Jesus as behaving in the fashion of Q 6.27-42; (6) Mark 12.28-34 shows, 'if it remembers rightly', that Jesus 'paid heed to Lev 19', as Jesus refers to Lev. 19.18 as the second commandment; (7) there is 'no explanatory advantage' in assigning Q 6.27-42 to a contemporary author other than Jesus.

978 Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 380-81: 'Luke 6 would incorporate the memory of multiple oral performances in which Jesus, in dialogue with Lev 19 and its history of interpretation, encouraged unrestricted benefaction and reciprocity and discouraged revenge and judging others...the text does not record anybody's personal memory of a single occasion; rather, it descends from somebody's generic memory, which was the product of multiple episodes.'

979 Cf. John Dominic Crossan, *Who Killed Jesus? Exposing the Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Gospel Story of the Death of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), the notion of 'prophecy historicized'.

980 Cf. Bultmann, *History*, pp. 261-84.

981 Cf. D. F. Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* (trans. George Eliot; ed. Peter C. Hodgson; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972 [German original, 1836]), pp. 563-690.

982 Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 387-433.

983 Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 392-403.

984 Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 403-23.

985 Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 423-27 (423).

Allison lists thirty-two traditions from Q, Mark, M, L, Thomas, the authentic Pauline letters, 1 Timothy, Hebrews, and 1 Peter, which ‘reflect [in other words, recurrently attest] a very wide-spread belief’ that ‘Jesus did not run from his death or otherwise resist it’. The final conclusion is that Paul, the tradents of the Jesus traditions, and other early Christians remembered that Jesus did not shun but rather accepted his execution because that is what happened.⁹⁸⁶

Allison’s final discussion on memory and invention addresses the question as to how much history is contained in the Gospels.⁹⁸⁷ Allison discusses the possibility of there being entirely metaphorical narratives in the Synoptic Gospels, but after addressing issues related to the genre of the Synoptics, ancient reading methods, the possibility of the evangelists communicating fiction through humor and absurdity, other possible textual clues about authorial intentions, and redaction criticism, he reaches a two-fold conclusion: first, it remains unclear that those Jesus traditions which are now generally regarded as ‘purely metaphorical’ or theological fiction (e.g. the earthquake, opening of the tombs in Mt. 27.51-53) were intended as such by the evangelists; they were probably reporting what they thought had really happened, namely, ‘a true story’; second, the first conclusion is not absolutely certain; due to what is known about oral performance of Gospel texts in ancient communities, Allison does not want to rule out the possibility that the social settings would have ‘offered clues as to how texts or episodes within them should be understood.’⁹⁸⁸ Despite all the ‘sins of memory’ and hesitations about historians’ ability to access the past, Allison remains quite confident that ‘Synoptic writers thought that they were reconfiguring memories of Jesus, not inventing theological tales.’⁹⁸⁹ In sum, Allison’s view of the Jesus traditions and Jesus scholarship represents an articulated attempt to find the larger patterns within the traditions and the best explanations for those patterns; such a view differs considerably from previous scholarship that attempts to authenticate individual items of tradition and posit hypothetical tradition-histories for them.

986 Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 427-33 (432, 433); cf. Rodríguez, ‘Jesus as His Friends Remembered Him’, pp. 224-44 (233-34).

987 Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 435-62 (435).

988 Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 437-59 (459). Allison (p. 459) theorizes: ‘Maybe the prefatory or interpretive comments that accompanied a reading of Matthew’s infancy narrative would have made it plain enough to an audience that “not everything that is remembered happened.” And maybe the ecclesiastical setting for a reading of Mark’s passion narrative would have made it evident that the darkness at noon was true only theologically. We can never know otherwise.’

989 Allison, *Constructing*, p. 459.

CRITIQUE & EVALUATION

Reactions to Allison's proposal for studying the Jesus traditions can be roughly categorized as follows: (1) those who largely agree with it,⁹⁹⁰ (2) those who strongly disagree with it,⁹⁹¹ and (3) those who view Allison's overall argument positively but criticize some aspects of it.⁹⁹² First, some who hold that memory studies have a positive contribution to the study of the Jesus traditions approve of Allison's basic approach; they accept the principle of recurrent attestation,⁹⁹³ view the historical Jesus as a teacher on the basis of this principle,⁹⁹⁴ and agree with the rejection of authenticity language and the criteria of authenticity that go with it.⁹⁹⁵ For example, Chris Keith is so close to Allison's position that he states 'Constructing Jesus aligns with the Jesus-memory approach' he has proposed.⁹⁹⁶

Second and in contrast, there are negative reactions to Allison's view from others who are critical of the contribution of memory studies to the study of the Jesus traditions.⁹⁹⁷ In the fifth volume of his major project on the historical

990 Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 44-47; *idem*, *Scribal*, pp. 17, 78, 80, 83; *idem*, 'Indebtedness', pp. 25-48 (26-28, 43); Bird, *Gospel*, pp. 110, 111; Schröter, 'The Criteria of Authenticity in Jesus Research and Historiographical method', pp. 49-70 (51, 52, 57, 58, 65). Allison's view is not discussed by Eve, *Behind*, except for a few approving references. See Eve, *Behind*, pp. 102, 114-15. Eve, *Behind*, pp. 114, labels Allison's view of memory 'fuzzy memory' and argues that it 'plays the same role as Dunn's notion of the synthesis of the impact [of Jesus] made on a number of occasions' and that 'Allison...shows how the gaps in Dunn's treatment of memory could be filled in without fundamentally undermining Dunn's position.'

991 Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, V, pp. 17-18, 27-28 (n. 28).

992 Rodríguez, 'Jesus as His Friends Remembered Him', pp. 224-44 (234-43); Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (53-62).

993 Keith, *Scribal*, pp. 83; Schröter, 'The Criteria of Authenticity', pp. 49-70 (65): 'The general outline might be more characteristic for how Jesus was perceived by his contemporaries than the particular unit isolated by form-critical investigation and put to the test for its authenticity'. Also, Bird, *Gospel*, p. 111: '[w]here we find these repetitive patterns in the Gospels, we are on fairly solid ground to conclude that we are encountering the literary deposit of an oral tradition based on solid memory.' Cf. Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 15-24.

994 Keith, *Scribal*, p. 17: 'Didaskalos appears in all four Gospels in reference to Jesus. The Gospels... collectively affirm that those around Jesus recognized him as a rabbi and teacher, and there is no reason to doubt this portrayal. "It is more than a safe bet that Jesus was a teacher."' Keith's quotation is from Allison, *Constructing*, p. 24. Also, Bird, *Gospel*, p. 110: 'Jesus probably taught and said the same things in multiple instances, in various locations, over the course of three years. His itinerant ministry would require that much the same thing be said from place to place as he urgently broadcast the message of the kingdom to the string of villages he entered.'

995 Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 44-46; *idem*, *Scribal*, pp. 78, 80; *idem*, 'Indebtedness', pp. 25-48 (26-28, 43); Schröter, 'The Criteria of Authenticity', pp. 49-70 (52, 65). Cf. e.g. Allison, *Constructing*, pp. x, 460-61; *idem*, *The Historical Christ and the Theological Jesus*, p. 55; *idem*, 'How to Marginalize the Traditional Criteria', pp. 3-30 (5, 7); *idem*, 'It Don't Come Easy', pp. 186-99 (195-97).

996 Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, p. 46.

997 Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, V, pp. 17-18, 27-28 n. 28.

Jesus, which deals with the authenticity of Jesus' parables, John P. Meier considers Allison's 'whole approach problematic'.⁹⁹⁸ Meier's main problem seems not to be with the possible contribution of studies on memory, eyewitnesses, oral tradition, and oral performance to NT research per se,⁹⁹⁹ but rather with Allison's principle of recurrent attestation and his rejection of the criteria of authenticity applied specifically to the Jesus traditions and the historical Jesus. Meier argues that the criteria of multiple attestation and coherence 'sneak back into' his quest for repeating patterns, the former criterion becoming 'the pivotal criterion' in the project. Instead of individual sayings and deeds of Jesus, Meier argues, Allison's use of multiple attestation is focused on general themes and motifs. This results in a dead end as for the historical Jesus, as it is not possible to leave open the question of the authenticity of individual traditions and maintain the view that, taken together, these traditions somehow create more than a highly dubious pattern. Recurring patterns simply are not enough if no decision is made about the probable historicity of the individual sayings and deeds.¹⁰⁰⁰ Meier concludes that Allison's skepticism about the criteria of authenticity and the authenticity of individual Jesus traditions should lead to equal skepticism about 'constructing any probable portrait of the historical Jesus'.¹⁰⁰¹ In general, Meier is skeptical about efforts to undermine both the role of textuality in the transmission of the Jesus traditions¹⁰⁰² and the traditional textual methods of inquiry¹⁰⁰³ in favor of studies on memory and oral tradition; while for instance any parable of Jesus

998 Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, V, p. 27 n. 28; cf. e.g. Allison, *Constructing*, p. 10; *idem*, 'How to Marginalize', pp. 3-30.

999 Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, V, p. 50: 'Such studies are welcome additions to NT research, but one may wonder what exactly they contribute to the question of the authenticity of a given parable.' This statement demonstrates a fundamental difference between Meier and scholars like Keith and Zimmermann who do not view the 'authenticity' or 'inauthenticity' of a given Jesus tradition as something that can be meaningfully discussed.

1000 Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, V, p. 27 n. 28: 'In reconstructing the historical Jesus, the whole is the sum of the parts selected for analysis.' Italics are original.

1001 Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, V, p. 27 n. 28; cf. van Eck, 'Memory', pp. 1-10 (5-6), who argues that the rejection of the criteria approach would lead to a *No Quest* due to the lack of sources to work with.

1002 Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, V, pp. 50, 78 n. 58, refers to Hurtado, 'Oral Fixation', pp. 321-40, who emphasizes that an emphasis on oral tradition does not justify undermining the role of texts in early Christianity.

1003 Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, V, p. 50: '...the proper understanding of the complexity of oral tradition and the influence of memory on both oral and written material enriches but does not invalidate the basic model created by form, source, tradition, and redaction criticism, including the two-source theory of Synoptic relationships.'

would ‘undergo many oral performances and be remembered in different ways,’ the scholarly treatment of the issue of authenticity in the case of each individual tradition cannot be replaced with notions of ‘oral variants’ or ‘[v]ague, general appeals to folk memory and oral performances in ancient or nonliterate cultures.’¹⁰⁰⁴

Meier’s criticism of Allison’s method is not entirely without merit; apart from his discussion of the fallibility of memory, Allison’s proposal lacks a detailed discussion on method, which makes his view vulnerable to the charge of simply ‘muddling through’ the tradition with his ‘scholarly instinct.’¹⁰⁰⁵ While Allison has argued for the rejection of the criteria of authenticity at length,¹⁰⁰⁶ his recurrent attestation may not be a satisfactory methodological replacement for the criteria. Its methodological basis is rather vague, and in some cases, it even seems that the old criteria are presupposed but not cited explicitly.¹⁰⁰⁷ It is also worth considering that Allison’s and others’ total rejection of the criteria of authenticity may, at least in part, result from unrealistic expectations for the results and level of certitude that the criteria are to yield; even a hard-core proponent of the use of the criteria like Meier does not believe absolute certainty is within reach in historical studies.¹⁰⁰⁸ Meier is at least right in insisting that the variety of results and lack of worldwide scholarly agreement on the historical Jesus is hardly surprising and is not the right reason to abandon the criteria.¹⁰⁰⁹

On the other hand, regarding Meier’s criticism, one may legitimately ask what

1004 Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, V, pp. 50-51, 78-79 n. 59. In contrast, obviously, to e.g. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*.

1005 Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, V, p. 17: ‘...some of these skeptics [like Allison] prefer to “muddle through” as best they can with their scholarly instinct...’

1006 Allison, ‘How to Marginalize’, pp. 3-30; *idem*, ‘It Don’t Come Easy’, pp. 186-99.

1007 Cf. Allison, ‘How to Marginalize’, pp. 3-30 (7), which accuses Theissen and Winter, *The Plausible Jesus*, of only revising the old criteria, with Allison, *Constructing*, p. 22 n. 93, which recognizes that his own effort of trying to find a Jesus who makes sense of what is otherwise known of Judaism and early Christianity is reminiscent of the criterion of plausibility in Theissen and Winter, *The Plausible Jesus*. Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, V, pp. 18, 28 n. 30 (18), argues that both Theissen and Winter, *The Plausible Jesus*, and Theissen and Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, are guilty of reformulating and streamlining the traditional criteria into one or two criteria (esp. ‘criterion of plausibility’), while ‘other [traditional] criteria may quietly and surreptitiously function when they are useful in individual cases.’ See also the discussion on the criticisms of Allison by Rodríguez and Hågerland below.

1008 On historical probabilities, see Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, I, pp. 167-68. Also, see the discussion on Anthony Le Donne’s view below (ch. 3.7).

1009 Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, V, p. 17. Meier points out that ‘more than a century of minute study of the Synoptic Gospels has not led all scholars to adopt a single solution to the Synoptic Problem.’

contribution, if any, does he think memory studies have to the study of the Jesus traditions and the historical Jesus. Meier's sympathetic yet questioning rhetoric about memory studies is hardly enough to account for what so many scholars today see as a major development and *paradigm shift* in the study of the historical Jesus.¹⁰¹⁰ Also, given the widely-shared understanding that historical inquiry never reaches absolute certainty regardless of method, it is far from clear why the results of Meier's study of Jesus' parables – in particular, the basic conclusion regarding the historicity of the parables that the historical Jesus probably only spoke the four parables that can be authenticated through the criteria of authenticity¹⁰¹¹ – should elicit more confidence than, say, Allison's method of recurrent attestation, which avoids the authenticity language and focuses instead on memories of Jesus.¹⁰¹²

Third, there are positive yet critical reactions to Allison's view from some who explicitly approve of the use of memory studies,¹⁰¹³ and others who, while open to memory's significance as a conceptual category, are not willing to endorse memory studies at the expense of rejecting the criteria of authenticity.¹⁰¹⁴ On the one hand, Rafael Rodríguez views Allison's general approach to the historical Jesus, including its rejection of the criteria of authenticity, as commendable, yet criticizes some aspects of Allison's view of memory and the principle of recurrent attestation.¹⁰¹⁵ Rodríguez is 'largely persuaded' by Allison's overall approach, namely, that the 'sources have the broad strokes of Jesus right' and that Allison's discussion is 'an even-handed, cautious treatment of the issues facing anyone...

1010 E.g. Zimmermann, *Puzzling the Parables*, p. 57: 'Within Jesus scholarship, a paradigm shift from the "historical" to the "remembered" Jesus is emerging.' Of course, it is understandable that Meier does not make a greater attempt to integrate memory studies into his work at this point, as his book on the authenticity of Jesus' parables is the fifth volume in his major series on the historical Jesus, which otherwise leans heavily on the use of the criteria of authenticity in a traditional sense.

1011 Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, V, p. 370 concludes: 'We identified four parables that, upon further testing, proved to be credible candidates for the critical judgment of "coming from the historical Jesus." In the case of the Mustard Seed (Mark-Q overlap), the Great Supper (Matthew and Luke), and the Talents/Minas (again, Matthew and Luke) the basic argument for historicity... was the multiple attestation of independent sources. The odd man out was the Evil Tenants of Vineyard, where a form and redaction-critical analysis provided us with a primitive version of the parable that met the criteria of embarrassment and/or discontinuity.'

1012 Though Jesus' parables are a recurring theme that Allison, *Constructing*, does not discuss; cf. Rodríguez, 'Jesus as His Friends Remembered Him', pp. 224-44 (241). It takes, of course, more than these remarks to abandon any use of the criteria of authenticity altogether, as is indicated below.

1013 Rodríguez, 'Jesus as His Friends Remembered Him', pp. 224-44 (234-43).

1014 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (53-62).

1015 Rodríguez, 'Jesus as His Friends Remembered Him', pp. 224-44 (234-43).

wanting to know about the historical Jesus'; Rodríguez does not see a new No Quest as the result, but rather asserts '[t]he quest of the historical Jesus...has turned a corner and is heading in new directions.'¹⁰¹⁶ These positive statements can be seen, at least in part, in contradiction with what follows.

Rodríguez's first critical question has to do with Allison's skeptical view of human memory, which he thinks is one-sided and in need of refinement.¹⁰¹⁷ Allison can be read to indicate that memory is almost useless for preserving specific details, but this goes against the reality that human beings rely on the successful general performance of their memories in everyday life (despite the fact that the failings of memory are reflected in laboratory experiments). Studies also suggest that malleability and stability are simultaneous and complex functions of memory.¹⁰¹⁸ Furthermore, Rodríguez contends that human beings do not usually think they are free to 'remember whatever past they wish'. While Allison rightly argues that people often 'confuse what...ought to have occurred with what did occur', one must not forget that people are often 'confronted with a past that they wish they could forget'.¹⁰¹⁹ Rodríguez also reminds that the presence of other people establishes social constraints which make mucking with the past harder.¹⁰²⁰ Finally, the interplay between memory and identity provides a constraint: figures or events that are less significant for an individual's or group's sense of self tend to have less inertial weight; however, important events and figures that 'provide orientation to the present and enable meaningful interpretation of reality' experience more inertia.¹⁰²¹

Allison responds to Rodríguez's criticism by recognizing that, despite agreeing

1016 Rodríguez, 'Jesus as His Friends Remembered Him', pp. 224-44 (234-35). Also Rodríguez (p. 244): 'This is the point of recurrent attestation: if the tradition ever got anything about Jesus right, we can be most confident about its "rightness" in the broad strokes and general ideas of its representations...This is the new shape of Jesus scholarship...the days of questing after the historical Jesus, free from interpretations and memories of those who considered themselves his followers, are behind us.'

1017 Rodríguez, 'Jesus as His Friends Remembered Him', pp. 224-44 (235-38).

1018 Rodríguez, 'Jesus as His Friends Remembered Him', pp. 224-44 (236), argues that this is not clear in 'Allison's emphasis on general ideas over against particulars.'

1019 Rodríguez, 'Jesus as His Friends Remembered Him', pp. 224-44 (236-37); Schudson, 'The Present', pp. 105-13 (107-12); cf. Allison, *Constructing*, p. 4. Rodríguez points out that Allison recognizes this in his discussion on the aftermath of Jesus' execution and his followers' likely response to it. Cf. Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 423-24.

1020 Rodríguez, 'Jesus as His Friends Remembered Him', pp. 224-44 (237); Schudson, 'The Present', pp. 105-13 (112): 'People's ability to reconstruct the past just as they wish is limited by the crucial social fact that other people within their awareness are trying to do the same thing.'

1021 Rodríguez, 'Jesus as His Friends Remembered Him', pp. 224-44 (237-38).

on several points, he is ‘less sanguine than Rodríguez’ about human memory; this is, Allison says, a direct result of studying the cognitive literature on memory extensively and reflecting on the ability of one’s mind to create memories and misremember things of everyday life.¹⁰²² As presented above in my presentation of Allison’s view, it is not just the malleability of memory that Allison wishes to emphasize; he has also argued for a ‘middle way’. While Allison admits that discussing this merely in a footnote may have given the wrong impression, it is evident in his following conclusions about the historical Jesus that he does not promote skepticism.¹⁰²³ Allison argues that his focus on the fallibility of memory was to warn historians of Jesus about the difficulty of their job; the discussion was also meant to justify both the marginalization of the criteria of authenticity which promised ‘much more than they have delivered’ and the search for the general impressions of the tradition. In light of this consideration, Allison also admits that his work may not have given sufficient thought to his focus on generalities over details; yet he notes in agreement with Rodríguez to have ‘long assumed’ that details can be fixed by repetition and emotional states like surprise and trauma, and a lack of individual or communal significance is likely to result in fluctuations of memory.¹⁰²⁴

Rodríguez’s other points of criticism have to do with recognizing recurrently attested themes. Much like Meier, who accused Allison of ‘muddling through’ the tradition with ‘scholarly instinct’, Rodríguez laments the methodological imprecision of Allison’s work: commonsense plays a great role in Allison’s proposal. Rodríguez asks the obvious question: how does Allison choose, for instance, the seventeen traditions that relate to the question of Jesus’ confrontation with the devil? Allison admits that not all of the traditions are historical, but his argument depends not upon individual traditions but on all of them together. He does not, however, discuss how many traditions are enough for a theme to be recurrently attested.¹⁰²⁵ Despite his own advocacy of memory studies and the rejection of the criteria of authenticity, Rodríguez states that Allison’s method requires more discussion ‘if we are to avoid the impression that the flight from the traditional

1022 D. C. Allison, ‘Response to Rafael Rodríguez, ‘Jesus as his Friends Remembered Him’, *JSHJ* 12 (2014), pp. 245-54 (246-48).

1023 Allison, ‘Response’, pp. 245-54 (248); Allison, *Constructing*, p. 9 n. 47.

1024 Allison, ‘Response’, pp. 245-54 (248-50).

1025 Rodríguez, ‘Jesus as His Friends Remembered Him’, pp. 224-44 (238-40); cf. Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 17-20.

criteria of authenticity results almost automatically in a flight towards unbridled historical intuition (or 'commonsense').¹⁰²⁶

Moreover, Rodríguez points out the imbalance in Allison's discussion of different recurrently attested themes: while as such Allison is allowed to focus on certain themes more than on others in one work on the historical Jesus, giving much more space to two of the five themes (180 pages on apocalyptic eschatology, over 80 pages on Jesus' self-conception) leaves the impression that Allison's choice and way of organizing the Jesus traditions did not have as much to do with recurrent attestation as he indicates.¹⁰²⁷ Also, Rodríguez finds Allison's discussion on the thematic, structural and intertextual continuities in the Sermon on the Plain (Q 6.27-42) as well as his treatment of Jesus' passion somewhat deficient with respect to recurrent attestation. While the former discussion is based on a different method, one that Allison never comments upon, and 'raises the question of other routes of inquiry from the Gospels to Jesus',¹⁰²⁸ the latter is primarily focused on knowledge about Jesus' passion attainable from Paul's letters, both in isolation and in relation to Mark and John.¹⁰²⁹ Rodríguez finds Allison's discussion on the special function of memory in helping people cope with the death of a loved one helpful.¹⁰³⁰ He also sympathetically acknowledges that Allison never claims recurrent attestation to be 'sufficient unto itself' and believes that recurrent attestation could do more than Allison's work indicates, but nevertheless laments how little the book has to do with the principle.¹⁰³¹

Again, Allison readily admits that he could have been clearer about the intentions of his method. However, regarding the choice of the seventeen traditions about Jesus' confrontation with the devil, he argues the pattern in these traditions is only presented as an example and 'the beginning of discussion, not the end'; simply to note the pattern is not the end of the discussion either here

1026 Rodríguez, 'Jesus as His Friends Remembered Him', pp. 224-44 (240).

1027 Rodríguez, 'Jesus as His Friends Remembered Him', pp. 224-44 (240-41). Rodríguez (p. 241) lists several themes that appear throughout the tradition but are not discussed by Allison (e.g. Jesus' open table fellowship, the presence and function of women, children and other socially marginal persons in and for Jesus' ministry, Jesus' parables, Jesus' religious piety and experience with God, his conflicts with Jewish figures, his interpretation of Hebrew biblical tradition, appeal to the gentiles, his relation to the temple-cult, etc.)

1028 Cf. Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 305-86. See the discussion on Hägerland's criticism and the criteria of authenticity below.

1029 Cf. Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 387-433 (392-421).

1030 Cf. Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 423-27.

1031 Rodríguez, 'Jesus as His Friends Remembered Him', pp. 224-44 (242-43).

or in any of the other chapters.¹⁰³² Allison disagrees with Rodríguez's notion that the discussion on the Sermon on the Plain (Q 6.27-42) does not utilize recurrent attestation; he refers to the beginning of the chapter in *Constructing Jesus*, where he argued for a pattern of Jesus delivering speeches, not just one-liners, which runs across the sources¹⁰³³; the subsequent discussion is focused on Jesus as a speaker of discourses and what Allison believes to be 'the most likely speech to go back, in some form, to Jesus himself'. Therefore, recurrent attestation is more of a starting point than the conclusion.¹⁰³⁴ Regarding the overall imbalance of his chosen material, Allison concludes that it was never the intention to address all important subjects; he merely attempted to explicate that one can know some important things about the historical Jesus without the criteria of authenticity.¹⁰³⁵

There is no question that Allison's notions about human memory are sober and well-documented; while overly skeptical views may not be grounded in evidence, there is no reason to exaggerate the reliability of either individual or communal memory. Allison's discussion and subsequent reactions to it well demonstrate that memory studies, or memory as a conceptual category, does little to prove it; two basic kinds of conclusions have been drawn from his discussion: the kind that places emphasis on skepticism about the reliability of memory and argues for a variable rather than stable Jesus tradition,¹⁰³⁶ and the kind that emphasizes the general reliability of early Christian memory and the stability of the Jesus tradition.¹⁰³⁷ While this difference of outlook on Allison's work (or what kind of

1032 Allison, 'Response', pp. 245-54 (251-52). Allison (p. 252) notes that in *Constructing*, p. 19, he said 'I would argue, if demonology were our subject (which it is not), that in this particular our texts remember rightly'.

1033 Cf. Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 306-9.

1034 Allison, 'Response', pp. 245-54 (250-51).

1035 Allison, 'Response', pp. 245-54 (253-54).

1036 See e.g. Schröter, 'The Criteria of Authenticity', pp. 49-70 (51), who shares Allison's criticism of the criteria of authenticity and seems to adopt a similarly skeptical view of human memory: '... "memory" is by itself a problematic historical category. It does not lead automatically to a more adequate picture of the past, but, to the contrary, can be affected by misperception, wrong information, oblivion, and projection. Therefore, memory itself begs the question for critical scrutiny.' Also see Foster, 'Memory, Orality, and the Fourth Gospel', pp. 191-227 (201-2), who views Allison as an example of a nuanced understanding of the role of memory in reconstructing the historical Jesus, which properly emphasizes memory's fallibility (contra Bauckham). Foster's whole argument is that 'memory studies', while not without value, should not be applied over-confidently to the quest for the historical Jesus and cannot be used to validate 'the historical authenticity of Gospel traditions'.

1037 See e.g. Bird, *Gospel*, p. 111, who rejects the notion that 'the earliest followers of Jesus suffered from some kind of "radical amnesia"' in favor of the reliability of the Jesus traditions. Cf. Allison, *Constructing*, p. 9 n. 47: 'I do not contend that the evangelists were, in effect, amnesiacs.' For a

views his work is taken to support) may be in part due to the fact that Allison's comments against 'hyperskepticism' are only found in a footnote, it nevertheless demonstrates that it is the scholar's responsibility to do the historiographical work on the Jesus traditions; any discussion on memory, no matter how sophisticated, is in vain if not accompanied by an articulated method that can make sense of both memory studies and the Jesus traditions.

Because of this, the question of Allison's method is pertinent. At least in relation to the exemplary seventeen traditions on Jesus' confrontation with the devil, it may be acceptable for Allison to say that recurrent attestation is only the beginning. Nevertheless, in practice, devoting so much space to questions other than this principle in relation to both the Sermon on the Plain (Q 6.27-42) and Jesus' passion without discussing the chosen 'other' methods undermines Allison's overall argument.¹⁰³⁸ Allison hardly manages to escape the charge against the vagueness of his method. In fact, he does not even make much of an attempt, as he admits that 'the logic of recurrent attestation cannot be quantified',¹⁰³⁹ nor can the procedure of his work be formalized, and further states that his 'work involves the hazy principle of abduction, or inference to the best explanation'.¹⁰⁴⁰ If one's method is so imprecise that it cannot be formalized and, therefore, suggested to others, are not further considerations required?

Tobias Hägerland, on the other hand, offers some such considerations regarding the question of the historicity of the Jesus traditions, focusing mainly on Allison's rejection of the criteria of authenticity.¹⁰⁴¹ Hägerland recognizes that on the basis of Allison's attention to the Gospels' recurring patterns 'a picture of Jesus can be painted that is not sketchy or blurred but remarkably colourful and rich in detail', but remains unconvinced that recurrent attestation can entirely replace the criteria of authenticity.¹⁰⁴² According to Hägerland, the main problem with Allison's method lies in the fact that through the principle of recurrent attestation

criticism of Bird's view, see A. Kirk, 'Ehrman, Bauckham and Bird on Memory and the Jesus Tradition', *JSHJ* 15.1 (2017), pp. 88-114.

1038 Cf. the discussion below on Tobias Hägerland's criticism of Allison's view of Jesus' crucifixion.

1039 Allison, 'Response', pp. 245-54 (252).

1040 Allison, 'Response', pp. 245-54 (252).

1041 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (53-62). For a critical response to Hägerland, see Keith, 'The Narratives of the Gospels and the Historical Jesus', pp. 426-55 (430-33).

1042 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (53-54). Hägerland is not as dissatisfied with the principle of recurrent attestation as Meier, but like Meier he considers Allison's avoidance of the criteria problematic.

Jesus' past can be represented only partially: there are unrepeatable crucial events in Jesus' life, which cannot be recurrently attested.¹⁰⁴³

Hägerland allows Allison's condition that recurrent attestation is only the first step of the method and its use needs to be paired with other assured circumstances about Jesus' life such as the rough dates of his life (ca. 7–5 BCE–30/33 CE), his baptism by John the Baptist, his (last or only) journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, his arrest and condemnation by the Romans, and his crucifixion.¹⁰⁴⁴ However, it is not clear, Hägerland argues, how Allison can recover these other circumstances and events that clearly cannot be established through recurrent attestation; neither Allison nor any other scholar who rejects the criteria of authenticity has proposed a viable alternative method for establishing the historicity of these events, which results in an inexplicit or partial acceptance of the traditional criteria.¹⁰⁴⁵

Regarding such events, Hägerland first asks how Allison and others would explain within the confines of historiography that Jesus was baptized by John.¹⁰⁴⁶ Allison mentions the recurrent endorsements of John by Jesus, but does relate the question of historicity to them; he offers no historical explanation for Jesus' baptism by John.¹⁰⁴⁷ Second, Hägerland points out that neither Allison nor any

1043 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (54). A satisfactory representation of the historical Jesus must account not only for those events that 'occurred repeatedly at Jesus' own instigation' but also for 'those decisive events which were to a large extent beyond his control'.

1044 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (54); cf. Allison, 'How to Marginalize', pp. 3-30 (26), where these circumstances are listed as examples of such circumstances in Jesus' life.

1045 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (54-55). Of course, it can be argued that it is not the intention of these scholars to attempt to establish the historicity of any events.

1046 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (55-57). Hägerland (p. 55) points out that the historicity of this event is rarely doubted in traditional scholarship, as the three major criteria of authenticity are used to authenticate the Gospel narratives about the event. First, Jesus' baptism by John is coherent with Jesus' sayings about the pre-eminence of John that are considered authentic by other criteria (Mk 11.27-33; Q 7.24-35; 16.16); secondly, multiple attestation applies to the story (Mk 1.9-11; Q 3.21-22; cf. Jn 1.29-34; *Gos. Heb.* 2); third, the episode evidently caused embarrassment by portraying Jesus as subordinate to John and by expressing doubt about Jesus' sinlessness (cf. Mt. 3.14-15). Cf. e.g. Meier, *A Marginal Jew, II*, pp. 101-3, 103-5.

1047 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (55-56); cf. Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 53-54. Hägerland (p. 56) also finds fault with Mark Goodacre, 'Criticizing the Criterion of Multiple Attestation', pp. 152-69 (159-62, 166), who criticizes and gives up the criteria of multiple attestation and embarrassment as for the historicity of Jesus' baptism by John; how does he then know that Jesus was baptized by John? Hägerland (pp. 56-57) also argues that Rodríguez, 'The Embarrassing Truth About Jesus', pp. 132-51 (141-43, 145-46), in abandoning the criterion of embarrassment in relation to Jesus' baptism, grants the scholar a 'freedom to choose any "historical" narrative (whether prompted by the sources or not, it seems) as the framework within which to interpret an individual item of the tradition', while offering no explanation for the event or why none of the previously presented reconstructions are convincing.

other scholar who rejects the criteria of authenticity offers an explanation for how Jesus' action in the temple can be viewed as part of a viable representation of the historical Jesus.¹⁰⁴⁸ This is, according to Hägerland, a major shift from traditional views like that of Sanders, who held the Jesus' temple action as 'one of the most fundamental facts about Jesus, indeed the very foundation for his reconstruction of Jesus as an apocalyptic prophet'.¹⁰⁴⁹ Allison only treats the episode as an instance of recurrent attestation, another narration that demonstrates Jesus' royal and prophetic identity, but remains uncertain about whether a specific event in history is commemorated; Hägerland indicates that, while Allison's agnostic position on the matter is consistent with his method, it is 'explicitly motivated by the failure of earlier, criteria-based scholarship to attain consensus'.¹⁰⁵⁰

Third and finally, Hägerland argues that Allison's lengthy treatment of Jesus' passion and crucifixion indicates both that Allison believes 'that it really occurred' and that Allison employs, at least indirectly, the criteria of authenticity.¹⁰⁵¹ Hägerland notes that Allison's discussion on Paul's knowledge of a pre-Markan passion narrative attempts to show that Paul was probably aware of many of the Gospels' details of Jesus' death; Allison's discussion of the common themes

1048 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (57-59). Hägerland (p. 58) points out that '[n]one of the essays in *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of the Authenticity* makes even a single reference to the temple action, which is therefore left out completely of the general picture of Jesus established by the "memory approach".'

1049 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (58-59). Hägerland (pp. 57-58) explains that, while '[m]ost scholars appear to acknowledge a basis in history for this episode', there is a minority that expresses doubt. All three main criteria are used to argue for the authenticity: first, the temple action is viewed as coherent with Jesus' identity as a prophet. Cf. John P. Meier, 'From Elijah-like Prophet to Royal Davidic Messiah', in D. Donnelly (ed.), *Jesus: A Colloquium in the Holy Land* (New York and London: Continuum, 2001), pp. 45-83 (68). Second, it is attested doubly (Mk 11.15-17; Jn 2.14-17). Cf. Kyle R. Snodgrass, 'The Temple Incident', in D. L. Bock and R. L. Webb (eds.), *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus: A Collaborative Exploration of Context and Coherence* (WUNT, 247; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), pp. 429-80 (430-31, 439-44). Third, taken together with the multiply attested saying about destroying the temple and building a new one, the temple action is dissimilar to (namely, does not derive from) early Christianity and appears to have been embarrassing. Cf. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, pp. 71-75. Hägerland (p. 58) presents the criticism of each of these points by David Seeley, 'Jesus' Temple Act', *CBQ* 55 (1993), pp. 263-83; *idem*, 'Jesus' Temple Act Revisited: A Response to P. M. Casey', *CBQ* 62 (2000), pp. 55-63: first, Jesus' temple action would be incoherent with Jesus' non-violent behavior and his relative indifference towards the external matters of religion; second, John is dependent on Mark's narration of the episode, which, thirdly, fits within Mark's plot and is derivable from his purposes. Furthermore, according to the negative criterion of implausibility, for example, such action would have made no sense to Jesus' contemporary audience and would have caused a forceful reaction from the Roman authorities.

1050 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (59); cf. Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 237-38. 264.

1051 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (59-62).

between Paul and the Gospels relates the question of how early the traditions are to be dated to the question of whether they represent historical events, though Allison does distinguish between the two questions. Thus, it seems that '[e]ven for Allison the early date of a tradition, being entailed by its attestation in two or more independent sources, increases the likelihood that it is rooted in a historical event', that is, Allison seems to accept the criterion of multiple attestation in some cases.¹⁰⁵²

Similarly, Allison seems to employ the criterion of dissimilarity in order to establish the historicity of some details of Jesus' death. Allison writes: 'at least a few of the stories are likely to mirror real events because they cannot be derived from the Jewish Bible and the because there is no obvious motivation for Christian invention...'¹⁰⁵³ This is in contrast with Rodríguez's complete rebuttal of the use of the criterion of embarrassment (or any other criteria) to authenticate the event of crucifixion, without offering any other explanation for how one can know that Jesus was crucified.¹⁰⁵⁴ In light of his discussion of Allison's view, Hägerland concludes that the criteria of authenticity are still useful and necessary 'for authenticating traditions which cannot be corroborated by appeal to recurrent attestation' and suggests, as a methodological consideration, that 'the traditional criteria' be used 'preferably in conjunction with the principle of recurrent attestation'.¹⁰⁵⁵

From this discussion and presentation of critique of Allison's view, it can be concluded that Allison's method of recurrent attestation is not enough for the study of the Jesus traditions if one wants to make even cautious claims about their historicity.¹⁰⁵⁶ If nothing else, Meier's criticism points towards the continuing

1052 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (60); cf. Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 404, 423.

1053 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (60); cf. Allison, *Constructing*, p. 425. Among the events that are authenticated by this logic are 'conscriptio of a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, to carry Jesus' cross; crucifixion by order of Pontius Pilate; execution at a place called Golgotha; the presence of female followers at the cross; burial by a Jewish official, Joseph of Arimathea'. Cf. Allison, *Constructing*, pp. 426-27, where Allison expresses hesitations about the validity of the criterion of embarrassment.

1054 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (60-61); cf. Rodríguez, 'The Embarrassing Truth About Jesus', pp. 132-51 (146-47). Rodríguez (p. 147) argues, for example, that the use of the criterion of embarrassment to authenticate Jesus' crucifixion is doomed to fail because already Paul used Jesus' execution as a criminal as part of his proclamation; albeit a difficult fate for Israel's Messiah from the viewpoint of early Christian theology, it became the centre of Paul's theology, far from an embarrassing event.

1055 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (62). It is remarkable that Allison, *Constructing*, p. 20 n. 85, does not think others less skeptical cannot use the criteria with his recurrent attestation.

1056 I do recognize that it is exactly against these kinds of claims that some within the memory

usefulness of some of the criteria of authenticity; while his notions need to be balanced with a nuanced view of the role of memory in the study of the Jesus traditions, he points out that, despite seemingly rejecting the criteria, Allison refers to them without explicitly referring to them. Also, Rodríguez recognizes that recurrent attestation will need other methods to accompany it; as a proponent of memory studies in conjunction with the rejection of the criteria of authenticity, he is, however, not willing to suggest the use of the criteria in any form. Rodríguez's discussion on Allison's view of memory serves to demonstrate the need of a more formulated method for discussing the historicity of the Jesus traditions. Finally, Hägerland promotes a balanced contribution to the question of method as for the historicity Jesus traditions; albeit not one of the scholars who have strongly advocated memory studies, he is willing to adopt language that is largely consonant with memory studies and combine their insights with the more traditional methods, the criteria of authenticity.¹⁰⁵⁷ By pointing out some blindspots in Allison's work regarding the criteria of authenticity, Hägerland offers methodological considerations that can contribute to the study the Jesus traditions after the rise of the memory approach. As will be discussed below in relation to Anthony Le Donne's view, these methodological considerations are not unanimously viewed as contradictory to the use of memory as a conceptual category within the memory approach.

3.7 ANTHONY LE DONNE

Anthony Le Donne's (b.1975) initial work, *The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Son of David* (2009), which is based on his earlier PhD dissertation at Durham University, is among the first systematic applications of social memory theory to the questions of the Jesus traditions and the historical Jesus.¹⁰⁵⁸ The purpose of Le Donne's work is to develop a hermeneutical

approach react.

1057 Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65. Hägerland (p. 62), concludes, for example, that 'if we go on to speak of "authenticity" we must acknowledge that this does not mean anything like a state of non-remembered, non-interpreted hard facts of the past'. This is, of course, a view with which Chris Keith strongly disagrees. Again, Keith, 'The Narratives of the Gospels and the Historical Jesus', pp. 426-55.

1058 See Le Donne, *Historiographical*; on a more popular level Le Donne, *Historical Jesus*; also, *idem*, 'The Problem of Selectivity in Memory Research: A Response to Zeba Crook', *JSHJ* 11 (2013), pp. 77-97; *idem*, 'Theological Memory Distortion in the Jesus Tradition: A Study in Social Memory Theory', in Barton, Stuckenbruck and Wold (eds.), *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity*, pp. 163-

methodology for applying social memory theory to the Jesus traditions in a way that benefits the study of the historical Jesus. Le Donne begins by a critique of historical positivism, which he argues has plagued historical Jesus research with its dichotomy between history (that is, historical fact) and interpretation. Le Donne wishes to rebut rationalist historiography, which attempted to reach historical certainty and objectivity, deriving its impetus from the desire for objectivity in the empirical sciences; he argues for a moderate form of postmodern historiography, which he imagines as ‘a welcome middle ground between critical realism and postfoundationalism.’¹⁰⁵⁹

Le Donne refers to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1789), a disciple of Benedict (Baruch) Spinoza (1632–1677), as a representative of an era when a notion of historical consciousness arose that historical truth and objectivity are beyond reach due to the gap between historical truth and experiential certainty.¹⁰⁶⁰ Le Donne further recognizes specifically the significance of Friedrich Schleiermacher’s (1768–1834) notion of ‘pre-understanding’ (from the German *Vorverständnis*) and Martin Heidegger’s (1889–1976) ‘fore-conception’ (cf. the German terms *Vorhabe*, *Vorsicht*, and *Vorgriff*), for the development of the idea of the hermeneutical circle;¹⁰⁶¹ there is a strong constructive factor in any attempt

78; *idem*, ‘Memory, Commemoration and History in John 2.19-22: A Critique and Application of Social Memory’, in A. Le Donne and T. Thatcher (eds.), *The Fourth Gospel in First-Century Media Culture* (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2011), pp. 186-204; *idem*, ‘The Rise of the Quest for an Authentic Jesus: An Introduction to the Crumbling Foundations of Jesus Research’, in Keith and Le Donne (eds.), *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, pp. 3-21; *idem*, ‘The Criterion of Coherence: Its Development, Inevitability, and Historiographical Limitations’, in Keith and Le Donne (eds.), *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, pp. 95-114; also *idem*, ‘The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Revisionist History through the Lens of Jewish-Christian Relations’, pp. 63-86.

1059 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 1-15. On Le Donne’s view of postmodern historiography, see further Le Donne, *Historical Jesus*, pp. 3-10 (5-7), 134: ‘[Within a postmodern paradigm] [t]he historian’s job is to tell the stories of memory in a way that most plausibly accounts for the available mnemonic evidence...the historical Jesus is not veiled by the interpretations of him. He is most available for analysis when these interpretations are most pronounced. Therefore, the historical Jesus is clearly seen through lenses of editorial agenda, theological reflection, and intentional counter-memory.’

1060 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 17-26; cf. e.g. G. E. Lessing, ‘On the Proof of the Spirit and of Power’, in H. Chadwick (ed.), *Lessing’s Theological Writings* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1956), pp. 51-56; *idem*, *Gesammelte Werke* (ed. P. Rilla; 10 vols.; Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1954–1958).

1061 The hermeneutical circle, as envisioned by Schleiermacher and Heidegger, has some affinity with the mnemonic cycle Le Donne utilizes later in his work. See Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 67; the discussion below.

to acquire real knowledge.¹⁰⁶² He also discusses Bultmann's hermeneutical view, which, he argues, employs Heidegger's idea of the hermeneutical circle but nevertheless results in a positivistic understanding of historiography: it is not enough to encourage 'the subjectivity of the modern historian' when the workings of the hermeneutical circle are not recognized 'in perceptions of the ancient historians.'¹⁰⁶³ Based on his survey of the history of hermeneutics, Le Donne summarizes his initial premises: (1) '*If perceptions are to be remembered, then they will inevitably be interpreted – subconsciously, consciously, or both*'; (2) '*Perceptions that contribute to historical memory are thus always interpreted along each stage of the tradition that they inhabit*'.¹⁰⁶⁴

Albeit critical of Halbwachs' historical positivism, Le Donne starts his discussion of the relationship between history and memory from Halbwachs' understanding of social memory.¹⁰⁶⁵ The concepts of memory distortion and refraction are central to Le Donne's approach. Memory is not simply the cognitive preservation of past events.¹⁰⁶⁶ It is rather 'a process of encoding information, storing information, and strategically retrieving information, and there are social, psychological, and historical influences at each point.'¹⁰⁶⁷ *Distortion* is used to distinguish the

1062 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 28-32 (32): 'In sum, Schleiermacher's circle (and Heidegger's adaptation of it) demonstrates how a new perception can attract a significance that has been prefigured (or "fore-conceived") in a similar type of category.' Cf. e.g. F. D. E. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik, Nach den Handschriften neu herausgegeben und eingeleitet von Hinz Kimmerle* (Heidelberg: Karl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1959); H. G. Gadamer, 'The Problem of Language in Schleiermacher's Hermeneutic', *JTC* 7 (1970), pp. 68-95; *idem*, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 2004 [1960]), pp. 190-92, 267, 295; M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1961 [1927]), pp. 150-51; *idem*, *Being in Time* (London: SCM, 1962 [1927]), pp. 194: 'Any interpretation which is to contribute to understanding must already have understood what is to be interpreted'. Also see Le Donne, *Historical Jesus*, pp. 56-64.

1063 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 32-39 (39); cf. e.g. R. Bultmann, 'Is Exegesis without Presuppositions Possible?', in K. Mueller-Vollmer (ed.), *The Hermeneutics Reader* (repr. from *TZ* 13 [1957], Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), pp. 242-48.

1064 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 38. Italics are original. On Le Donne's view on history and certainty, see also Le Donne, *Historical Jesus*, pp. 72-80 (77): '*The unremembered and uninterpreted past is not history*'. Italics are original.

1065 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 41-50. Le Donne (p. 42) summarizes the contribution of Halbwachs' work as follows: '(1) Memory is the reconstruction of the past based on the needs of the present; (2) Collective memory is that which to that which is articulated into social communication; (3) All memories are conceived within social frameworks.' Cf. the discussion on Halbwachs in the introduction of chapter 2.5.

1066 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 50; D. Schacter, 'Memory Distortion: History and Current Status', in D. Schacter (ed.), *Memory Distortion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 1-46.

1067 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 50, quoting Schudson, 'Dynamics', pp. 346-64 (348).

memory of the past from the past actuality. While memory distortion commonly carries negative connotations, not least due to the extreme forms it sometimes takes (such as revisionist history for political purposes), Le Donne argues that it is neither malevolent nor always consciously strategic.¹⁰⁶⁸ Memory is always by nature distortion, whatever claims to its veracity are made, because it is always perspectival and interpreted; some things are emphasized, other things selectively ignored. Due to the inevitability of selectivity and distortion, no such thing as ‘undistorted memory’ exists. Le Donne’s view of distortion resists any passive, objective or simplistic notions of memory.¹⁰⁶⁹

Memory distortion is not a reference to the unreliability of memory. Due to the negative associations the term carries, Le Donne prefers the concept of *refraction*. He utilizes Michael Schudson’s four categories of distortion (refraction) in memory and history: (1) *distanciation* (the tendency for memories to become vague); (2) *instrumentalization* (the tendency for memories to be reinterpreted to serve the present better); (3) *conventionalization* (the tendency for memories to conform to socio-typical experiences); (4) *narrativization* (the tendency for memories to be conventionalized through the constraints of storytelling).¹⁰⁷⁰ To these categories, Le Donne adds *articulation* (the tendency for memories to conform to language conventions). He contends that narrativization and articulation are the two most significant types or roles of memory *refraction*.¹⁰⁷¹

Le Donne notes that social memory can be transmitted because it is always articulated. Articulation of social memory can take place through ritual (for instance, a religious observance, commemorative calendar), art (for instance, monuments commemorating particular events or people), and verbal or written language, which is usually required by all forms of articulation.¹⁰⁷² When memories

1068 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 50; see M. Kammen, ‘Some Patterns and Meanings of Memory Distortion in American History’, in D. Schacter (ed.), *Memory Distortion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 329-45 (329); Schudson, ‘Dynamics’, pp. 346-64 (351).

1069 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 51; Schudson, ‘Dynamics’, pp. 246-64 (348).

1070 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 52; *idem*, *Historical Jesus*, pp. 106-10 (109); Schudson, ‘Dynamics’, pp. 246-64 (348).

1071 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 52.

1072 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 52-53; Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, p. 47. Le Donne (p. 53 n. 65), notes that ritual and art rarely emerge without being accompanied by language in some way. Cf. Eve, *Behind*, pp. 92-93, who points to the celebration of the Lord’s Supper in the Pauline churches (1 Cor. 11:23-26) as an early Christian example of a commemorative ceremony, which made use of both language and ritualistic practices to rehearse ‘collective memories.’ Hymns, prophecy, preaching, teaching and reading Scripture in worship meetings would be other examples of rehearsal of traditions.

take the form of language through articulation, they must fit into the accepted semantic frameworks of the context; vocabulary, syntax, grammar, metaphor, and genre are some examples of these social frameworks. Le Donne views 'semantic frames' as the most significant of Halbwachs' 'social frameworks' because language conventions are important for the localization of memories. Memory always needs to be rendered intelligibly within its context; articulation of tradition cannot render meanings inappropriate to the context or genre of articulation. This means that the transition from memory to language involves both translation and interpretation.¹⁰⁷³ Memory tends to conform to patterns familiar to the present group.¹⁰⁷⁴

Le Donne pays close attention to *narrativization*, namely, telling one story in terms of another: articulation of social memory is subject to narrativization.¹⁰⁷⁵ The past is remembered in the form of stories because stories provide societies and individuals with natural ways to order, connect and meaningfully explain events.¹⁰⁷⁶ While providing stability, storytelling involves a distortion of what is

1073 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 52-53; Fentress and Wickham, p. 85. According to Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, p. 45, 'verbal conventions constitute what is at the same time the most elementary and the most stable framework of collective memory'. Reference in Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 54 n. 70.

1074 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 54.

1075 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 54. In social memory theory, narrativization is related to framing and keying. Framing, or the application of schemata, is important for social remembering, as the conceptual frameworks used to interpret past and present experiences determine to an extent how the present and the past are understood. What is remembered not only individually but also collectively is dependent on how the information was encoded to be remembered at the first encounter and how the information is later interpreted on occasions of recollection and explanation. One tends to remember what best fits existing frameworks, reshaping the unfamiliar to fit the customary schemata. Eve, *Behind*, p. 96, points to the capacity of social memory 'to conform to the predominant conceptual frameworks of the group to which it belongs, although the fit can often be imperfect'. The mismatch between social memory and conceptual frameworks can bring about a re-evaluation of the present. Nevertheless, framing helps the group to focus on what it deems significant in the midst of data and impressions. See also, Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, p. 27; Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, pp. 32-36; Misztal, *Theories*, pp. 15-16, 82-83, 95.

Keying, namely, 'understanding one set of events in light of another', has to do with using an understanding of a significant event (for instance, in the distant past) to make sense of another, more recent or present episode. For instance, some aspects of the story of Jesus may be keyed to the history of Israel. See Eve, *Behind*, p. 97; Misztal, *Theories*, pp. 96-97; Barry Schwartz, 'Jesus in First Century Memory – A Response', in Kirk and Thatcher (eds.), *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, pp. 249-61 (50-51). Cubitt, *History and Memory*, p. 208, states: 'Knowledge of the earlier Hebrew prophets shaped perceptions of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, both during that life and afterwards[.]' The full quotation from Cubitt in Eve, *Behind*, p. 97; cf. e.g. the views of Horsley and Rodríguez.

1076 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 54; D. Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge:

recalled; stories will conform to the socially recognizable forms and plots familiar to the culture. This often requires the simplification and adaptation of the material being emplotted; a successful narrative requires a beginning and an end, with an interesting storyline and heroic characters.¹⁰⁷⁷

Both the storyteller and the audience are forced into stereotypical patterns by narrativization. Le Donne refers to Gedi and Elam who underline the importance of stereotypes, which 'are an indispensable part of our cognitive mechanism, rational patterns according to which our impressions are modeled.'¹⁰⁷⁸ Narrativization is not only a process that shapes memories in storytelling, but it also provides the individual with a framework for interpreting her environment and role in it; this grid provided by narrativization is powerful on a subconscious level.¹⁰⁷⁹ *Metanarratives* are important for the process of narrativization, as they are stories of such a great cultural significance that all similar stories are interpreted by them. Metanarratives have significant mnemonic and distortive capabilities; individuals and societies tend to measure the climactic moments of their lives against the climactic moments in great metanarratives. Certain characters of significance in the great stories are elevated to the status of *archetypes* by the interpretative process.¹⁰⁸⁰ For example, in early modern Europe, the Bible was so often read by the people that its stories and characters began to organize their perceptions and memories.¹⁰⁸¹

Typology is also an important feature of narrativization, namely, the articulation

Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 223: 'stories appear to us as just a natural way of thinking about things, a way of ordering our knowledge [...] and representing them in our minds... Stories provided us with a set of stock explanations which underlie our predispositions to interpret reality in the ways that we do. The full quotation in Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 54. Cf. Eve, *Behind*, p. 97; Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, pp. 50, 51, 72, the idea that stories with plots are easier to remember at subsequent occasions of recollection than unrelated facts.

1077 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 55, writes 'pasts worth remembering are so because they bear resemblance to interesting plots, characters, and settings in our mind's eye. These resemblances function as "mnemotechniques," or "vehicles for memory"'. Cf. Eve, *Behind*, p. 97; Misztal, *Theories*, p. 10.

1078 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 54, quoting N. Gedi and Y. Elam, 'Collective Memory—What Is It?', *History and Memory* 8 (1996), pp. 30-50 (46).

1079 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 54.

1080 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 55-56.

1081 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 56 quotes Peter Burke, 'History as Social Memory', in T. Butler (ed.), *Memory: History, Culture, and the Mind* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), pp. 97-114 (103), who notes that, for example, the autobiography of John Bunyan 'made use of schemata; Bunyan's account of his conversion is clearly modeled, consciously or unconsciously...on the conversion of St. Paul as described in the *Acts of the Apostles*'.

of social memory, as it refers to the interpretation of the roles of more recent or new characters in the narratives by the great characters of metanarratives. While narrativization usually takes place unnoticed, the localization of the individual memories of climactic moments into social frameworks requires what Le Donne labels “grand localizations” in order to give appropriate meaning to these memories’ for the present state of mind. These moments of reinforcement make the metanarratives of collective memory more recognizable. Typology functions as a recognizable appeal to the foundational metanarratives and archetypes that have shaped the collective memory of the society or group.¹⁰⁸² Typological narrativization is not, however, a literary device employed in far-removed contexts, but rather a means of conflation between personal narratives and social narratives within a short time period, often the life of personal memory.¹⁰⁸³

Le Donne gives two basic applications of social memory theory.¹⁰⁸⁴ The first one has to do with ‘the social constraints upon personal memories’; it is focused on Halbwachs’ original conception of the theory, namely, on exploring how present cognitive states influence an individual’s perception of her personal past. Le Donne calls this application of the theory ‘memory’. The other application has more to do with ‘the commemorative activity of communities’; it aims to explore the influence of the present social contexts on the collective memories of groups. This is called ‘commemoration’. This latter form of analysis is more common in historiography, as social memory is most often applied to the examination of the commemoration of history in contexts removed by generations; personal memory is not a constraining factor of commemoration in such cases. The role of contemporary interpreters is viewed as more significant than that of the original perceivers or witnesses of the events.¹⁰⁸⁵

1082 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 56. Typological manifestation can also happen in times of political or national crisis, as a society will choose to commemorate a tradition from the past: by reaching back into the society’s history all the way to the ‘golden age’, a more noble identity can be promoted. See Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 56-57; Y. Zerubavel, ‘The Historical, the Legendary and the Incredible: Invented Tradition and Collective Memory in Israel’, in J. R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 105-25; Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country*, pp. 21-25.

1083 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 59. Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 54-59, gives several examples of cases where the conflation of personal narratives and social narratives were imagined by the individual rememberers, ‘not by mythmakers generations later’.

1084 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 60, pointing to Kirk, ‘Social and Cultural Memory’, pp. 1-24, for the subsets of the application of the theory.

1085 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 60.

Le Donne remarks that the latter method can be applied to the commemoration that takes place within the same generation of the event, but then discussion on the personal memories of those contemporary to the event cannot be avoided.¹⁰⁸⁶ In this method, the commemorative aims of the group are measured against personal memories, which echoes Halbwachs' original aim, although the interests of contemporary theorists are historiographical. Le Donne emphasizes that the people contemporary to the historical events shape the interpretation of the memory and its distortion; thus, it is not feasible to focus on the commemoration, while avoiding analyzing 'the initial perceptions, memories, and interpretations of that event'.¹⁰⁸⁷ The exploration of both 'memory' and 'commemoration' is important for the study of the Gospels and the historical Jesus; in the Gospels, 'memory' (how Jesus was initially remembered) and 'commemoration' (how these memories contributed to his commemoration in early Christianity) meet each other. If one is to apply social memory to the study of the Jesus traditions, neither approach can be independently applied.¹⁰⁸⁸

As a cautious working model which combines social memory theory with historical methodology and confronts the flawed 'passive model of recall', Le Donne presents the synchronic model of the mnemonic cycle which refers to the circular and ongoing mnemonic process; in this process, a notable symbolic category (that is, a mnemonic or mental frame) (A) drawn from social memory mnemonically localizes (D) new perceptions (C), rendering them intelligible and communicable through the necessary process of refraction that involves any of the distortions of memory (B).¹⁰⁸⁹

1086 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 61. Le Donne (p. 61 n. 96) refers to Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, pp. 11, 50-56, who suggests forty years for 'kommunikative Gedächtnis', or when the first generation begins to die, and to M. Bockmuehl, 'New Testament Wirkungsgeschichte and the Early Christian Appeal to Living Memory', in S. Barton, L. Stuckenbruck, and B. Wold (eds.), *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity: The Fifth Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium* (WUNT, 212; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), who argues for a 'living memory' that extends to the second generation (approx. 70–150 years).

1087 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 61.

1088 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 60-64 (64): 'I contend that social memory's historiographical interest in commemoration should only be applied independently when there are no personal memories to be measured. To avoid discussion of personal memory when the commemoration has been shaped by living memories of the historical event is irresponsible.'

1089 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 65-68. Le Donne assigns four letters (A–D) to the mnemonic cycle to represent the different phases of synchronic analysis of the mnemonic process, which cannot be reduced to a linear progression: (A) mnemonic category of significance; (B) trajectory of refraction; (C) contemporary perception; (D) localization of the perception (C) within the previous category (A). Cf. Le Donne's (p. 66) Figure 4.2.

John the Baptist serves to illustrate the model.¹⁰⁹⁰ First, the mental associations regarding John's appearance in the wilderness, his attire, and socioeconomic status with the category 'prophet' known to Jesus' audience stand for 'movement A', that is, a mnemonic category of significance. Second, the prophetic expectations that the perceivers of John had before perceiving him would have refracted their actual perceptions of him, for instance, in the way of conventionalization and narrativization: not only did '[g]oing out to see a prophet' presuppose 'a certain sociotypical experience within that historical context', but the significance of John was also associated with a specific Scripture (Mal. 3.1) by Q, and perhaps by Jesus; hence, movement B. Thirdly, and since movement C, namely that Jesus presupposed that John was perceived by his audience, can be taken for granted, Jesus' words 'more than a prophet' indicate that 'John's significance has the capacity to reinterpret the previous parameters of prophethood'; the previous category ('prophet') is refracted to heed the new perception of John. Thus, Malachi 3.1 is reinterpreted in light of John's significance, taken as a category of significance wherein John's significance is 'localized'; also, 'the significance of Malachi has been "reinforced" within the new perception of John the Baptist'; hence, movement D.¹⁰⁹¹

However, synchronic analysis of the mnemonic process requires a validation of mnemonic continuity through a diachronic analysis. Le Donne argues that by a diachronic analysis of memory refraction, memory trajectories can be identified, measured and triangulated; the ultimate purpose of such an analysis 'is to postulate what an early refracted memory probably looked like'. As movement A ('the previous category of significance') in the mnemonic cycle does not remain static but is always refracted 'in order to accommodate for the novum (C)'; the mnemonic process 'presupposes previous mnemonic cycles and propels subsequent mnemonic cycles'. This is illustrated by the mnemonic spiral of the diachronic continuity of memory where new perceptions refract previously established categories; hence, the reinterpretation of movement A along each memory cycle (A2, A3, etc.) and the evolution of memory refraction within each new memory cycle (B2, B3, etc.). Le Donne links movement D, namely,

1090 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 68, refers to 'the Jesus of Q' who 'appeals to' the memory of John the Baptist (Lk. 7:24-26; cf. Mt. 11:7-9). Thus, Le Donne accepts a standard solution to the Synoptic Problem.

1091 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 69-70. On the consequences of Le Donne's view for the variation and stability of the Jesus traditions, see Le Donne, *Historical Jesus*, pp. 65-71

‘localization of a new event within a previous mnemonic category’, with the ‘impact’ of the new perception (C). If the new perception does not entail anything unique or peculiar, it is not memorable. The consequences of the perception of a new event are dependent upon the extent of its impact, while the mnemonic spiral generally stabilizes new perceptions.¹⁰⁹²

Le Donne is able to grant ‘mnemonic continuity’ and speak of successive memory refractions as analyzable ‘trajectories’ due to his notion of memory refraction (distortion) which is not equated with ‘false memory’; human memory demands a considerable degree of continuity ‘in order to tie all of our shifting frames of meaning together’. He notes, however, that when moving from personal memories to commemoration, the multiplicity of trajectories that ‘branch off in separate directions’ needs to be recognized; instead of a simple mnemonic spiral, a matrix of refractive spirals connected to (and to some degree in tension with) each other needs to be imagined. Nevertheless, Le Donne stresses the concept of mnemonic continuity, as the different trajectories allow the historian ‘to comparatively analyze the development of thought and patterns of refraction’; understanding the origin of a mnemonic trajectory requires comparison and contrasting interpretive spheres (namely, mnemonic cycles) that cause the opposite refractions. It is paramount to Le Donne’s approach to emphasize navigating ‘through interpretations’ as opposed to trying to set them aside; this requires a qualified sense of ‘real’, whereby ‘that which is perceived and interpreted and thus refracted’ is meant. Le Donne, like Dunn, rejects the distinction between the real Jesus and the remembered Jesus: even for the first-generation followers of Jesus, the real Jesus was essentially the Jesus of their memory. It is the historian’s task to render a history of effects that accounts for the contrary accounts and interpretations.¹⁰⁹³

In order to illustrate that typological narrativization can function as a means of

1092 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 70-72; cf. Figure 4.3 (p. 71). Le Donne’s notion of the impact of the new perception is close to Dunn’s notion of impact.

1093 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 72-77; cf. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*. Le Donne (pp. 75-77) discusses and qualifies Jens Schröter’s view of the relationship between historical event and historical story (‘history of effects’), which neither sets aside stories about Jesus in order to search for the ‘real’ Jesus nor ignores the historical Jesus in favor of the stories, and Theissen and Winter’s notion of historical plausibility, which posits that, while the data cannot be taken at face value, human beings are not capable of falsifying historical truth comprehensively; the accidental nature of the historical data increases the ‘intuitive certainty’ about the data. See Schröter, ‘Von der Historizität der Evangelien’, pp. 163-212 (205-6); Theissen and Winter, *The Plausible Jesus*, p. 234.

remembering, Le Donne further discusses the case of John the Baptist, placing the saying of the Matthean Jesus (Mt. 11.12-15) first on a typological cycle and then on a typological spiral. As for the typological cycle and synchronic analysis, the text appeals to Elijah, which functions as a category from the Hebrew Bible; Jesus' saying would evoke specific narratives from 1 and 2 Kings (for instance, the taking up of Elijah to heaven in 2 Kings 2); here 'the category seems to be eschatological and evokes memories from Malachi's appendix' (Mal. 4.5-6); hence, movement A. Jesus' claim that John 'is Elijah, who was to come' indicates that John the Baptist could be the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy. Like in the case of Q, which identified John with Malachi 3.1, here John is taken as the new perception (C), and conflated with a narrative category, that is, refracted via narrativization (B). The eschatological interpretation of Elijah by Malachi points to the existence of a refraction trajectory of Elijah tradition. Elijah is then interpreted in light of John's significance by Jesus (D, 'synthesis [localization] of tradition'), which results in a re-reading of Malachi 4.5-6 by Jesus' audience if they accept his interpretation. Thus, 'Matthew's commemoration of Elijah was localized within perceptions of John, and John's significance was refracted by the previous category of Malachi 4:5-6.'¹⁰⁹⁴

Le Donne, further, presents the refraction trajectory of Elijah typology as a typological spiral and continuum, highlighting four shifts of refraction (or B1–B4): Elisha as a type of Elijah (2 Kgs 2), Elisha as baptizer (2 Kgs 5.10), Malachi's Elijah as eschatological expectation, and John the Baptist as Elijah redivivus. Jesus' typological interpretation of John the Baptist indicates 'how a refraction trajectory can take on typological significance.'¹⁰⁹⁵

On the basis of this discussion on the mnemonic cycle, continuity, and typology, Le Donne outlines his historical method for studying the Jesus traditions which, while in part based on traditional historical-critical methods, introduces 'the mnemonic value of typology and the process of triangulation' to the field of historical Jesus research.¹⁰⁹⁶ Albeit not followed in a rigid order in his later analysis, Le Donne proposes a method which consists of five basic steps. (1) He surveys cultural traditions related to the given passage, charting their

¹⁰⁹⁴ Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 77-79; cf. Figure 4.4 (p. 78).

¹⁰⁹⁵ Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 79-80; cf. Figure 4.5 (p. 79). Le Donne (p. 80): '...in Matthew, we see that Jesus' appeal to Elijah's significance was eschatologically filtered through Malachi.'

¹⁰⁹⁶ Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 81-86, 87-91.

interpretive trajectories previous to, parallel to, and following the text or subject; this step is regularly used in historical Jesus research and involves the study of Jesus' first-century context,¹⁰⁹⁷ Hellenistic Judaism, the scriptural frameworks of the Hebrew Bible and Septuagint (e.g. metanarratives, archetypes, etc.).¹⁰⁹⁸ (2) He analyzes two or more manifestations of the same story or saying in the Jesus tradition, focusing specifically on 'how this tradition functions mnemonically in its respective synchronic contexts' and on manifestations of memory refraction; this step involves the study of mnemonic refraction, namely how the 'evangelist's authorial tendencies' have distorted an episode of the Jesus tradition, in a fashion similar to redaction criticism.¹⁰⁹⁹ (3) He analyzes the diachronic movement of the Jesus episode, the relations between its versions to one another, and the refraction trajectories of the given Jesus tradition; this step involves the comparison of 'different synchronic stages of the Jesus tradition (i.e., the Gospels)' and attempts to chart 'commemorative development from Q to Mark, Mark to Matthew, Mark to Luke, and so on'; the different theories that attempt to solve the Synoptic Problem originate in this kind of discussion.¹¹⁰⁰ (4) He considers 'the possibility that the trajectory emerged prior to the tradition's literary form', if the synchronic

1097 Le Donne does not discuss the first-century context at length in *The Historiographical Jesus*, but in *The Historical Jesus* his view is consonant with those who take seriously the oral nature of the transmission of the Jesus traditions. Consider Le Donne, *Historical Jesus*, pp. 65-71 (69-70): 'Understanding the difference between literate culture and oral culture is important for us because Jesus was first remembered by a largely oral culture. His words and deeds were not initially recorded, nor were they archived. Jesus' words were *remembered* by an oral community. Every time Jesus told a parable worth remembering it was remembered by several witnesses with degrees of variance and stability.' Italics are original.

1098 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 81, 82. Le Donne (p. 82) notes that the purpose of this step is 'to establish a tradition trajectory whereby a particular fountainhead (a text, or group of texts) has taken a special cultural significance...it is the movement from [A] to B that is available for analysis.'

1099 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 82, 83-84. Le Donne (p. 83) writes '[w]hen...the evangelist's tendencies involve the application of scriptural categories to the Jesus tradition, one can expect the episode to be localized within such mnemonic frameworks. This corresponds to the movement from B to C in [the mnemonic cycle]. One can also expect that the NT category reinterprets the significance...of the scriptural category. This corresponds to the movement from C to D [in the mnemonic cycle]. The synthesis (or mnemonic reinforcement/localization) of old and new categories promote the contemporary relevance of the scriptural category and thus propel the distortion trajectory of the fountainhead. This corresponds to the movement from D to A in [the mnemonic cycle] and anticipates the movement from D to [A2 in the typological cycle].'

1100 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 82, 84 (84). Le Donne (p. 84) notes that this step is entirely dependent on one's 'ability to establish two or more refractive tendencies that are suggestive of a particular interpretative trajectory.'

context of the traditions can be viewed as representing ‘a particular sphere along a diachronic refraction trajectory’; this step involves – and distinguishes Le Donne’s whole method of applying memory studies to the Jesus traditions from the views previously discussed in this chapter – consideration of whether the tradition has its origins ‘in memory or invention’ with the help of the criteria of authenticity.¹¹⁰¹

(5) He attempts to triangulate toward ‘the most plausible historical scenario’ according to the trajectories, if diverging redaction trajectories can be established and the tradition can be viewed as an early and widespread memory of Jesus; the notion of triangulation ‘describes the mnemonic sphere that best accounts for the trajectories of memory’. To illustrate the final step of triangulation, Le Donne returns to John the Baptist; as a historical person, John is to account for both the trajectory from Jewish prophetic typologies to Q and Matthew and the trajectory to John 1.19-21 (“‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ And he said, “I am not.”)), which directly contradicts Jesus’ saying and the Elijah typology in Matthew 11.12-15.¹¹⁰²

In the course of his exegetical chapters, Le Donne applies his method to the title Son of David, which he views as a category of the early Christian social memory of Jesus.¹¹⁰³ He follows the mnemonic trajectories of the Son of David typology, starting from a narrative schema in the Hebrew Bible and working his way through ancient Jewish texts to its early Christian refractions in the Jesus

1101 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 82, 84, 87-91, 176, 195, 252 n. 107, 265, 267. Le Donne (pp. 87-91) qualifies the notions of ‘authenticity’ and ‘historicity’ in accordance with his methodology, which maintains that all memory is refracted, and there is no access to the past actuality or ‘objective history’ in order to verify ‘what actually happened.’ Nevertheless, Le Donne does not avoid the question of the origin of the Jesus traditions, but attempts to establish ‘whether a story originated in the perceptions contemporary to the historical event.’ He employs the criteria of multiple attestation, embarrassment, contrary tendency, multiple forms, coherence, and Semitisms and Semitic influence to address the question of origin. He stresses that the use of the criteria is only one stage of his historical method; the question of ‘historicity’ is not all that there is to the historian’s task. Cf. the views of Kelber, Dunn, Horsley, Rodríguez, Keith, Allison.

1102 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 82, 84-86 (86); cf. Figure 4.6 (p. 86). Le Donne (p. 84) describes ‘triangulation’ as charting toward a historical portrait. On triangulation, also see Le Donne, *Historical Jesus*, pp. 120-32 (126-132). Le Donne, *Historical Jesus*, p. 130, writes ‘It is when the editors of [the Gospel stories/Jesus traditions] disagree the most that we can most confidently postulate historical memory! *The fact that the memories of Jesus were refracted (bent in different directions) is the very fact that allows the historian to postulate the historical event.*’ Italics are original.

1103 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 93-257. Le Donne (p. 93) ‘examines the title “Son of David” with an aim to (1) ascertain the title’s entry point into the Jesus tradition, (2) analyze the ways that it was mnemonically refracted in the interpretation of Jesus’ ministry (and vice versa), and (3) discuss how this refracted the more developed (i.e., formalized) Jesus tradition in early Christianity.’

traditions. Le Donne first provides a general historical backdrop for measuring Jesus' actions and words. He discusses the uses of 'Son of David' in the Hebrew Bible (for instance, 2 Samuel 7, Isaiah 11) and in *Psalms of Solomon* 17, the first-century document which develops Hebrew concepts such as messianism in a Hellenistic context. In the Hebrew Bible, 'Son of David' is conflated with Solomon imagery and motifs, and in *Psalms of Solomon* 17, the 'Son of David' references of Isaiah 11 are placed within an eschatological and messianic framework as a reaction against historical events related to the inner disputes of Hasmonean dynasty (67–62 CE) and the conquest of Pompey; these historical events were typologically represented, that is, refracted and localized, by contemporary people.¹¹⁰⁴

Le Donne next turns to the question as to how the Solomonic exorcism paradigm influenced Jesus and the early Christians. He analyzes 'the mnemonic lens' utilized by Matthew, who has developed the title Son of David in the NT the most, and notes that Matthew frames Jesus' therapeutic ministry (that is, refracts the Jesus traditions about his healings and exorcisms) with 'Son of David', localizing Jesus' activity in this significant category of Solomon's reputation in order to show, against the negative connotation of foreign exorcistic practice, that Jesus' activity was in line with both royal messianism and Jewish exorcism; a conflicting mnemonic trajectory is found in the writings of Celsus and the much later Talmudic literature (*b.Sanh.* 107b), which view Jesus' healings and exorcisms in light of foreign magical practices and sorcery. The originating refractive sphere for these trajectories, Le Donne argues, is the historical Jesus who was remembered as an exorcist and healer. Matthew attempts to make Jesus' therapeutic ministry intelligible in a Jewish mnemonic sphere.¹¹⁰⁵

Le Donne argues in the next chapter that Jesus' temple procession (namely, his entry into Jerusalem and procession toward the temple) bears resemblance to a typological kingly entrance into a city, but this does not render the event unhistorical as such. Assessing Mark's version (Mk 11.1-11) of Jesus' procession, Le Donne argues that its core has its basis in memory rather than invention. He discusses the conceptual categories, for example, scriptural precedents, that are at work in the tradition. First, Mark localizes his procession narrative within a framework of Psalm 118. Second, although Mark may not have been aware of

1104 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 93-136.

1105 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 137-89.

the connection, the mnemonic trajectory from Mark's symbolic depiction can be traced to Solomon's entrance into Jerusalem on David's mule in the Succession Narrative (esp. 1 Kings 1.32-40), a category further applied to Zerubbabel by Zechariah (Zech. 9.9). This indicates that Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was localized in Zechariah 9.9 before Mark's Gospel. On the other hand, Matthew's version with Jesus riding into the city on two animals, also localizing Jesus' act within Zechariah 9.9, represents a trajectory that symbolically explains Zechariah's motif of dual messianism of king and priest present in the first century Dead Sea Scrolls; Matthew's version is 'a textbook example of refraction by narrativization', as it culminates in Jesus' rejection by the high priest at the temple.¹¹⁰⁶

In his final exegetical chapter, Le Donne detects a similar priestly and royal motif in the Son of David question in Mark 12.35-37 where Psalm 110 is quoted. He contends that 'early and widespread memories of Jesus considered him to have claimed divinely endorsed authority to destroy the present temple to make way for the temple of heaven', but does not think the Son of David question can be established as having originated in early memory. Nevertheless, Le Donne argues that the tradition had a pre-Markan origin on the basis of the fact that 'Son of David' is not a central christological category for Mark, and that the question confirms that 'Jesus' perceived rank and mission' were in opposition to the temple institution and entirely dependent upon his authority over the temple. Le Donne entertains the possibility that there was a messianic refraction of the perceptions of Jesus which localized Jesus' significance in the exegesis of Psalm 110; these perceptions would have christologically combined the priestly and royal offices, posing a direct threat to the temple priesthood. Thus, while the quotation of Psalm 110 cannot be established as 'historical', its use as an early mnemonic refraction reveals aspects of contemporary perception and the interpretation of Jesus' relation to the temple institution. Finally, Le Donne concludes that "'Son of David" provided the necessary mnemonic continuity between the historical Jesus and the Christology of early Christianity'.¹¹⁰⁷

Le Donne concludes his work by presenting the major results of his exegetical analyses of the title Son of David in light of the mnemonic cycle, the typological cycle, the mnemonic/typological spiral to demonstrate diachronic continuity.¹¹⁰⁸

1106 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 191-220 (215).

1107 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 221-57 (257).

1108 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 259-68; cf. Figures 9.1-9.6.

His ultimate conclusion regarding the historical Jesus indicates a cautious posture toward the Jesus traditions:

The historical Jesus is the memorable Jesus; he is the one who set refraction trajectories in motion and who set the initial parameters for how his memories were to be interpreted by his contemporaries...the historian does not 'find' Jesus in spite of the refractions of the evangelists. Rather the historian discerns his historical presence and impact on the basis of these refractions. It is because these refractions exist that we can confidently postulate the mnemonic sphere in which the memories of Jesus were located.¹¹⁰⁹

CRITIQUE & EVALUATION

Le Donne's view is not engaged in many other studies on social memory theory and the Jesus traditions, although it was one of the first lengthy treatments of these issues in the field of historical Jesus research.¹¹¹⁰ On a general level, some scholars have welcomed Le Donne's way of combining social memory theory and the notions of the historian's subjectivity and memory refraction with the study of the Jesus traditions.¹¹¹¹ More specifically, for instance, Tobias Hägerland views Le Donne's combination of social memory theory with the use of tradition criteria of authenticity in order to address the historicity of the Jesus traditions as plausible.¹¹¹² However, some have expressed strong criticisms about Le Donne's

¹¹⁰⁹ Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 268.

¹¹¹⁰ Albeit not a study of the historical Jesus, I find it surprising that Eve, *Behind*, pp. 86-134, fails to mention, let alone discuss, Le Donne's view or methodology in relation to social memory theory and the oral Jesus tradition.

¹¹¹¹ See e.g. Bird, *Gospel*, pp. 82 n. 27, 97 n. 94: 'All memory is filtered through the structures of pre-existing patterns, types, and categories'; '...the real Jesus was the Jesus of their memory'; cf. Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 52-64, 76. Allison, *Constructing*, p. 389: 'To biblicalize is not necessarily to invent...A memory can be told in many languages, including the language of Scripture'; cf. Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 52-59, 115-36; *idem*, 'Theological Memory Distortion', pp. 163-78. Thomas Kazen, 'Revelation, Interpretation, Tradition: Jesus, Authority and Halakic Development', in Byrskog, Holmén, and Kankaanniemi (eds.), *The Identity of Jesus*, pp. 127-160 (130): 'in Anthony Le Donne's words "[i]t is the effects of the past that are available for analysis and not the past itself"'; cf. Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 76. Redman, 'How Accurate Are Eyewitnesses', pp. 177-97 (194): 'memory is distortion'; cf. Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 52-64, 76; *idem*, 'Theological Memory Distortion', pp. 163-78 (168).

¹¹¹² Hägerland, 'The Future of the Criteria', pp. 43-65 (62), notes that 'using Le Donne's recent terminology, we should recognize that an 'authentic' tradition is one that has 'a basis in perception' more than 'a basis in invention'; cf. Le Donne, 'The Criterion of Coherence', pp.

overall method. For example, while recognizing that Le Donne uses the criteria of authenticity in his discussion on the historicity of the Jesus traditions,¹¹¹³ Ernest van Eck claims that Le Donne's approach is guilty of for what Le Donne criticizes 'the criteria approach', namely of 'historical positivism'; this criticism is, however, based on a misrepresentation of Le Donne's view.¹¹¹⁴ Also, Zeba Crook has raised concerns about Le Donne and others' use of 'memory theory' in too an optimistic way as a guarantor of the historicity of the Gospels; Crook's criticism is, however, weakened by the fact that it is mainly targeted against Le Donne's more popular-level book, *The Historical Jesus*, and does not discuss (1) the nuances of Le Donne's view of memory, which by no means undermine, for instance, memory distortion, and (2) Le Donne's key method of triangulation.¹¹¹⁵ Furthermore, there are others, who are much more approving of Le Donne's overall approach and memory studies than van Eck and Crook, but have nevertheless raised concerns about the specifics of his view, especially as for Le Donne's understanding of the historian's task regarding the historicity of the Jesus traditions. Holly Hearon, Alan Kirk, and Chris Keith, who were all among the initial reviewers of *The Historiographical*

96-114 (96), which Hägerland considers better than the dichotomy between 'memory' and 'invention' in Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 86. See the discussion below.

1113 van Eck, 'Memory', pp. 1-10 (8 n. 31); cf. Le Donne, *Historical Jesus*, pp. 48-52, 85-92, 123-29, on Le Donne's application of the criteria of authenticity on the question of Jesus' relationship with his family.

1114 van Eck, 'Memory', pp. 1-10 (5 n. 14, 17). I fail to see the logic in van Eck's (p. 5 n. 17) criticism: how does the quotation from Le Donne, *Historical Jesus*, p. 26 ('memory does not preserve the past') evince for historical positivism? Van Eck (p. 5 n. 17) asks '[w]hy, for example, is it not possible that some of Jesus' sayings (e.g., the aphorisms in Mk 10:25; 12:17) could have been remembered as Jesus uttered them?' I do not think that Le Donne would deny that these kinds of sayings *could* theoretically have been remembered as Jesus uttered them. The point of Le Donne is, however, that we cannot achieve objective certainty about such things. (I would add to this that these aphorisms in their present Greek form cannot possibly maintain *ipsissima verba Jesu* for the simple reason that Jesus probably taught them in Aramaic, which was his first language. On this see e.g. Meier, *A Marginal Jew, I*, pp. 255-68). I do not understand how Le Donne's view can be viewed as compatible with the 'historical positivism' critiqued at length, for example, in Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 1-39, which is the introductory section of his major contribution to the subject and is, for reasons unknown, completely ignored by van Eck. Le Donne has certainly attempted to redefine what 'authenticity' means, and is not guilty of plain historical positivism. See the discussion below. Cf. also my discussions on van Eck's criticisms of the memory approach above in ch. 3.5.

1115 Crook, 'Collective Memory Distortion and the Quest for the Historical Jesus', pp. 53-76; cf. Le Donne's response in Le Donne, 'The Problem of Selectivity in Memory Research', pp. 77-97, and Crook's response to Le Donne's response in Z. Crook, 'Gratitude and Comments to Le Donne', *JSHJ* 11 (2013), pp. 98-115, where Crook (p. 99 n. 2) admits: '...Le Donne's *Historiographical Jesus* is a fine, nuanced piece of scholarship. Though this work raises some of the same concerns for me as his *Historical Jesus*, those concerns are much more muted in his scholarly work.'

Jesus, have indicated that Le Donne's continuing use of the criteria of authenticity may not be compatible with his application of social memory theory to the Jesus traditions.¹¹¹⁶

Hearon, who believes, for example, that Le Donne's view of history as memory refraction is compelling, states that by attempting to locate memory refractions in history and using 'the well-worn criteria' in the process, Le Donne fails to distance himself from those he critiques.¹¹¹⁷ Also, Kirk believes that while Le Donne has significantly advanced the historiographical discussion in Jesus research, combining the standard criteria with his proposed method is vulnerable to criticism.¹¹¹⁸ Furthermore, Keith acknowledges that postmodern historiography, espoused by Le Donne, has proved the error of historical positivism, namely, the assumption that one can attain objective reconstruction of the past,¹¹¹⁹ that Le Donne's description of the general historical task of postulating the different interpretive trajectories ('what could have happened in the past') as helpful,¹¹²⁰ and that Le Donne's project of triangulation of memory refractions provides a way forward for scholars of the historical Jesus; however, this is only so '...if/once they dispense with the criteria of authenticity'.¹¹²¹ Keith admits that Le Donne's refinement of the authenticity language in his use of the criteria is significant, but still argues that Le Donne ignores the methodological basis of the criteria

1116 See H. E. Hearon, review of Anthony Le Donne's *The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Sone of David*, *CBQ* 74 (2012), pp. 163-65 (165); A. Kirk, review of Anthony Le Donne's *The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Sone of David*, *RBL* 4 (2011), pp. 1-5 (4); C. Keith, review of Anthony Le Donne's *The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Sone of David*, *RQ* 53 (2011), pp. 117-18; *idem*, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 64-65, 67; *idem*, 'The Indebtedness', pp. 25-48 (44-46).

1117 Hearon, review, pp. 163-165.

1118 Kirk, review, pp. 1-5 Kirk (p. 4) wonders 'whether the methodologies can be productively conjoined' and he remarks that many of the standard criteria 'are calibrated toward making the positivistic distinction between fact and interpretation in the tradition to which Le Donne's methodology is so averse, and the origins of the criteria approach lie in the form-critical construal of the tradition as a history of often radical discontinuities'.

1119 Keith, *Scribal*, p. 71; cf. Le Donne, *Historical Jesus*. See also Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 175-76 n. 31, where Keith distinguishes his own view of historiography, which he says 'coheres with that of Schröter and Allison', from that of Le Donne: 'Whereas Le Donne...proceeds...to qualify Schröter by claiming that scholars cannot speak intelligently about an actual past that existed apart from perception..., I affirm with Schröter that scholars can at least offer theories "about how things could have been." No doubt, Le Donne would consider my appropriation of social memory theory to these ends to be closer to critical realism than his appropriation of social memory theory.' Cf. Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 8-10. I consider this more a matter of emphasis than considerable difference.

1120 Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, p. 67, also see pp. 64-65.

1121 Keith, 'The Indebtedness', pp. 25-48 (45).

approach (namely, separating history from interpretation) and is open to the criticism that his method invalidates his validation of the authenticity criteria.¹¹²²

Regarding these critiques, it has to be noted first that Le Donne does not end up among those he critiques uncritically. He is very well aware of the roots of the criteria of authenticity and that those roots go further than the early form criticism of Bultmann and others.¹¹²³ More to the point, in order to determine whether Le Donne's use of both social memory theory/his notion of memory refraction and the criteria of authenticity to discuss the question of the historicity of the Jesus traditions can be viewed as contradictory, one must understand how Le Donne defines 'historicity' and 'authenticity'; surely, Le Donne borrows methodological considerations regarding the criteria of authenticity, for example, from Meier,¹¹²⁴ who would probably fall into the category of 'positivism' in the estimations of those advocating for a memory approach,¹¹²⁵ but Le Donne does not do so uncritically: he redefines the authenticity language in light of memory studies, while benefitting from the long tradition of methodological discussion on the historicity of the Jesus traditions; it is not the Jesus historian's task to attempt to find the 'certain' and 'objective facts' about Jesus.¹¹²⁶ Le Donne has no unrealistic expectations about the results of the criteria due to his hermeneutical considerations. Thus, it is not accurate to define Le Donne as adopting the methodological basis of the criteria approach as such.

One could, of course, keep pressing the point and argue that the criteria are not necessary: let the memory refractions stand as they are.¹¹²⁷ However, whatever

1122 Keith, 'The Indebtedness', pp. 25-48 (46); *idem*, review, pp. 117-18. Further, Keith, 'The Narratives of the Gospels and the Historical Jesus', pp. 426-55.

1123 See Le Donne, 'The Rise of the Quest for an Authentic Jesus: An Introduction to the Crumbling Foundations of Jesus Research', in Keith and Le Donne (eds.), *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, pp. 3-21; also Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 87-91; cf. Keith's view, which greatly emphasizes the form-critical roots of the criteria approach.

1124 See the definitions of the criteria in Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 87-91; cf. Meier, *A Marginal Jew, I*, pp. 167-95.

1125 See e.g. the criticism of Meier's view in Rodríguez, 'The Embarrassing Truth About Jesus', pp. 132-51 (148-49): 'Meier set out to distinguish historically authentic data apart from any predetermined/ -ing interpretation of data. But the quest for data can only ever proceed with interpretation as its guide!', citing Wright, *Victory of God*, p. 33 on interpretation from the viewpoint of critical realism.

1126 Cf. e.g. Le Donne, *Historiographical*, p. 76: 'It is the effects of the past that are available for analysis and not the past itself.'

1127 Cf. Hearon, review, pp. 163-65 (165); also, Keith, 'The Narratives of the Gospels and the Historical Jesus', pp. 426-55, who argues that the use of the criteria of authenticity cannot be reconciled with a memory approach for epistemological reasons.

method one chooses for the study of the Jesus traditions, if one wishes to discuss the historical Jesus, one has to make judgments about ‘historicity’, no matter how strong or weak these judgments are.¹¹²⁸ As has been pointed out by Hägerland, who labels Le Donne’s view ‘a moderate variety of postmodern historiography’ and recognizes that Le Donne avoids speaking of a non-remembered, non-interpreted, or non-perceived past, one needs to have some principles; as Le Donne attempts to do, the criteria can be used for ‘the task of judging whether a tradition has its basis in perception or invention.’¹¹²⁹ In order to do this, it seems only legitimate to utilize a methodology that is as nuanced as possible; Le Donne’s hermeneutical framework, which rejects historical positivism, his understanding of memory studies and memory refraction, combined with the refined understanding of the task of the criteria, is an articulated one and is capable of yielding concrete results. This is not a naïve claim for the historicity of the Jesus traditions. It is also explicit that Le Donne does not imagine the discussion on ‘historicity’ to be the only task of the historian of Jesus, but rather only one step among other steps.¹¹³⁰ Le Donne shows in practice that, while the criticism of atomistic usage of the criteria is in many ways to the point,¹¹³¹ there is still room for methodological discussion on the question of ‘historicity’ which involves the criteria of authenticity.¹¹³²

1128 Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 87-91 (87) argues for a weak sense of authenticity: ‘The aim is not to dig for an unrefracted memory...the historical goal is not to verify what “actually happened”’. Cf. Keith, *Jesus’ Literacy*, p. 65, who argues for a total rejection of the criteria and that rejecting the criteria approach’s division of the Jesus traditions into authentic and inauthentic does not mean one cannot make decisions about the historical accuracy of the traditions.

1129 Hägerland, ‘The Future of the Criteria’, pp. 43-65 (63). Hägerland (p. 63) concludes: ‘As long as the nature of historical inquiry is acknowledged – avoiding the confusion between historical reconstruction and the historical past itself – there is no reason why criteria should not be used for the task of judging whether a tradition has its primary basis in perception or invention; indeed, some criteria or principles are required for this task. Le Donne’s work, combining social memory theory with a use of conventional criteria, demonstrates that this can be done very well.’

1130 Cf. the five steps in Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 81-82.

1131 Cf. the numerous articles in Keith and Le Donne (eds.), *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*.

1132 Again, Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 87-91, application of the criteria thereafter. Hägerland, ‘The Future of the Criteria’, pp. 43-65 (62-65), using in part Le Donne’s terminology, suggests three ways in which the criteria should be used more cautiously in the future: (1) an ‘authentic’ tradition must be redefined to mean a tradition that has ‘a basis in perception’ more than ‘a basis in invention’; this point involves the notion that there is no clear line between ‘authentic’ and ‘inauthentic’; (2) the criteria must be cautiously selected, applied, and internally correlated; for instance, the so-called criterion of *double* dissimilarity must be abandoned, as ‘dissimilarity to Judaism cannot function as an argument in favour of historicity’; (3) the criteria alone cannot mean ‘a method’ for historical Jesus research, but ‘Jesus research has to involve a full method

On the critical side, Le Donne's treatment of the relevance of 'memory' to the study of the historical Jesus (namely, the period of when personal memories were still around) in *The Historiographical Jesus* does not address the question of eyewitness testimony, nor does it discuss the important works of Samuel Byrskog and Richard Bauckham in this respect.¹¹³³ Nonetheless, overall Anthony Le Donne's view is nuanced; its conclusions regarding the Jesus traditions are cautious. It is also based on a solid view of first-century media culture,¹¹³⁴ relatively low literacy rates, and the oral nature of the culture with the important role of texts, although this is not explicitly expressed in *The Historiographical Jesus*.¹¹³⁵ While Le Donne surely could have strengthened his hermeneutical discussion by discussing more recent works¹¹³⁶ and Paul Ricoeur¹¹³⁷, he offers important hermeneutical considerations, such as the circularity and necessity of interpretation, that are sometimes neglected by historians of Jesus despite their necessity; on the basis of this discussion, Le Donne offers a middle ground regarding 'historicity', with a clearly defined method which takes seriously social memory theory, the nature of the Jesus traditions as early Christian social memory, and transmission as refraction; it is a method of triangulation which he puts to use in his discussion of the title Son of David. The contribution of Le Donne's work to the study of the Jesus traditions and the whole field of historical Jesus research needs to be acknowledged and discussed by any well-informed scholar who attempts to make sense of the memory approach and its methodological diversity.

3.8 IMPORTANCE OF EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY

After discussing the different views that apply social memory theory and studies

for correlating [an 'authentic' tradition] to other 'authentic' items, to the general impression of the Gospels narratives and to the context of first-century Judaism.

1133 Cf. e.g. Le Donne, *Historiographical*, pp. 60-64. Admittedly, Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, may not have been available for Le Donne at the time of writing. Le Donne, 'The Problem of Selectivity in Memory Research', pp. 77-97, addresses Bauckham's view. These questions and scholarly views are tackled below in the final section of Chapter 3 (ch. 3.8).

1134 'First-century media culture' is the term used by Anthony Le Donne and Tom Thatcher (eds.), *The Fourth Gospel in First-Century Media Culture* (European Studies on Christian Origins; LNTS, 426; London: T & T Clark, 2011).

1135 However, see Le Donne, *Historical Jesus*, pp. 65-71 (69-70).

1136 As noted by Hearon, review, pp. 163-65 (164).

1137 As noted by Keith, review, pp. 117-18. Le Donne, 'The Problem of Selectivity in Memory Research', pp. 77-97 (96) refers to Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, p. 221, in response to Crook's critique against Le Donne's use of the telescope as an analogy for memory distortion.

on oral tradition to the Jesus traditions, it is necessary to address the final question of eyewitness testimony and individual eyewitnesses. What was the role of the original eyewitnesses of Jesus' ministry, his words and deeds, in the process of the formation and transmission of the Jesus traditions? It has been indicated in the previous sections of this study that there were particular individuals who performed the Jesus traditions in early Christian communities; however, is there any way of knowing who these individuals were, how they exercised their authority in the case they indeed were authoritative? The long-standing influence of form-critical assumptions about the anonymous communities that freely transmitted the Jesus traditions in an uncontrolled fashion has been questioned with appeals to the importance of eyewitness testimony and individual eyewitnesses by Samuel Byrskog (b.1957)¹¹³⁸ and Richard Bauckham (b.1946)¹¹³⁹. The final part of this research-historical section delves into their views which argue in their distinct ways that the testimonies of early eyewitnesses significantly influenced the early phases of the Jesus traditions until the writing of the Gospels.¹¹⁴⁰

3.8.1 SAMUEL BYRSKOG

Samuel Byrskog's *Story as History – History as Story* (2000),¹¹⁴¹ which lays out a broad framework of oral history and eyewitness testimony (*autopsy*) in ancient historiography and the environment of the New Testament, is his most thorough and relevant work regarding the question of eyewitness testimony and the transmission of the Jesus traditions in early Christianity.¹¹⁴² Byrskog begins by

1138 Professor of New Testament, University of Lund (2007–), Byrskog was a student of Birger Gerhardsson.

1139 Retired Professor of New Testament Studies and Bishop Wardlaw Professor in the University of St. Andrews.

1140 Limiting the discussion to Byrskog and Bauckham is reasonable, as the two scholars together – and despite their differences – seem to have become the ones most often mentioned in relation to the question.

1141 Byrskog, *Story as History*, is a continuation from Byrskog's 1994 dissertation, Byrskog, *Jesus the Only Teacher*, where Byrskog argued extensively for the centrality of Jesus as the only teacher of his disciples in relation to the transmission of the Jesus traditions in the Matthean community; Byrskog built his thesis upon Gerhardsson's model of comparison with rabbinic transmission and Riesner's discussion on the transmission of the Jesus tradition. Further on the connections between Byrskog's two books, see P. M. Head, 'The Role of Eyewitnesses in the Formation of the Gospel Tradition: A Review Article of Samuel Byrskog, *Story as History – History as Story*', *TynBul* 52.2 (2001), pp. 275-94 (275-83).

1142 In addition to Byrskog, *Story as History*, see also e.g. Byrskog, 'Introduction', pp. 1-20; *idem*, 'The Transmission of the Jesus Tradition', in Holmén & Porter (eds.), *Handbook*, pp. 2:1465-95; *idem*, 'A New Perspective on the Jesus Tradition', pp. 459-71; *idem*, 'Review of Rudolf Bultmann', pp.

noting that the purpose of his project is not ‘to defend the reliability of the gospel tradition’¹¹⁴³, but rather to provide a better historical understanding of the general problem of ‘*the dynamics involved behind the past in the present and the present in the past as the gospel tradition evolved*’. Byrskog’s work is triggered by what he considers a lack of nuance in previous scholarly treatments of the relationship between story and history, often wrongly conceived as a dichotomy.¹¹⁴⁴

Based on his appropriation of the works of oral historians Paul Thompson (b.1935) and Jan Vansina (1929–2017), Byrskog argues for a theoretical framework of oral history as a valid historiographical way of understanding how ancient historians related to the past; oral history, he notes, is ‘a move from below’, an investigation of the oral evidence of the witnesses of an event as the historian’s raw material. Oral evidence is not generally to be considered superior to written evidence, but it can, to an extent, be more reliable than a written document because the historian is able to sense the social clues of her witnesses. The historian must recognize that ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ are mixed in all human perception and memory, whether individual or collective; the notion of oral history avoids ‘the extreme documentary objectivity’ and ‘the relativistic subjectivity’. Byrskog notes, in line with Thompson, that ‘[o]ral history becomes oral tradition as the accounts are handed down by word of mouth to later generations’; while this process is subject to social pressures, Goody and Watt’s theory of homeostasis indicates that the story not only mirrors the present but also reflects ‘what happened before history became story’.¹¹⁴⁵

According to Byrskog, the modern discipline of oral history is helpful because

549-55; *idem*, ‘A Century with the Sitz im Leben’, pp. 1-27; most recently, *idem*, ‘Philosophical Aspects on Memory: Aristotle, Augustine and Bultmann’, in Byrskog, Hakola, and Jokiranta (eds.), *Social Memory and Social Identity in the Study of Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, pp. 23-47. Also see the accounts of Byrskog’s view in Eve, *Behind*, pp. 135-43; Head, ‘The Role of Eyewitnesses’, pp. 275-94 (283-92).

1143 Cf. the study with this very title by Byrskog’s teacher, Gerhardsson, *The Reliability of the Gospel Tradition*.

1144 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 1-17 (6). Italics are original. Some of the key concepts upon which Byrskog aims to shed light are ‘past and present’, ‘transmission’, ‘history’, ‘historicity’, ‘reliability’, ‘objectivity’, and ‘subjectivity’.

1145 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 26-33 (26-30); cf. Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past. Oral History* (Opus books; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2 edn, 1988), *passim*; Vansina, *Oral Tradition, passim*. Despite Vansina’s strict distinction between oral tradition and oral history, Byrskog (p. 31-32) notes that for Vansina, oral tradition is both of the present and of the past. Byrskog refers to Thompson and some other oral historians constantly in the subsequent chapters.

it resists the temptation of viewing only the contemporary materials as relevant for historical investigation; due to its interest in more than ‘the objective facts’, it can be placed in dialogue with ancient conceptions of historiography. For Byrskog ‘*history [is] an account of what people have done and said in the past, which means that various kinds of biased, pragmatic and didactic features can be part of the writing of history*’. He studies ancient Greek and Roman historians and their culture-specific patterns of oral history in order to shed some light on the socio-cultural setting of the inception and development of the Gospel tradition.¹¹⁴⁶

An important concept in Byrskog’s investigation is *autopsy* which he defines as ‘*a visual means to gather information concerning a certain object, a means of inquiry, and thus also a way of relating to that object*’.¹¹⁴⁷ Byrskog demonstrates that for ancient Greek and Roman historians, such as Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, Josephus, and Tacitus, the ideal was to write about the past, based on direct or indirect autopsy, namely on what they had themselves seen or learned from eyewitnesses who functioned as oral sources. The pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus’ dictum ‘Eyes are surer witnesses than ears’ was important for these ancient historians. A diachronic dimension was given to their historical writings, in other words, story as history was created by the use of eyewitness accounts. Byrskog argues that ‘the notion of the primacy of sight’ was in general ‘deeply embedded in the socio-cultural setting of the New Testament’.¹¹⁴⁸

Regarding the interplay between orality and textuality, and more specifically oral sources and written sources, Byrskog notes that, despite the cultural preference of ‘autopsy as orality’ and hearing over reading and writing, written sources were used by ancient historians to supply information that could not be had through autopsy. Attitudes toward writing were ambiguous but the permanent nature of written sources was appreciated, as they functioned as aids to memory and could preserve records about events for posterity.¹¹⁴⁹ While there were accusations against some ancient historians’ use of written sources, written sources were

1146 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 40-47 (44). Italics are original. Byrskog (p. 44) argues that the New Testament Gospels ‘have certain generic resemblances with the *bioi*, though the *bioi*, being part of a very flexible encomiastic genre, usually lack any serious sensitivity to the factual pastness of history to testify to the existence of an anecdotal interest in personality’.

1147 Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 48.

1148 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 48-65 (65), 93-99.

1149 Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 116: ‘*Writing was not avoided as such, but functioned mainly as a memorandum of what the person already should remember from oral communication*’. Italics are original. Cf. Gerhardsson’s view above (ch. 2.2).

sometimes used to supplement other visual and oral/aural sources. In contrast to the modern habit of reliance on written materials, ancient historians usually compared or cross-checked different oral accounts or hearsay and autopsy.¹¹⁵⁰

As for the role of eyewitnesses as interpreters, Byrskog argues that autopsy was not passive observation, but that it always had to do with an understanding and interpretation of the events that were witnessed. With some conditions, Byrskog links the modern practice of oral history with ancient historians like Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius, and Josephus, who not only generally viewed the involved testimonies of active participants as the most reliable sources, but also demonstrated by their own experiences that *'the ideal eyewitness is the one who is closest to the events, involved and participating'*.¹¹⁵¹ For instance, Josephus, in his writing about the Jewish war, considered his own participation in the events and his eyewitness status to be of importance. Byrskog notes that both the eyewitnesses, through their social involvement and active participation, and the historians, who attempted to create coherent narratives on the basis of oral testimonies, were subject to the principles of interpretation; the ideological and conceptual frameworks, selectivity, and memory which was highly regarded but recognized as vulnerable by some historians, all influenced both the eyewitnesses as informants and the historians as narrators.¹¹⁵²

In this regard, Byrskog recognizes the value of social memory theory, at least, to an extent.¹¹⁵³ The eyewitnesses and informants of the historians cannot be seen separately from their social identity and setting: *'it is the "social memory" of that larger setting which constantly nourishes the interpretative drive of the eyewitnesses as their oral history emerges and develops into forms of oral tradition'*.¹¹⁵⁴ Byrskog also acknowledges, in line with Halbwachs, that remembering always takes place in a social location, and the past is collectively nurtured by groups and cultures;

1150 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 107-27. Byrskog (p. 123) notes: *'The written text is not permanent in the sense that it is entirely stabilized, but in the sense that it is available as a fixed record for a longer period of time. It...can be repeated and embellished at a later point. That was the essential reason for consulting written material.'* Italics are original.

1151 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 156-57. Italics are original.

1152 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 145-65 (156-57), 254-265. Byrskog (pp. 254, 261) notes that, while the ancient historians 'never strived for the kind of social understanding that Thompson speaks of [with regard to modern oral history]', for them too '[w]riting history means interpreting it in an explanatory fashion'. The historian can only make sense of his own reality by the subjective elements of interpretation.

1153 A point made also by Eve, *Behind*, p. 140.

1154 Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 153. Italics are original.

however, despite noting that ancient authors (such as the early Christian ones) were not individualistic but rather part of collectivistic cultures, he rejects interpretations of Halbwachs which would undermine the distinctiveness of the individuals against the collective.¹¹⁵⁵

Byrskog argues that the ancient historians were interested in historical truth; in fact they had to sometimes emphasize it due to their preference for the involvement and participation of the eyewitnesses and the biases and subjectivity of their accounts. Byrskog points to, for example, Thucydides and Polybius to demonstrate that some ancient historians were interested in factual truth in terms of accuracy, although their writing of history was by definition a writing of interpreted history: the notion ‘that an interest for factual truth did not exist in antiquity’ has to be rejected.¹¹⁵⁶ However, this does not mean that the influence of rhetorical techniques should be undermined. Although there was some kind of a standard against which ‘lying historians’ could be judged by some authors, rhetorical patterns of persuasion were integral parts of speaking and writing also in the first century, so much so that, for example, Quintilian (c.35–c.96 CE) indicated that the persuasion of the judge overruled factuality in legal cases and Livy (59 BCE–17 CE) engaged in historical writing which was mainly interested in a literary and rhetorical pursuit instead of genuine historical research.

Nevertheless, Byrskog aims to resolve the apparent contradiction by noting that ‘the hard core of the past’ did not lose its character regardless of the reality that gifted rhetoricians would have been expected to place it ‘within the richly ornamented pattern of a story’, and that distinguishing ‘the hard core from the elaboration’ would sometimes have been very hard.¹¹⁵⁷ While Byrskog also acknowledges that claims of autopsy were used in an apologetic and rhetorical fashion to impress an audience all the way to the first century, some of Josephus’ claims being examples of this (though Byrskog does not take this to imply Josephus’ complete untrustworthiness), he nevertheless maintains that valid claims to autopsy and factual truth were also made despite the narrativizing process. Byrskog reasons that ‘the most persuasive arguments will always be the ones that build solidly on knowledge derived from facts.’¹¹⁵⁸

1155 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 254–55. See the critical discussion below.

1156 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 179–90 (183).

1157 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 200–213 (213).

1158 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 214–23 (223). Byrskog continues: ‘*Persuasion and factual credibility were supplementary rhetorical virtues, not contradictory*’. Italics are original.

Along the way, as the argument of *Story as History* develops, Byrskog applies the general discussion on autopsy and historical truth in the Greek and Roman environment to the early Christians and the Jesus traditions. Byrskog discusses the likely early Christian candidates for eyewitness status.¹¹⁵⁹ He argues that not many of the people who witnessed Jesus became informants, namely, people who shared what they had seen with those who were in touch with larger portions of the Jesus tradition.¹¹⁶⁰ Nonetheless, Byrskog argues that among the important eyewitnesses were (1) some anonymous Galilean village people who would spread rumors about Jesus based on their experiences of him (as evinced by Mark's Gospel),¹¹⁶¹ (2) certain individuals of the twelve disciples¹¹⁶² of whom (3) Peter is the most prominent,¹¹⁶³ (4) Jesus' family members (his mother Mary, his brother James),¹¹⁶⁴ and (5) Mary Magdalene along with other women witnesses to the crucifixion, burial, and the empty tomb, whose testimonies would have been viewed as embarrassing in that context but were nevertheless legitimated by 'the authoritative witness of men.'¹¹⁶⁵ Regarding the role of eyewitnesses for

1159 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 65-91, 101-7, 165-76, 190-98, 266-69. Byrskog (pp. 166-67) rejects Kelber's notion of social identification and preventive censorship which 'implies...the discontinuity and disruption of the past that emerges from the early Christians' keen interest and involvement in the matters of the present', and asks 'Why would the involvement, the keen and enthusiastic attachment to the person and teaching of Jesus, be an obstacle to the truth for [the early Christians]?'

1160 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 65-67.

1161 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 67-69. Byrskog (p. 68) notes that the phenomenon of rumor is most evident 'in the fact that sick persons come up to Jesus or are being brought to him' (e.g. Mk 5.27, 10.47).

1162 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 69-70, 167-75. Byrskog does not question the historicity of the twelve. Peter, James, and John are said to have assumed important roles after Jesus' death (cf. e.g. Gal. 2.9). Regarding James, 'the Lord's brother', Byrskog (pp. 167-75), argues that the Letter of James was not only written by him but it also includes traces of his autopsy; while James would not have been involved with the Jesus movement from very early on, he would have later seen and heard his brother speak on several occasions, familiarizing himself profoundly with the teachings of Jesus also contained in the Sermon on the Mount/Plain (cf. e.g. Jas 5.12/Mt. 5.34-37). Byrskog argues that a more primitive form of some Jesus traditions is to be found in the Letter of James, namely James' autopsy in epistolary form.

1163 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 71-73. Byrskog (p. 73) states: 'As the most prominent disciple, he is of course the most important eyewitness'. On Peter, see further Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 269-99; also the discussion below.

1164 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 82-90; 266-69. However, Byrskog (p. 268): 'It is significant that Jesus' relatives, for all we know, do not appear as informants about any larger parts of the gospel narratives. Mary's treasured memories concern only some aspects of Jesus' birth [ie., Luke's birth narrative], and they are entirely integrated into other items of information. James, the ideal informer according to ancient standards, limits himself to certain blocks of material which deal mainly with ethical issues recorded as Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount/Plain.'

1165 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 73-78, 78-82, 190-98.

the formation of the Jesus tradition and the inclusion of their autopsy into the oral history of early Christians, Byrskog concludes: *'The historical Jesus event was experienced through their eyes and their ears and soon became historic by entering into the present, oral currencies of observers such as Peter, the women, James and Mary; it became their own oral history which they proclaimed to others.'*¹¹⁶⁶

Turning to autopsy in early Christian texts, Byrskog studies the autopsy claims in Paul, Luke, John, and 2 Peter. While recognizing that the early Christian writers' narratives were not similar to those of ancient historians, Byrskog nevertheless sets out to study how 'autopsy entered into the world of the early Christian stories, how it became narrativized, how it functioned as a bridge between history and story'.¹¹⁶⁷ First, he argues that in Paul, history and autopsy serve as apostolic legitimation. While Paul did not deny the importance of the earthly Jesus, he claimed autopsy to the risen Christ to legitimate his own apostolic work (1 Cor. 9.1, 15.5-8; Gal. 1.6).¹¹⁶⁸ Second, Byrskog notes that in Luke-Acts references to autopsy carry apostolic testimony. The Lukan prologue, which according to Byrskog covers both Luke and Acts, indicates that the tradition that was available to Luke from 'the eyewitnesses and the ministers of the word' was sufficient for his writing because it was rooted in the oral history of people who were present at the events (Lk. 1.1-4). Further, Acts 1.21-22 on the replacing of Judas indicates that an apostle had to be an eyewitness to Jesus. Also, the apostles' special role as eyewitnesses is confirmed by Peter (Acts 10.39a, 41).¹¹⁶⁹ Third, despite an emphasis on seeing 'with the eyes of faith' in the Johannine literature, Byrskog contends that there are references to autopsy as authorial legitimation (Jn 19.35, 21.24; 1 Jn 1.1-4).¹¹⁷⁰ Fourth, Byrskog explains how the pseudonymous 2 Peter, with Peter's voice, refers to Peter's autopsy of the transfiguration of Jesus to defend the reality of parousia.¹¹⁷¹ Byrskog concludes the discussion by considering the question of

1166 Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 106. Italics are original.

1167 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 223-53 (224).

1168 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 224-28. Byrskog (p. 227) argues that, '[w]hile the autopsy of Paul...has an intrinsic revelatory character, it is a revelation...that is as real and historical as the ordinary observation of the other concrete persons and events. It is part of his own oral history, and it is a history that now enters in to the story of apostolic preaching – history as kerygma.'

1169 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 228-35.

1170 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 235-42. Byrskog (p. 242) comments on 1 John 1.1-4: '*By understanding autopsy as part of oral history of a group, the author grounds and legitimizes the present writing in the real life of Jesus of history.*' Italics are original.

1171 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 242-44. Byrskog (p. 244) concludes that Peter's eyewitness testimony '*has entered into the narrative substructure of an entirely pseudonymous writing, even*

if the early Christian inclusion of autopsy into their narrativizing processes is an indication of ‘traces of real people who served as informants concerning the words and deeds of Jesus’; Byrskog contends that, while autopsy claims seem to become stronger with time and an increased need for establishing the reliability of the eyewitnesses (especially, in the later Luke and Matthew), this is only one side of the matter: both the scarcity and modesty of the autopsy claims in the NT suggest that elaboration for a purely apologetic purpose seems unlikely, and even the elaborated claims to autopsy show interest in the difference between past and present, and in historical truth.¹¹⁷²

Byrskog also considers the relationship of Peter’s eyewitness testimony to Mark. He discusses Eusebius’ quote from Papias (the second-century bishop of Hierapolis) in which Mark is described as Peter’s interpreter, who wrote down what he could remember of Peter’s teaching which Peter had given ‘in the form of chreiai’ (*Hist. eccl.* 3.39.15).¹¹⁷³ Byrskog argues that the scholarly dismissal of the historical value of Papias’ note, which Papias claims to have received from John the Elder, is unfounded, as Papias’ writing does not say anything extremely peculiar in the context of ancient historiography and oral history; in fact, Byrskog contends, Papias seems to have done what an evangelist like Mark would do, namely ‘rely on an important eyewitness and interrogate him from the perspective of his own present concerns and conceptions’; on the basis of the lack of ‘explicit anti-gnostic polemic’ in Papias, Byrskog does not accept the popular view that Papias’ note would have been written against gnostic attempts to appeal to Peter as a champion.¹¹⁷⁴ Also, based on his argument of oral history and ancient historians’ use of autopsy, Byrskog indicates that the reference to what John the Elder was in the habit of saying places the tradition in the first century and does not appear historically implausible. Byrskog does not have a reason to doubt Papias due to

fostering, it seems pseudonymous attribution and authorship’. Italics are original.

1172 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 246-53 (247). Byrskog (p. 248) repeats his notions that ‘*the most convincing story is the one that truthfully interacts with history*’. He (p. 215) also notes: ‘Apologetics thus provides only part of the explanation why the notion of autopsy occurs in late texts. *The essential factor is not merely the need for apologetics, but time*.’ Italics are original.

1173 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 269-99 (272).

1174 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 272-75 (273-74). Byrskog (p. 274) argues that the dismissal of Papias as apologetic fiction results in part from a scholarly neglect of the fact ‘*a close study of oral history of an eyewitness brings to the fore the complex interplay between historical truth and interpreted truth on all levels of tradition and transmission, from the eyewitness’ involvement in the event to the final story, and further*’. Italics are original.

the lack of proof to the contrary.¹¹⁷⁵

Finally, Byrskog contends that there are many links between Mark and Peter in the NT traditions, and the Markan story reflects the relationship between the two.¹¹⁷⁶ He counters the arguments against the veracity of Papias' note by noting, for example, that Mark's 'deficient knowledge' of the geography of Galilee is due to his background in Jerusalem; also, his portrayal of Jewish rites is intentionally polemic and should not be considered 'misguided' according to the standards of historians.¹¹⁷⁷ Regarding the Markan outline of Jesus' ministry, Byrskog argues that Mark was familiar with Peter's sermon in Acts 10.34-43, which contains 'in some measure, not only the primitive kerygma, but the kerygma as preached by Peter', and used it in his narrativizing process.¹¹⁷⁸ Finally, Byrskog entertains the possibility that the *chreiai*¹¹⁷⁹, mentioned in Papias' note (and identified in Mark's Gospel as 'the Petrine chreiai' by Vincent Taylor), can be taken to imply that Peter employed them in his preaching.¹¹⁸⁰ Byrskog's conclusion is, however, cautious; he concludes that only a few of the Markan chreiai are directly related to Peter. His overall conclusion of the relationship between Mark and Peter emphasizes the complexity of Mark's tradition history:

While a Petrine influence behind the Markan narrative is likely, in my view, *the evangelist, in accordance with the ancient practice, incorporated Peter's oral history into his story by means of a subtle interchange between the eyewitness testimony and other traditional*

1175 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 275-80 (280): 'One may indeed end up in total agnosticism in regard to the information provided by Papias...However, following the dictum that an ancient author is correct until proven otherwise, it is difficult to see any conclusive reason for labelling it as historically incorrect on all points.'

1176 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 280-92. Cumulatively, Byrskog (pp. 292-97) argues that Matthew also includes traditions based on Petrine autopsy in his account. He argues (p. 297) that the Markan and Matthean differences as concerns the Torah can be explained through Peter's change of mind on the subject: 'To simplify somewhat, what we have in Mark reflects Peter before Antioch; what we have in Matthew reflects Peter after Antioch.'

1177 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 280-84 (281).

1178 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 284-88 (286). Byrskog (p. 288) admits that the evidence is indirect.

1179 Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 289, refers to the definition of *chreia* given by Aelius Theon of Alexandria (c. 50-100 CE), 'a concise statement or action which is well aimed, attributed to a specified character or something analogous to a character', and adds, for example, that using chreiai did not require rhetorical training; '[i]t could be unprompted or prompted by a specific situation, a statement or a response of varying character...it could be presented in various rhetorical patterns...'

1180 Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 288-92 (289).

*material available to him, on the one hand, and his personal, selective and interpretative perspective, on the other hand, at the end thus narrativizing his own existence by presenting history as story.*¹¹⁸¹

In sum, regarding the early Christian eyewitness testimony, Byrskog argues from a viewpoint of oral history and ancient historiography that the New Testament documents imply that there were important early Christian eyewitnesses and informants who influenced the formation and transmission of the Jesus traditions in particular ways. However, this influence was not straightforward not least due to the complex interplay between orality and writing in the ancient context. While the notion of autopsy links the perceptions of the eyewitnesses and informants of the Jesus traditions, namely their oral history, with the Gospel authors who interpreted, narrativized, and wrote them down, the Gospel narratives are not in any simple sense ‘history’; they are rather ‘syntheses of history and story’.¹¹⁸²

CRITIQUE & EVALUATION

Albeit published a few years prior to the rise of memory studies in historical Jesus research,¹¹⁸³ Byrskog’s view has established its place within the scholarly discussion on the nature and transmission of the Jesus traditions, drawing both appreciative and critical responses.¹¹⁸⁴ This section of critique and evaluation briefly addresses three broad areas with regard to Byrskog’s view: (1) ancient historiography both in general and in relation to the Gospels and early Christians, oral history, and factual correctness; (2) individual memory and social memory; (3) the specific eyewitnesses and their relationship to the written Gospels, especially Mark. Finally, some evaluative comments are made regarding the importance of Byrskog’s view.

1181 Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 292. Italics are original. Among the ‘other traditional material’, Byrskog would include, for example, a pre-Markan Passion narrative.

1182 Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 305. It is in light of this dynamic that Byrskog approaches terms like ‘reliability’, ‘historicity’, ‘tradition’, and ‘transmission’. Cf. Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 306.

1183 I recognize that there were works like Schröter, *Erinnerung*, in the 1990’s but also acknowledge that memory as a conceptual category and social memory theory increasingly began to be applied to the study of the Jesus traditions and the historical Jesus after the turn of the millenium.

1184 See e.g. Head, ‘The Role of Eyewitnesses’, pp. 275-94 (292-94); R. Bauckham, ‘The Eyewitnesses and the Gospel Traditions’, *JSHJ* 1.1 (2003), pp. 28-60; *idem*, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 8-11, 48-51, 119, 262-63, 273, 281, 288, 304, 310, 331, 384, 406, 409-10, 479-80; Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 5-6, 41-42, 46-47; Witherington, ‘Christianity in the Making?: Oral Mystery or Eyewitness History?’, pp. 197-226 (213-17); McIver, *Memory, Jesus, and the Synoptic Gospels*, pp. 128-29; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 198-99 n. 138, 340 n. 4, 843; *idem*, *The Oral Gospel Tradition*, pp. 54 n. 47, 232-33; Eve, *Behind*, pp. 135-43 (141-43); *idem*, *Writing*, pp. 44-46; Bird, *Gospel*, pp. 96-97 n. 93, 106-107 n. 122, 107-108.

First, it was noted in an early evaluation of Byrskog's work by Peter Head that Byrskog's investigation of ancient historiography, and his use of it as the comparative material in the study of the Jesus traditions, would be more balanced if it did not focus almost entirely on Greco-Roman historiography. Head notes that, despite discussing Josephus repeatedly, Byrskog does not address Jewish historiography in detail.¹¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, Head argues that Byrskog does not properly account for the distinction of genre between Greco-Roman ancient historiography and ancient biography, the category where he generally places the Gospels as *bioi*, lives of Jesus; for instance, contrary to Byrskog's own view that the authors of the Gospels were indeed interested in the past, Byrskog also suggested elsewhere that in his comparative material from ancient historiography more attention was paid to factual comprehensiveness and thoroughness than in *bioi*. Head considers it 'even damaging' to Byrskog's case that it does not further elaborate the distinction between the Gospels and ancient historiography, suggesting that a more thorough account may offer further support for the notion of eyewitnesses' involvement in the process of transmission.¹¹⁸⁶

Albeit not fatal to Byrskog's case, this is a significant point of criticism, considering how important the comparison of the notion of autopsy in ancient historiography and the Jesus traditions of the Gospels is for Byrskog. If his view of autopsy in ancient historiography is not solid, his notion of early Christian oral history and autopsy also falters. As is implied by Byrskog's lack of discussion on the dynamics of oral performance and transmission,¹¹⁸⁷ and has been noted by Dunn, Byrskog's view rests on the notion of oral history and autopsy, and demands no concrete conception, model, or role for oral transmission 'as itself a bridging factor between past and present'.¹¹⁸⁸

Furthermore, Eve criticizes Byrskog's use of ancient historians to shed light

1185 Head, 'The Role of Eyewitnesses', pp. 275-94 (294); cf. Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 43 n. 97.

1186 Head, 'The Role of Eyewitnesses', pp. 275-94 (294); cf. Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 44, 216.

Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 11, similarly notes the criticism that 'Byrskog assumes, rather than demonstrates, that the Gospels are comparable with the practice of oral history in ancient Greek and Roman historiography'. Bauckham's further critique is addressed in more detail below in conjunction with his own view (ch. 3.8.2).

1187 I do not think that Byrskog pays sufficient attention to the dynamics of oral transmission. He only refers to Parry and Lord as well as Foley's 'oral-formulaic theory' in passing. Cf. Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 23 n. 26.

1188 Dunn, *The Oral Gospel Tradition*, p. 54 n. 47; similarly, *idem*, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 198-99 n. 138. Regardless of the criticism that can be leveled against Dunn's view of orality, he pays more attention to oral transmission than Byrskog seems to do.

on the Gospel authors' ways of writing and relating to accuracy. He notes, quite reasonably, that Byrskog's own account of Greco-Roman historiography indicates that all ancient historians did not meet the criteria of Thucydides and Polybius; even Byrskog consistently admits that the early Christian writers were not historians,¹¹⁸⁹ which complicates the relation between the autopsy practiced by the most idealistic ancient historians and the authors of the Gospels. Eve suggests that the social situation of the early Christian authors, who were constrained by their roles in their Christian communities, must have been different from that of 'the more scrupulous' historians like Thucydides and Polybius who could write more freely on subjects in which they took interest. This suggests, as Eve indicates, that the early Christian authors may have been more constrained by ideological appropriateness and rhetorical persuasiveness than factual accuracy.¹¹⁹⁰

Eve also challenges Byrskog's logic that, regardless of the narrativizing process, ancient historians would build their elaborated narratives upon a factual historical core, as facts would make an argument rhetorically more persuasive.¹¹⁹¹ Eve is right in contesting the idea that rhetorical persuasiveness or effectiveness as such has anything to do with the human regard for factual truth, historical or otherwise. He notes that '[a]ll Byrskog is really entitled to argue is that it is better not to be caught out in a lie.'¹¹⁹² Eve generally refers to the nature of recurrent political propaganda and media distortion, but one could also give more specific, telling examples about the problematic relationship of 'fact' and 'persuasion' at a time when rather populist tendencies seem to have increasingly regained favor in political discourse.¹¹⁹³ Eve further demonstrates that Byrskog's distinction

1189 Cf. e.g. Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 223: 'The early Christian writers did not produce historical narratives of the same kind as the ones of the ancient historians... They were keenly interested in past events, writing about matters that had occurred some years back in time, but they neglected to tell the audience of how they actually knew anything about those events.' Also, Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 281: 'The Markan author did not have the ambition of a historian, so one should not ask too much of him.'

1190 Eve, *Behind*, p. 141; *pace* Byrskog.

1191 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 141-42. Cf. Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 223: 'the most persuasive arguments will always be the ones that build solidly on knowledge derived from facts.'

1192 Eve, *Behind*, p. 141.

1193 The general disregard for factual truth in favor of persuasiveness in political discourse has become a major topic of discussion in Western democratic societies. Besides the typical political jargon and uttering of half-truths and factually incorrect statements of which almost any political candidate or politician could be accused, a new level of polemical and aggressive style of argumentation with no regard to 'facts' was strongly associated with the 2016 presidential campaigns and election in the United States.

between factual core and narrative elaboration stands in contradiction with the view that eyewitness testimony is by definition always the eyewitnesses' interpreted testimony; oral history has to do with perceptions of events, not with what 'actually happened'. Often there is no agreement on what the facts even are.¹¹⁹⁴ Indeed, the requirement that the proper eyewitness actively participates and is socially involved in events, interpreting them, appears to undermine the notion of a factual core, despite that Byrskog admits that 'on occasion it must have been extremely difficult to distinguish the hard core from the elaboration'.¹¹⁹⁵

Secondly, regarding Byrskog's understanding of memory and social memory, Eve speculates that Byrskog's notion of 'factual core' may resonate with the notion of social memory theory that the past is not completely lost in the present, but continues to influence the present even when narrated within the frameworks of the present. Eve further surmises that if Byrskog's notion of 'factual core' is taken to refer to 'what is commonly believed to have happened', instead of 'what actually happened', his view is reminiscent of the idea of a stable core in social memory theory, as espoused for example by Rafael Rodríguez and Barry Schwartz. This would be consonant with the idea that, say, Mark could not have contradicted what his audience knew about Jesus in order to be received as authoritative.¹¹⁹⁶ However, regardless of how Byrskog would imagine the relation of his 'factual core' to the actual past, it is clear that his view of memory is not entirely consonant with how others, including Rodríguez, understand social memory theory. Rodríguez demonstrates that the initial criticism by Gerhardsson against the 'collective' nature of memory,¹¹⁹⁷ which was echoed in *Story as History*¹¹⁹⁸ and also later repeated by Byrskog in his dialogue with Dunn,¹¹⁹⁹ namely, that social memory downplays the role of individuals, is unfounded, as in Rodríguez's words

1194 Eve, *Behind*, p. 142; cf. Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 26-30 on oral history, pp. 145-53 on eyewitnesses.

1195 Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 213.

1196 Eve, *Behind*, p. 142. Eve admits that this is, however, probably not what Byrskog had in mind.

1197 Gerhardsson, 'Secret', pp. 1-18 (8-9).

1198 Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 255: '*Groups and cultures do not remember and recall; individuals do*'.

1199 Byrskog, 'A New Perspective on the Jesus Tradition', pp. 459-71 (463-67), where Byrskog attempts to recognize the interplay between individual and collective memory but nevertheless maintains that '[t]he popular stress on 'collectivistic' and 'dyadic' selves should not cause us to neglect the individualistic traits of the ancient Mediterranean world, but to appreciate individual consciousness within collectivistically conditioned contexts', and (contra Dunn) indicates '[o]ral history, with its attention to the individual self as part of a group or society, gives a more helpful framework for how Jesus was remembered than the vague notion of corporate memory'.

‘social memory theory does not postulate a Durkheimian metaphysical “group consciousness” that acts independently of individual social actors comprising the group.’¹²⁰⁰ It has also been noted by others that Byrskog’s view is in danger of downplaying the collective aspect of memory in favor of the individual eyewitnesses.¹²⁰¹

Third, regarding Byrskog’s view of early Christian autopsy, specific points of Byrskog’s postulation of individual eyewitnesses in the Jesus traditions have come under criticism.¹²⁰² For example, within his conceptual framework of the impact of Jesus, Dunn finds it unlikely that the Lukan birth narrative (Lk. 1–2) contains Mary’s reminiscences and, therefore, questions Byrskog’s claim that ‘[i]t is entirely plausible that the Jerusalem community entertained a certain interest in Mary’s intimate memories concerning the birth of the risen Lord’.¹²⁰³ McIver in turn criticizes Byrskog for underestimating the role of ‘the eleven surviving disciples of Jesus’ in his questioning of the possibility of a collective oral history in the group of the disciples.¹²⁰⁴ Eve presents several critical points about Byrskog’s reasoning. He notes that the evidence for the autopsy status of James, Jesus’ brother, is conjectural: taking first the Letter of James to be written by Jesus’ brother and then arguing that it presents James as a close family eyewitness who nevertheless only echoes some parts of the Jesus traditions, included in the Sermon on the Mount,

1200 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 41–42, 46–47 (46–47). Rodríguez (p. 42) notes the irony in Byrskog’s criticism of Dunn’s notion of ‘collective memory’, as ‘Dunn himself is sceptical of social memory theory’. The main problem with Dunn’s view is the lack of nuance in his original discussion on memory and remembering in *Jesus Remembered*. See my discussion on Dunn in ch. 3.2 and Rodríguez in ch. 3.4.

1201 See e.g. Bird, *Gospel*, pp. 96–97 n. 96, 106–7 n. 122. Bird (p. 107 n. 122), notes that ‘social memory refuses to treat individuals as isolated entities, analyzable apart from social contexts’. Cf. Byrskog’s recent defence in Byrskog, ‘Philosophical Aspects of Memory’, pp. 23–47 (24): ‘I affirmed indeed the idea that memory is social, I also affirmed the idea that memory is individual, and I argued that social memory is closely related to the cognitive aspects of each person’s memory.’ Byrskog (p. 24) further charges ‘[b]iblical scholars, in reviewing the book’, including Eve, *Behind*, for missing ‘the point of trying to combine both perspectives’.

1202 I present some of the criticisms here, but do not assess each one individually.

1203 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 340–48 (340 n. 4); *pace* Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, p. 210; Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 89–90 (90).

1204 McIver, *Memory, Jesus, and the Synoptic Gospels*, p. 128–129 (129 n. 5); cf. Byrskog, *Story as History*, p. 70. However, Byrskog’s more cautious stance regarding the eyewitness role of the disciples as a *group* may be more plausible, as McIver’s appeal to the role of all eleven disciples as teachers and leaders in early Christian communities suffers from lack of evidence. As Byrskog argues, only Peter, John, and James are clearly recognized for their post-Easter roles in the early church.

is not a conclusive case.¹²⁰⁵ Eve also points out that, in his search for links between Mark and Peter, Byrskog's claim that Mark's outline of Jesus' ministry resembles Peter's speech in Acts 10.34-43 is vulnerable to the charge that it does not take seriously Byrskog's own conclusion about the complexity of Mark's narrativizing process.¹²⁰⁶ Eve makes a similar point regarding Byrskog's efforts to argue for a direct Petrine influence on Matthew on the basis of explaining the differences between Mark and Matthew's views of the Torah by Peter's change of mind on the subject; this can be taken as Byrskog's ignorance of the contribution of Matthew's authorial ideology.¹²⁰⁷ It is reasonable to ask with Eve whether the narrativizing of tradition, which Byrskog also attempts to emphasize, can be taken seriously in conjunction with such claims.

On the other hand, Byrskog's views of some of the other eyewitnesses can be viewed as more plausible. Dunn recognizes, for instance, that Byrskog's argument in favor of the influence of Mary Magdalene and other women is justified; their witness would not have survived the 'androcentric force of transmission and redaction' had their witness not been influential in the early Christian community.¹²⁰⁸ Also, regardless of the criticisms that are targeted against the specific aspects of it, Byrskog's view of Mark's relation to Peter's preaching can be viewed as generally plausible. Eve notes that, while 'far from proven,' Papias' testimony combined with other more indirect traditions can be taken as evidence of the influence of Petrine autopsy on Mark.¹²⁰⁹ However, there is no guarantee that Peter indeed was a reliable eyewitness; he could have been, however in light of memory studies one cannot imagine a straightforward access from Mark to the historical Jesus on account of Mark's possible familiarity with Peter.¹²¹⁰

In conclusion, while Byrskog's view of the formation and transmission of the

1205 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 140-41; cf. Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 167-75.

1206 Eve, *Behind*, p. 139-40; cf. Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 284-88. According to Eve (p. 140), the logic of Byrskog's argument seems to demand that the narrativization of Jesus' ministry is to be attributed to Mark.

1207 Eve, p. 141; cf. Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 292-97.

1208 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 843 n. 75.

1209 Eve, *Behind*, p. 143. Eve (p. 143) makes additional points in favor of Byrskog's suggestion: (1) Peter is known to have been a prominent leader in the early church (cf. Gal. 1.18; 2.16-14) (which is of course recognized by Byrskog) but he was also active late enough for the author of Mark's Gospel to have encountered him (the early 60s CE); (2) his preaching was probably taken seriously due to his eyewitness status; (3) Mark's possible relationship with Peter may explain why Mark's Gospel was readily accepted in early Christianity (e.g. by Matthew and Luke).

1210 Eve, *Behind*, p. 143.

Jesus traditions is rather conservative in the sense that it argues for a relatively direct relation between the ancient Greco-Roman notion of autopsy and autopsy in early Christian traditions, it does so with considerable nuance without lapsing into uncritical defense of the ‘historicity’ or ‘reliability’ of the Jesus traditions. While his use of ancient historiography and notions of oral history and factual accuracy may require some refinement, as they appear to contradict what Byrskog elsewhere argues, and his notion of memory somewhat undermines the collective nature of remembering in favor of individual eyewitnesses, Byrskog nevertheless presents a case that attempts to account for both the reality that the Jesus traditions exhibit an interest in the past and the fact that they have gone through processes of considerable theological interpretation. Despite the lack of a nuanced discussion on oral performance and oral transmission, Byrskog also attempts to take seriously the interplay between orality and writing in antiquity. His view also presents some plausible argumentation for some traces of eyewitness testimony in the Jesus traditions. Whether this evidence is enough to account for such a direct relationship between those eyewitnesses and, for example, the Gospel of Mark, is another matter. Richard Bauckham, as we shall see in the next section, presents a much bolder view for the role of early Christian eyewitnesses, attempting to correct what some have considered a deficiency in Byrskog’s view, namely the lack of sufficient criteria for defining eyewitnesses.¹²¹¹

3.8.2 RICHARD BAUCKHAM

In *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (2006), Richard Bauckham takes some of Samuel Byrskog’s ideas much further, arguing that the eyewitnesses of Jesus’ ministry exercised considerable control over the transmission of the Jesus traditions, and that the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John are all directly based on eyewitness testimony.¹²¹² This argument is directly targeted against the general form-critical view of the development of

1211 See W. Carter, review of Samuel Byrskog’s *Story as History – History as Story*, *CBQ* 63 (2001), pp. 545-46; in Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 11.

1212 See Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*. Unless otherwise stated, I refer to the first edition of the book in this chapter, since the main chapters remain unchanged in the second edition, which was published with three additional chapters in the spring of 2017. See R. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2nd edn, 2017), pp. 509-615. Also, see Bauckham, ‘The Eyewitnesses and the Gospel Traditions’, pp. 28-60; *idem*, ‘Gospel Traditions: Anonymous Community Traditions or Eyewitness Testimony’, in Charlesworth (ed.), *Jesus Research*, pp. 483-90.

the Gospel tradition, and the minor role it gave for the eyewitnesses.¹²¹³ Unlike Byrskog, who does not define his thesis in terms of defending the ‘reliability’ or ‘historicity’ of the Jesus traditions, Bauckham starts with a straightforward theological apologetic for his search of the Jesus of testimony in the Gospels on the basis of eyewitness testimony. Bauckham criticizes what he considers a faulty project of methodological skepticism and historical positivism, namely the search and reconstruction of ‘the historical Jesus’ (or ‘the real Jesus behind the Gospels’), which has resulted in a plethora of historical Jesuses; this is, Bauckham indicates, an unfortunate situation for at least Christian theology. Instead of embarking on the reductionist road that leads to the separation of history and theology (and the false dichotomy between ‘the historical Jesus’ and ‘the Christ of faith’), Bauckham suggests that one should look for the Jesus of testimony, ‘testimony’ being both a theological and a historical concept, applied to the Gospels.¹²¹⁴ In support of his view, Bauckham presents a multi-faceted and rather complicated set of historical arguments in favor of the Gospels and the Jesus traditions as eyewitness testimony; he intends to further develop and in some ways correct Byrskog’s viewpoints.¹²¹⁵ The aspects of Bauckham’s argumentation that are the most relevant for the purposes of this dissertation are presented below.

First, regarding his basic argument that the Gospels of Mark, Luke, and John embody eyewitness testimony, Bauckham argues for the notion of *inclusio*, a literary device, which he finds in Mark, John, and Luke, as well as in the ancient authors Lucian (*Alexander*) and Porphyry (*Life of Plotinus*); the notion of *inclusio* refers to the idea that, in order to indicate who their eyewitness *sources* were, the authors named them at the beginning and end of their stories.¹²¹⁶ According

1213 Throughout his work, Bauckham argues against the views of Bultmann, and regarding the eyewitnesses, Dennis Nineham. See e.g. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 241-49; cf. Dibelius, *From Tradition*; Bultmann, *History*; specifically on eyewitnesses, Dennis E. Nineham, ‘Eye-Witness Testimony and the Gospel Tradition, I’, *JTS* 9 (1958), pp. 13-25; *idem*, ‘Eye-Witness Testimony and the Gospel Tradition, II’, *JTS* 9 (1958), pp. 243-52; *idem*, ‘Eye-Witness Testimony and the Gospel Tradition, III’, *JTS* 11 (1960), pp. 253-64.

1214 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 1-8, also pp. 472-508. Bauckham (p. 2) states from a distinctly (Christian) theological viewpoint, ‘it is hard to see how Christian faith and theology can work with a radically distrusting attitude to the Gospels.’

1215 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 8-11. For instance, by developing criteria for identifying eyewitness testimony. Bauckham interacts with Byrskog throughout his study; see e.g. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 8-11, 48-51, 119, 262-63, 273, 281, 288, 304, 310, 331, 384, 406, 409-10, 479-80.

1216 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 124-47. In contrast with Byrskog, who emphasizes autopsy as a rather general historiographical category, Bauckham specifically stresses the nature of

to Bauckham, Mark's references to Simon Peter at the beginning (1.16) and the end (16.7) of the story form a deliberate *inclusio*.¹²¹⁷ In John's Gospel, Bauckham identifies an *inclusio* on the basis of John 1.35-40 and John 21.24; he argues that the anonymous disciple of the former passage is the Beloved Disciple, who is the ideal witness to Jesus, and the person whose testimony is embodied in John's Gospel; he is also the author of the entire Gospel (21.24).¹²¹⁸ Bauckham argues that in Luke's narrative the *inclusio* is formed by the women who followed Jesus (8.1-3) and visited the tomb (24.10); further, Luke has also, like Mark, 'made sure that Simon Peter is both the first and the last disciple to be individually named in his Gospel (4:38, 24:34)'.¹²¹⁹ Bauckham does not find the literary device of *inclusio* in Matthew, which he indicates 'seems not concerned to claim the authority of any specific eyewitnesses'; for Bauckham this does not, however, mean that Matthew would have had no basis in eyewitness testimony.¹²²⁰

In addition to the fact that Mark refers to Peter more than any other Gospel, and contains the *inclusio* of his eyewitness testimony, Bauckham argues that a further important indication of Peter as the main eyewitness source of Mark's Gospel is its use of 'the plural-to-singular narrative device' and the specific Petrine perspective. By the narrative device, Bauckham refers to the specific 'point of view', a form of internal focalization, which 'enables the readers to view the incident that follows from the perspective of the disciples who have arrived on the scene with Jesus'; this narrative device is indicated by 'they' (the disciples, notably Peter, also James, and John) and 'he' (Jesus).¹²²¹ Bauckham does not argue that Mark's Gospel is Peter's autobiographical reminiscence or a mere transcript of Peter's teaching, but maintains that it carries a strong and carefully designed perspective of Peter's teaching.¹²²²

eyewitness testimonies as historical sources.

1217 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 124-27.

1218 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 127-29, also 358-411.

1219 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 129-32 (131). Bauckham (131) concludes: '[The] three Gospels all use the literary device of the *inclusio* of eyewitness testimony in order to indicate the main eyewitness source of their story'.

1220 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, p. 131-32 (132). Bauckham argues rather that the pattern of names used in Matthew's Gospel (and other Gospels) are typical and found in contemporary Jewish Palestine, which indicates that they are authentic and can be taken to refer to the eyewitness status of these individuals (e.g. the twelve) when combined with how important mentioning the names of one's eyewitness sources was at the time. See Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 39-93.

1221 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 155-64 (163). Cf. Mk 5.1-2; 8.22; 11.12; 14.32.

1222 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 165-80. Bauckham (p. 180) summarizes: 'The Gospel reflects the way Peter, as an apostle commissioned to communicate the gospel of salvation, conveyed the

In addition to the relationship between Mark and Peter, Bauckham discusses arguments in favor of a pre-Markan passion narrative, and more specifically employs Gerd Theissen's argument that some of the features in the major units in that narrative go back to the Jerusalem church around 40–50 CE, concerning both named and unnamed persons in the narrative. Bauckham argues in light of Gerd Theissen's notion of 'protective anonymity' that the unnamed individuals can be viewed as eyewitnesses who were mentioned in the pre-Markan Jerusalem source and whose identity was not disclosed in order to protect them from the persecution by the high-priestly family. Among such people are the woman who anointed Jesus (Mk 14.3-9), and the disciple who struck the High Priest's servant and the young man who fled naked (Mk 14.43-52).¹²²³

Secondly, the evidence from Papias provides a crucial basis for Bauckham's argument of the Gospels as eyewitness testimony.¹²²⁴ After first generally introducing Papias' surviving writings (fragments of his *Expositions of the Logia of the Lord*) which are quoted in Eusebius (esp. *Hist. eccl.*) and noting that Papias was in his writing referring back to approximately the period when the Gospels were written (ca. 80 CE), Bauckham discusses the Prologue of Papias' work (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.3-4) and concludes from the distinction between the listed seven disciples ('seven for complete witness') and the two subsequently named witnesses, Aristion and John the Elder, that the oral traditions of Jesus words and deeds were attached to specific eyewitnesses. Bauckham argues in light of Byrskog's notions about ancient historiography that Papias' preference for 'a living and surviving voice' over written tradition belongs to the historiographical category of oral history, not to the category of oral tradition which spans over at least one generation (according to Jan Vansina's terms); it shows Papias' interest in eyewitness testimony, namely in what Byrskog calls *autopsy*. Bauckham maintains that the Gospel authors generally also practiced *oral history*.¹²²⁵

Bauckham further develops his argument regarding Papias in relation to Mark

body of eyewitness traditions that he and other members of the Twelve had officially formulated and promulgated.' This implies a view of rather formal and controlled transmission of tradition.

1223 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 183-201; cf. G. Theissen, *The Gospels in Context* (trans. L. M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), ch. 4.

1224 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 12-38, 202-39, 358-437 (412-37).

1225 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 12-38; cf. Vansina, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 28, 29; Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 48-65. Bauckham (p. 24) writes 'what Papias thinks preferable to books is not oral traditions as such but access, while they are still alive, to those who were direct participants in the historical events – in this case the "disciples of the Lord".'

and Matthew.¹²²⁶ He turns to the two passages of Papias preserved in Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 3.39.14-16), rejecting the scholarly views that dismiss Papias' evidence, and argues that Papias envisaged Mark as the translator of the Petrine anecdotes (*chreiai*), which had been used by Peter in his preaching and were remembered and communicated by Peter to Mark, who could then use them to form his Gospel narrative.¹²²⁷ Moreover, Bauckham contends that in the cases of both passages, the one that relates to Mark and the other that relates to Matthew, Papias attempts to explain 'why a Gospel with eyewitness testimony lacks proper "order"'; according to Bauckham, Papias was wrong in assuming that Mark was 'not in order'; it could be Papias' interpretation, not John the Elder's eyewitness view. Bauckham explains that, in Papias' mind, on the one hand, Mark did not attempt to put the material in order, as Peter had not related it that way, and Mark was not an eyewitness; on the other hand, Matthew was an eyewitness and could therefore 'put the *logia* in order in his original Gospel'; this order was changed by those who translated Matthew's original Gospel into Greek. Finally, Bauckham argues that Papias knew John's Gospel and considered its historiographical quality superior to that of Mark and Matthew, contrasting their lack of order with John's Gospel, which was also an eyewitness source, and presumably, so Bauckham argues, was used by Papias to order his own work.¹²²⁸

With regard to the evidence provided by Papias, Bauckham also argues that the Beloved Disciple, whom he identifies as the anonymous disciple called with Andrew by Jesus in John 1.35-40, is John the Elder of Papias.¹²²⁹ Although he is not one of the twelve, he is an eyewitness of the events and testifies for this in John 21.24. Bauckham rejects the view that the Beloved disciple is a later narrative or theological construct; he is rather the ideal eyewitness who testifies for Jesus. Bauckham contends that the Beloved Disciple (John the Elder) is the author of the entire John's Gospel, the end of the Gospel (Jn 21) is an integral part of the text,

1226 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 202-39.

1227 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 202-17. Bauckham (p. 216) argues that 'Papias evidently thought that Peter needed Mark to translate his Aramaic into reasonably good Greek', and indicates (p. 217) against 'the assumption of the form critics that the Gospel traditions functioned in a homiletic context in which their message was applied' that 'Peter...may simply have rehearsed the traditions'. Bauckham also contends in line with Byrskog that Peter would not have needed a formal rhetorical training in order to utter Jesus' deeds and sayings in short anecdotes.

1228 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 217-39 (223-24).

1229 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 412-37; for further evidence Bauckham draws on John from the slightly later authors Polycrates and Ireanaeus, see Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 440-71.

and that John the Elder offers his authoritative ‘we’ testimony in John 21.24.¹²³⁰

Thirdly, with regard to the model of transmission of the Jesus traditions, Bauckham follows Gerhardsson and others in postulating a foundational role for the twelve disciples whom he views, contrary to the form-critical notions about anonymous early Christian communities, as the guarantors, named controllers and authorizers of the Jesus traditions, led by Peter, during the early years of the Jesus movement until the writing of the Gospels. Bauckham considers the twelve as a collegium based in Jerusalem and originally formed by Jesus and believes that they stand for the ideal constitution of Israel and have a special role in Jesus’ mission of renewing or restoring God’s people Israel. The lists of the twelve confirm, according to Bauckham, that ‘the Twelve constituted an official body of eyewitnesses’ (Mt. 10.2-4; Mk 3.16-19; Lk. 6.13-16). Bauckham also addresses the identification of Thaddeus and Judas of James, rejects the identification of Levi with Matthew, and discusses the ‘epithets’ of the apostles, designed for distinguishing the members of the twelve from one another.¹²³¹

In his treatment of the questions regarding oral transmission, Bauckham discusses and critiques three common views of oral transmission: form criticism, the ‘Scandinavian approach’ associated with Gerhardsson, and Kenneth Bailey’s ‘informal controlled tradition.’¹²³² Bauckham recognizes the lasting value of the form-critical notion that ‘most of the individual pericopes in all three Synoptic Gospels retain broadly the shape in which they existed in oral transmission’, but fiercely criticizes other aspects of form criticism: (1) the assumption of Bultmann that traditions originated in pure form is highly questionable; (2) no strict correlation exists between a form and *Sitz im Leben*; (3) Jack Goody’s notion of homeostasis, namely the idea that traditions are in perfect correspondence with their use in society that transmits them, was greatly exaggerated by form critics; (4) as E. P. Sanders demonstrated, there are no laws operating consistently throughout the Gospel traditions; (5) the comparison between the oral transmission of Jesus traditions and folklore is questionable due to the different processes and time spans; (6) folklorists themselves no longer adhere to the ‘romantic’ idea of the folk that collectively creates folk traditions, but they rather recognize the role of

1230 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 358-83.

1231 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 93-113 (96); cf. Riesenfeld; Gerhardsson. Bauckham bases his argument for the historicity of the Twelve on Meier, ‘The Circle of the Twelve: Did It Exist During Jesus’, pp. 635-72; *idem*, *A Marginal Jew, III*, pp. 125-97.

1232 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 240-63.

authoritative individuals in interaction with the community; (7) the form critics' predetermined picture of early Christianity, especially Bultmann's distinction between Palestinian and Hellenistic communities, cannot be maintained; (8) the form critics claimed without evidence that the Jesus traditions circulated purely orally for decades; (9) the form critics, especially Bultmann, have come under attack for their use of a literary model for understanding the process of oral transmission.¹²³³ Regarding Gerhardsson's view, Bauckham comments on some of the most common criticisms, such as the charge of anachronism in relation to Gerhardsson's comparison of rabbinic tradition with the Jesus traditions, the claim that Gerhardsson's view is too rigid to explain the variation in the Jesus traditions, and the criticism that there is no sufficient evidence for the controlling apostolic college that Gerhardsson imagined functioned in Jerusalem, but notes that many of the criticisms have been exaggerated.¹²³⁴

He also challenges Bailey's terminology of referring to Bultmann's view as 'informal uncontrolled tradition', Gerhardsson's view as 'formal controlled tradition', and Bailey's own view as 'informal controlled tradition'; Bailey's model, and especially Dunn's adoption of it, is problematic due to its confusion of the questions of formality and control. Bauckham argues that Bailey's idea of stability and flexibility would be applicable to both a *formal* and an *informal* controlled tradition; it is not enough to refer to Bailey's model as *informal* in order to account for the flexibility of the tradition, assuming at the same time that *formal* refers to stability. A more nuanced picture is needed for the transmission of the Jesus traditions. One must ask, Bauckham maintains, additional questions: granted the tradition was controlled, for what reasons was the control thought to have been necessary? What were the mechanisms of control? Were different kinds of traditions treated differently with regard to the degree of flexibility? If so, what was the relative balance between stability and flexibility? How are the Gospels related to the oral tradition? Bauckham notes that Bailey's model, as well as Dunn, fails to account for the mechanisms of control. They both undermine the role of eyewitnesses, and especially the role of the twelve, although Bauckham does recognize that Dunn later moved to affirming the importance of individual

1233 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 241-49 (243). Bauckham's criticisms of form criticism are largely consonant with ch. 2.1 above.

1234 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 249-52. Cf. ch. 2.2 above.

eyewitnesses.¹²³⁵

Bauckham's own proposal for 'transmitting the Jesus traditions' is not very different from Gerhardsson's model, which emphasized the formal transmission in the sense that specific practices were used to ensure the faithful handing on of tradition. Bauckham refers to Paul's letters as evidence for the formal transmission of the tradition; the proper terminology of tradition is used by Paul frequently (for instance, *paradidōmi* in 1 Cor. 11.2, 23; *paralambanō*, in 1 Cor. 15.1, Gal. 1.9, etc.). Bauckham presumes that Paul spent two weeks in Jerusalem with Peter and became 'thoroughly informed of the Jesus traditions as formulated by the Twelve' (Gal. 1.18). Again, he addresses the notion of oral history, namely, that early Christians were genuinely and from early on interested in remembering the past of the earthly Jesus. He also notes that memorization of the Jesus traditions must have been an important practice, not least due to the prevalence of memorization in ancient education.

Bauckham answers the criticism that Gerhardsson's position of memorization did not account for the variation of the Jesus traditions by listing the 'five main factors' that can be used to explain the variability of the traditions: (1) Jesus must have used varying versions of his own sayings on different occasions; (2) some verbal differences result from translation variants (from Aramaic to Greek); (3) many differences particularly in narratives are due to the variability of oral performance and to the degree that is considered appropriate for the type of material; (4) many differences in the sayings are due to the tradents' interpretative alterations or additions in the post-Easter situation; (5) there are changes made by the authors of the Gospels in order to integrate traditions into their narrative. Bauckham also maintains that, while writing mainly served as an aid to memory in the first century, it is not unlikely that there were also some literate Christians who used notebooks to write down Jesus traditions.¹²³⁶

Bauckham's work differs from Byrskog in that he discusses individual and collective memory, as well as eyewitness memory, more thoroughly from a

1235 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 252-63, further on Dunn's view, the question of anonymity/eyewitnesses and the Gospels, pp. 290-310; cf. Dunn, 'On History, Memory, and Eyewitnesses', pp. 482-85 (484). Bauckham (p. 298) argues that '[i]t is a weakness of Bailey's and Dunn's models that they focus on the early transmission of Jesus traditions in Palestinian Jewish villages, ignoring the Jerusalem church'. Bauckham (p. 307) refers to 1. Cor. 15.3-8 as an example of a specific eyewitness tradition which Paul received from the Jerusalem church and handed on to the Corinthian Christians.

1236 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 264-89; cf. Gerhardsson's view above (ch. 2.2).

psychological viewpoint.¹²³⁷ Regarding the individual and collective memories, Bauckham recognizes the significance of Halbwachs' understanding of social memory, but criticizes it for its strong tendency to social determinism. Bauckham aims to find a balance between 'social determinism' and 'the excessive individualism that disregards the social dimension' with the help of Barbara Misztal's 'intersubjective approach' which, he believes, takes seriously the cultural forms and social constraints of remembering without undermining individuals' role.¹²³⁸

Furthermore, Bauckham wants to make some differentiations between the different types of memory he considers relevant for his view. First, he distinguishes between recollective memory (in which the person can 'relive' the recollected experience) from memory for information (which does not include one's own experience). Second, Bauckham distinguishes between (1) the social dimension of individual recollection, (2) the shared recollections of a group, and (3) collective memory. Bauckham acknowledges that individuals always remember as members of the groups to which they belong, and agrees therefore with Misztal's statement, 'individual remembering takes place in the social context'.¹²³⁹

While Bauckham strongly emphasizes that the social dimension of individual recollection does not make one's personal recollection less distinctive, he nevertheless recognizes the existence of group memory in the sense that Dunn argued, namely 'already during the ministry of Jesus his disciples must have been sharing their memories of the events'. Bauckham remains very cautious about not ignoring the individual aspect of memory in favor of social memory, but admits that 'collective memory' refers to 'the traditions of a group about events not personally recollected by any of the group's members'; this kind of collective memory would have existed among those Christians who were not eyewitnesses but appropriated the testimonies of individuals and the shared memories of the twelve for their communities.¹²⁴⁰

Finally, in his discussion on eyewitness memory, Bauckham first points to the

1237 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 310-18, 319-57; cf. Byrskog, *Story as History*, pp. 160-65 on the functions of memory in ancient historiography (with only a minor reference to 'the psychology of memory' on p. 165 n. 96), and pp. 153, 255 on 'social memory' and Halbwachs' notion of collective memory.

1238 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 310-12; cf. Misztal, *Theories*, chapter 3.

1239 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 312-13; cf. Misztal, *Theories*, p. 5.

1240 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 313-14 (314); cf. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 239-41.

fallibility of human memory, but nevertheless sets out to argue that generally eyewitness memory is reliable.¹²⁴¹ Bauckham indicates that most episodic Gospel narratives, if based on eyewitness testimony, fall into the category of personal or recollective memory. In support of the reliability of specifically recent recollective memories, Bauckham references William Brewer, who notes, for instance, that recent recollective memories ‘frequently predict objective memory accuracy’.¹²⁴² Bauckham discusses reconstructive theories of memory, including Bartlett’s original work, and copy theories, and indicates that neither kind is sufficient on its own. He suggests a list of factors that, in his view, indicate the reliability of a recollective memory: (1) unique or unusual (‘memorable’) event; (2) salient or consequential event (also ‘memorable’); (3) an event in which a person is emotionally involved (though Bauckham notes this finding is less secure); (4) vivid imagery; (5) irrelevant detail; (6) point of view; (7) dating; (8) gist and details (gist is likely accurate, even when details are not); (9) frequent rehearsal. Bauckham argues that these factors can be applied to the Jesus traditions with a slightly varying degree of confidence.¹²⁴³

Bauckham also attempts to account for the problematic relation between fact and meaning, and past and present, in eyewitness memory. He uses psychologist John Robinson’s study of the subjective first-person perspective to argue for the inadequacy of a simplistic distinction between objective fact and subjective experience; Bauckham also discusses Robinson’s four factors for studying how meaning in personal memories changes or remains stable, and applies the discussion to the Jesus traditions, contending that it is not justified to suppose that interpretation takes the tradition further from the facts.¹²⁴⁴ While acknowledging that memories are socially shaped at every stage, distortions can occur, and schemata can be flexible, Bauckham notes in light of his account of psychological studies of recollective memories that eyewitness accounts quickly

1241 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 319-57.

1242 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 324-25; Brewer, ‘What is Recollective Memory?’, pp. 19-66 (60-61).

1243 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 325-35, 341-46. Bauckham (p. 346) concludes that ‘the memories of eyewitnesses of the history of Jesus score highly by the criteria for likely reliability that have been established by the psychological study of recollective memory’.

1244 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 338-41, 351-55; cf. John A. Robinson, ‘Perspective, Meaning and Remembering’, in D. Rubin (ed.), *Remembering Our Past: Studies in Autobiographical Remembering* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 199-217: (1) the multiplicity of potential meanings; (2) deferred meaning; (3) changing meaning; (4) negotiating meaning. On Bauckham’s use of Robinson also see, Eve, *Behind*, pp. 156-57.

take the narrative schemata (or ‘forms’) that are available in the social setting. This counters Dennis Nineham’s and the form critics’ supposition that the forms of the Gospel pericopae resulted from a long process of oral-traditional development in communities; Bauckham argues that the early Christian eyewitnesses were involved in the formation of the Gospel traditions.¹²⁴⁵

CRITIQUE & EVALUATION

Bauckham’s *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* caused somewhat of a controversy at its time, evoking a heated discussion with reactions varying from a complete rebuttal to positive adoption of its thesis.¹²⁴⁶ Since it is impossible and unnecessary to

1245 Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 335-38, 346-51; cf. Nineham, ‘Eye-Witness Testimony and the Gospel Tradition, I’, pp. 13-25; *idem*, ‘Eye-Witness Testimony and the Gospel Tradition, II’, pp. 243-52; *idem*, ‘Eye-Witness Testimony and the Gospel Tradition, III’, pp. 253-64. In the concluding chapter of *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, Bauckham returns to the the question of testimony from a theological and philosophical viewpoint, citing Paul Ricoeur in support of his notion that ‘[t]estimony...authorizes theology only as theologically understood history’. See Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 472-508 (508); cf. Ricoeur, ‘The Hermeneutics of Testimony’, in Ricoeur, *Essays on Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Lewis S. Mudge; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980, pp. 133-34: ‘There is therefore no witness of the absolute who is not a witness of historic signs, no confessor of absolute meaning who is not a narrator of the acts of deliverance’.

1246 See e.g. J. D. G. Dunn, ‘Eyewitnesses and the Oral Jesus Tradition’, *JSHJ* 6 (2008), pp. 85-105, also published in Dunn, *The Oral Gospel*, pp. 213-229 (referenced below); S. Byrskog, ‘The Eyewitnesses as Interpreters of the Past: Reflections on Richard Bauckham’s, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*’, *JSHJ* 6 (2008), pp. 157-68; David Catchpole, ‘On Proving Too Much: Critical Hesitations about Richard Bauckham’s *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*’, *JSHJ* 6 (2008), pp. 169-81; I. H. Marshall, ‘A New Consensus on Oral Tradition? A Review of Richard Bauckham’s *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*’, *JSHJ* 6 (2008), pp. 182-93; Stephen J. Patterson, ‘Can You Trust a Gospel? A Review of Richard Bauckham’s *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*’, *JSHJ* 6 (2008), pp. 194-210; T. J. Weeden Sr., ‘Polemics as a Case for Dissent: A Response to Richard Bauckham’s *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*’, *JSHJ* 6 (2008), pp. 211-24; J. Schröter, ‘The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony? A Critical Examination of Richard Bauckham’s *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*’, *JSNT* 31.2 (2008), pp. 195-209; C. A. Evans, ‘The Implications of Eyewitness Tradition’, *JSNT* 31.2 (2008), pp. 211-19; Allison, *Constructing*, 1 n. 1; Kankaanniemi, *Guards*, pp. 59-62; Redman, ‘How Accurate Are Eyewitnesses?’, pp. 177-97; Witherington, ‘“Christianity in the Making”: Oral Mystery or Eyewitness History?’, pp. 197-226 (217-24); Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 6-7, 41, 43, 47, 58, 129-30 n. 38, 130 n. 40, 224; *idem*, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 4-5; Keith, *Jesus’ Literacy*, pp. 49-50; *idem*, ‘The Competitive Textualization of the Jesus Tradition in John 20:30-31 and 21:24-25’, pp. 321-37; Foster, ‘Memory, Orality, and the Fourth Gospel’, pp. 191-127 (193-200); Kloppenborg, ‘Memory, Performance, and the Sayings of Jesus’, pp. 97-132 (109); McIver, *Memory, Jesus, and the Synoptic Gospels*, pp. 5-9; *idem*, ‘Eyewitnesses as Guarantors of the Accuracy of the Gospel Traditions in the Light of Psychological Research’, *JBL* 3 (2012), pp. 529-46; Crook, ‘Collective Memory Distortion and the Quest for the Historical Jesus’, pp. 53-76; Le Donne, ‘The Problem of Selectivity in Memory Research’, pp. 77-97; Eve, *Behind*, pp. 143-58; *idem*, *Writing*, pp. 44-46; Bird, *Gospel*, pp. 96-97 n. 93, 106-107 n. 122, 107-108; Hübenal, *Das Markusevangelium*, pp. 60-67; Syreeni, ‘The Identity’, pp. 1-16 (12-13); *idem*, ‘Eyewitness Testimony, First-Person Narration and Authorial Presence as Means of Legitimation in Early Gospel Literature’, pp. 89-110; Ehrman, *Jesus Before the Gospels*, pp. 87-130 (100-118); Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, V, pp.

attempt to cover all aspects of Bauckham's study here, only some of the most relevant issues are discussed. To begin with Bauckham's conceptual category of 'testimony', some scholars have argued that Bauckham confuses the categories of history and theology. For example, John P. Meier considers Bauckham's work one of theological apologetics, driven by a theological agenda and a methodology not suitable for 'a strictly historical quest for the historical Jesus'.¹²⁴⁷ Also, Kari Syreeni, while regarding Bauckham's 'Jesus of testimony' as an attractive theological concept, views the notion of 'testimony' as questionable when brought into the field of Jesus scholarship; it appears to allow for the Gospels to be treated differently than other historical documents.¹²⁴⁸ Jens Schröter also indicates that Bauckham's category of 'testimony' is in danger of asking one to trust the Gospels uncritically.¹²⁴⁹ Others find Bauckham's introductory discussion on 'testimony' more helpful. Byrskog deems it 'a remarkable and hermeneutically helpful achievement',¹²⁵⁰ and Rodríguez and Keith, who have espoused the application of memory studies to the historical Jesus, find the emphasis of Bauckham's 'testimony' on the final form of the Gospels useful.¹²⁵¹ It is beyond the scope of this study to engage in a philosophical (not to mention a theological) discussion on 'testimony' as a conceptual category,¹²⁵² but it is sufficient to point out that, regardless of the motive behind his work, Bauckham attempts to provide a historical and social-

77-78 n. 57; Kirk, 'Ehrman, Bauckham and Bird on Memory', pp. 88-114. See also Bauckham's responses to the articles published in *JSHJ* 6 (2008) and in *JSNT* 31.2 (2008): R. Bauckham, 'In Response to My Respondents: *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* in Review', *JSHJ* 6 (2008), pp. 225-53; *idem*, 'Eyewitnesses and Critical History: A Response to Jens Schröter and Craig Evans', *JSNT* 31.2 (2008), pp. 221-35. Further, see the additional chapters in Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 2nd edn, pp. 509-615.

1247 Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, V, p. 77 n. 57. Meier notes that he is not opposed to the idea of using both historical research and social sciences in theology, but objects to confusing theology with historical research, in particular Christology with the quest for the historical Jesus.

1248 Syreeni, 'The Identity', pp. 1-16 (12-13). While indicating that Bauckham's notion of 'testimony' is not suitable for Jesus scholarship, Syreeni (p. 13) points out that, exegetically, testimony and remembrance are important themes in Luke, John, and Acts, which are all later than Mark and Matthew.

1249 Schröter, 'The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony?', pp. 195-209 (208).

1250 Byrskog, 'The Eyewitnesses as Interpreters of the Past', pp. 157-68 (158).

1251 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 6-7 n. 9, 224-25 (224): 'Whatever problems...attend to Bauckham's theses, "historical Jesus" scholars will have to account for the gospels as coherent, culturally conditioned and relevant portrayals of Jesus'. Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, pp. 49-50, regards Bauckham's 'testimony' useful as it does not imagine one can get 'behind' the Gospel texts to the historical Jesus. Cf. ch. 3.4; 3.5 above.

1252 These themes are, of course, commented upon in relevant sections of the dissertation.

scientific case for the Gospels as eyewitness testimony,¹²⁵³ a case which can be assessed by historical and social-scientific methods.¹²⁵⁴ In Bauckham's defense, one may note that at least he has made his presuppositions clear from the start.¹²⁵⁵

As for the basic tenet of Bauckham, namely, that the Gospels of Mark, Luke, and John embody eyewitness testimony, the argument about the literary device of *inclusio* has come under severe criticism. It has been pointed out that Bauckham's argument is especially weak in Luke, where the named women are not mentioned until Luke 8.1-3, which is far from the beginning of the narrative; also, with regard to John's Gospel, the *inclusio* is far from obvious, as it is dependent upon the Gospel's recipients' ability to link 'a completely unremarkable unnamed disciple' (John 1.35-40) with the Beloved Disciple as the eyewitness source, as well as the author of the Gospel (21.24).¹²⁵⁶ Although Bauckham insists that a close reading of John reveals subtle meanings in John's Gospel in particular, his argument for the *inclusio* remains conjectural.¹²⁵⁷

In relation to Mark, Bauckham's attempt to identify the eyewitness sources based on the individuals named at the beginning and at the end of the story faces

1253 It is not difficult to recognize that Bauckham's 'Jesus of testimony' has a lot in common with some of the views that combine orality studies and social memory theory with the study of the Jesus traditions in a framework that is critical of historical positivism and its alleged methods of getting 'behind' the text (e.g. Kelber, Dunn, Rodríguez, Keith, Allison, also Le Donne); however, Bauckham's emphasis on the *theological* necessity of 'testimony' and of rejecting 'methodological skepticism' and 'historical positivism' is quite extraordinary within the field. Of course, the dichotomy between 'the historical Jesus' and 'the Christ of faith' has been discussed at length for centuries by Jesus scholars and theologians alike. Nevertheless, I share the criticisms by Meier and Syreeni as far as they express a concern about an uncritical mixing of theology with historical studies, wherein a theological concept can force unnatural or highly unlikely readings of historical documents. I do recognize, however, that a historical argument that appears 'unnatural' or 'unlikely' to one person, may not appear so to another. Thus, critical assessment of proposed historical arguments that relate to the historical documents that are available to all, and are the same for all, is crucial. I do not believe in the possibility of conducting historical research in a vacuum with no influence by one's presuppositions, religious or otherwise, and one's existing social frameworks. In the end, anyone denying such influences is, as the saying goes, 'entering a world of pain.'

1254 Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, V, pp. 77-78 n. 57, also goes on to critique the historical arguments of Bauckham's thesis.

1255 See Bauckham, 'Eyewitnesses and Critical History', pp. 221-35 (234), where he responds to Jens Schröter by noting that 'it is a prejudice to suppose that regarding the Gospels as good historical sources is necessarily "uncritical"'. Bauckham (p. 225) also notes that 'most weight must be placed on assessment of the general reliability of the sources.'

1256 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 144-45; also Catchpole, 'On Proving Too Much', pp. 169-81 (175-78); Patterson, 'Can You Trust a Gospel?', pp. 194-210 (201-2); cf. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 127-29, 129-32. For Bauckham's recent response to these criticisms, see Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 2nd edn, pp. 513-15.

1257 Cf. Bauckham, 'In Response', pp. 225-53 (243). See the discussion below.

another significant challenge. The narrative device of *inclusio*, which Bauckham applies to Peter, can be applied, as Eve demonstrates, *just as strongly* to Jesus, who is named before Peter in Mark 1.9; although Peter is mentioned after Jesus in Mark 16.6, the next verse 16.7 goes on after mentioning Peter to explain what Jesus will do. Throughout the Gospel narrative, Jesus is presented as the main character, being present at more of the events than Peter. In some cases, there are no other witnesses (e.g. Mk 1.10-13, 35; 14.35-36). Eve also notes that the author shares Jesus' thoughts and feelings (e.g. Mk 1.41; 2.5, 8; 3.5; 5.30; 6.6; 10.14, 21; 11.12; 12.34; 14.33), and narrates some events from his perspective (Mk 6.45-48; 9.25; 12.41-42; 14.37, 40). Thus, it can be argued that Mark is written from Jesus' perspective, but this of course cannot mean, unlike Bauckham's logic would demand if followed rigidly, that Jesus was Mark's eyewitness source.¹²⁵⁸

Bauckham's other arguments for Peter's role as the main eyewitness in Mark's Gospel have also been questioned. Weeden argues against Bauckham that Mark's Gospel gives us the perspective of Mark on Peter, not the perspective of Peter; the 'plural-to-singular' technique, upon which Bauckham bases his claim of Peter as the main eyewitness, simply demonstrates that 'a major focus of Mark's Gospel is upon Peter and his relationship with Jesus.'¹²⁵⁹ This counter-argument is also recognized by others who contend that the literary device can be conceived as a typical way of narrating the activity of a significant person who is followed by disciples.¹²⁶⁰ However, in response, Bauckham reasonably points out that Weeden's view of Mark's Gospel as a polemic against a *theios aner* Christology (based on his 1971 book) has been seriously criticized, and that it can be argued that despite all of his failures and misunderstandings, Peter is depicted positively by Mark.¹²⁶¹ Eve implies, nonetheless, that Bauckham still needs to explain the repeated discrediting of the main eyewitness source by Mark.¹²⁶²

Furthermore, Bauckham's studies of the names in the Gospels have raised

1258 Eve, *Behind*, p. 146.

1259 Weeden, 'Polemics as a Case for Dissent', pp. 211-24 (218-21).

1260 Patterson, 'Can You Trust a Gospel?', pp. 194-210 (202-3); Eve, *Behind*, p. 145: '[internal focalization] could surely just be an artistic device to draw the audience into the story, or to encourage the to identify with the disciples in a Gospel in which discipleship is one of the leading themes.'

1261 Bauckham, 'In Response', pp. 225-53 (251-52). In support of the last point, Bauckham refers to Timothy Wiarda, *Peter in the Gospels* (WUNT, 2.127; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000). For Bauckham's most recent response, see Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 2nd edn, pp. 510-12.

1262 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 145-46. Eve ignores Bauckham's reference to Wiarda, *Peter in the Gospels*.

critical questions.¹²⁶³ Byrskog, who is more interested in the eyewitnesses as interpreters than as sources for history, expresses skepticism about the names mentioned in the Gospels, which Bauckham takes as indicators of eyewitnesses; Byrskog indicates that even the names of the central figures of the stories appear in many ancient *bioi* with no implication for eyewitness testimony.¹²⁶⁴ Eve also challenges Bauckham's argument that the characters named for no obvious reason are to be viewed as the eyewitnesses of the particular event (for example, Jairus and Bartimaeus, who are named against the tendency for beneficiaries of Jesus' miracles to remain unnamed). Bauckham does not explain how Mark got access to the eyewitness testimony of these people. This challenge is further strengthened by the fact that Bauckham's argument indicates that Peter should be the eyewitness in Mark 5.37-39, where the raising of Jairus' daughter is narrated with the 'plural-to-singular' narrative device focusing on Peter, James, and John.¹²⁶⁵

Also, Bauckham's conception of historical fact has been questioned in particular with regard to the Gospels of Mark and John. Due to the discrepancies between the Gospels, Patterson states that '[i]f both John and Mark relied on eyewitness testimony, one of the witnesses was very unreliable'.¹²⁶⁶ Catchpole and Eve also point to the problem of viewing both Mark (with Matthew and Luke) and John as based on reliable eyewitness testimony. Whereas it could be argued that the coming of the kingdom of God is central to Mark and the other Synoptic Gospels, the Johannine Jesus is depicted as focusing mainly on the incarnate Son who reveals the Father.¹²⁶⁷ In response to this, Bauckham argues that John is much more interpretative than the Synoptics and based on the Beloved Disciple's 'lifelong reflection on the meaning of the events'; while John's Gospel cannot be read as 'a straightforward chronicle', its events are nevertheless 'historical in a fairly straightforward sense (with the normal allowances for storytelling freedom)'. Bauckham further contends that the passages in which Jesus' christological

1263 Cf. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 39-92. I only mention this section of Bauckham's work in passing above. Also see Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 2nd edn, pp. 542-45.

1264 Byrskog, 'The Eyewitnesses as Interpreters of the Past', pp. 157-68 (158-59). At the time of this debate, Bauckham, 'In Response', pp. 225-53, admitted that the topic of names needed more research. Evans, 'The Implications of Eyewitness Tradition' pp. 211-19 (215), indicated that the evidence on names did not prove as much as Bauckham wished, but was nonetheless important, as it shows that the Gospels are realistic stories.

1265 Eve, *Behind*, p. 146-47; cf. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 52-54.

1266 Patterson, 'Can You Trust a Gospel?', pp. 194-210 (200).

1267 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 148-49; Catchpole, 'On Proving Too Much', pp. 169-81 (178-80).

significance is unveiled are creations of the author.¹²⁶⁸ While Bauckham certainly allows for the author's interpretations to play a role, he believes that this interpretation does not do away with historical facts.¹²⁶⁹ However, in light of the very different accounts of Mark and John, one cannot help but wonder if Bauckham allows for too many qualifications for the notion of 'historical fact'.¹²⁷⁰ Albeit in the context of rhetoric, Byrskog also views Bauckham's thesis regarding historicity as somewhat uncritical: 'Bauckham, while often perceptively critical of form criticism, reveals a similar and yet different tendency in that the Gospels—at least Mark and John—are seen as more or less immediately transparent of the history behind them.'¹²⁷¹

Objections have also been raised on Bauckham's use of the evidence from Papias. For instance, Meier completely rejects Bauckham's heavy use of the fragmentary statements to ascertain the reliability of the Gospels and the eyewitness testimony. The fragments that have yielded more numerous contradictory interpretations 'than many *cruces interpretum* in the NT' cannot possibly carry the weight of Bauckham's argument, which equals, according to Meier, to building on sand.¹²⁷² Eve also maintains that Bauckham's argument is forced.¹²⁷³ Not only does it presuppose that Eusebius recorded the wording of Papias accurately, but it also requires that Papias in his later life remembered and recorded accurately what he had received from John the Elder when he was young, and that John the Elder's account of the relation of Peter's preaching to Mark is exactly accurate.¹²⁷⁴ This is, Eve contends, difficult to combine with Papias' views that Mark's account was not in order, but John's Gospel was. It is also difficult to see why Papias, if he thought that Mark had a direct access to Peter, did not suppose that Mark had ordered his Gospel according to Peter.¹²⁷⁵ As can be seen from these criticisms, caution is

1268 Bauckham, 'In Response', pp. 225-53 (239-40).

1269 Cf. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 305-10 (310):

1270 On this also see Eve, *Behind*, p. 149: 'The problem is that if Peter (through Mark) and the Beloved Disciple (in John) are both allowed to be sticking to the (albeit interpreted) historical facts, the notion of historical fact is in mortal danger from the death of a thousand qualifications.'

1271 Byrskog, 'The Eyewitnesses as Interpreters of the Past', pp. 157-68 (161).

1272 Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, V, pp. 77-78 n. 57.

1273 Eve, *Behind*, p. 147.

1274 See also Ehrman, *Jesus before the Gospels*, p. 112: '...Bauckham is especially enthusiastic about Papias's testimony, in part because he believes that Papias encountered these people long before he was writing, possibly as early as 80 CE – that is, during the time when the Gospels themselves were being composed. *Bauckham does not ask whether Papias's memory of encounters he had many decades earlier was accurate.*' Italics are mine.

1275 Eve, *Behind*, p. 147.

called for in relation to Papias' writings.

Those who take a more optimistic view of the matter challenge Bauckham's interpretation of Papias' phrase 'a living and surviving voice'. Dunn criticizes Bauckham for taking the phrase to imply a contrast between 'first-hand information', that is, eyewitness testimony, and a long chain of unattributed oral tradition; while Dunn contends that Bauckham is right in arguing that the meaning of 'living voice' is 'first-hand information' for Papias, he insists that the contrast is between written tradition and first-hand information. Dunn posits that Papias had received what he knew about earlier days from the oral tradition of the communities, as well as from the eyewitnesses.¹²⁷⁶ No such sharp distinction between oral history and oral tradition, as Bauckham envisages on the basis of Jan Vansina, is necessary. It has been noted by Byrskog that '[t]he testimony of an eyewitness is, in a sense, tradition as soon as it is communicated from one person to another; and by the same token, oral tradition is, in a sense, testimony, even if in an indirect way'.¹²⁷⁷

A few additional remarks on Bauckham's view of the Beloved Disciple need to be made. Marshall notes the controversial nature of the disciple's identification with John the Elder of Papias. He points out that it is problematic, for example, in light of the Synoptic narratives of the Last Supper, where only the twelve are with Jesus (Lk. 22.29-30), if one is to suppose that a disciple who was not one of the twelve was also there.¹²⁷⁸ There are more factors that cause uncertainty about Bauckham's notion of the Beloved Disciple as the eyewitness source in John's Gospel. First, the absence of the Beloved Disciple in John 2-12 indicates that the author must have acquired much of his material from elsewhere, from someone who Bauckham supposes was a direct eyewitness; in any case, the Beloved Disciple was not a direct eyewitness to many of the events in the Gospel. Secondly, the appearance of the Beloved Disciple is particularly cryptic; Bauckham's explanation

1276 Dunn, 'Eyewitnesses and the Oral Jesus Tradition', in Dunn, *The Oral Gospel Tradition*, pp. 213-29 (227-28). Schröter, 'The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony?', pp. 195-209 (201) similarly maintains that the passage underlines the primacy of oral tradition against written accounts: Papias employs the ancient *topos* of the *viva vox* in order to make this point.

1277 Byrskog, 'The Eyewitnesses as Interpreters of the Past', pp. 157-68 (159-60).

1278 Marshall, 'A New Consensus on Oral Tradition?', pp. 182-93 (193). Bauckham, 'In Response', pp. 225-53 (241) responds: 'My view is that it is pressing the evidence of the Synoptics too far to conclude that, because they only refer to the Twelve, only the Twelve were there. The nature of these kinds of narratives is that they focus on what interests the narrator and simply fail to mention other matters.' I find Bauckham's argument from silence unconvincing.

that the character is not known well enough, so he needs to hide his identity only to gradually reveal it, may function in John's narrative world, but it may not meet Bauckham's own criterion, according to which the eyewitnesses who transmit the testimony of Jesus are to be relevant.¹²⁷⁹ I cannot escape the impression that Bauckham's explanations for the absence and the hidden identity of the Beloved Disciple are just to beg the question. In the context of John's Gospel, the identity of the anonymous disciple is an important question, but Bauckham's argumentation that this individual must have been the primary eyewitness of the Gospel is inconclusive.

Regarding the authoritative status of the twelve, Bauckham is said to have overstated their influence beyond Jerusalem.¹²⁸⁰ Both the existence of the twelve in Jerusalem and that they exercised control to some degree over the transmission of the the Jesus traditions need not be denied;¹²⁸¹ rather, the question is how far and for how long their influence could expand.¹²⁸² Dunn agrees with Bauckham on the notion that early Christian communities were interested in first-hand accounts of Jesus, which they received from the eyewitnesses; he also approves of the view that the Jerusalem leadership provided a primary reference point for the traditions (Gal. 1.18); however, Dunn imagines that the control exercised by the twelve was not as extensive as Bauckham argues, when the Jesus movement spread. The original eyewitnesses are given too great a role if, in addition to their role in the formulation of the tradition, they are viewed as bridging the gap between the formulation and the transcription of the tradition. Dunn argues, as in relation to Papias' phrase 'a living and surviving voice', that no sharp distinction

1279 See Eve, *Behind*, p. 148; cf. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 402-3, 407-8; for further debate, see Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 2nd edn, pp. 550-89.

1280 Dunn, 'Eyewitnesses and the Oral Jesus Tradition', in Dunn, *The Oral Gospel Tradition*, pp. 213-29 (223, 225-29); cf. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 249-263.

1281 Cf. Gerhardsson's view above (ch. 2.2); for the recognition of the twelve in Paul, see 1 Cor. 9.1-5; 15.3-11; Gal. 1.11-19; 2.1-10. Also, Kankaanniemi, *Guards*, pp. 60-62 (62): it seems plausible that 'the Jesus traditions Paul assumed that his churches knew derived mostly from Jerusalem'; Eve, *Behind*, p. 45: 'it would be odd indeed if the Twelve ceased to have any function within a year or two of Jesus' death or if certain persons did not come to have much more control over the tradition than others.'

1282 Byrskog, 'The Eyewitnesses as Interpreters of the Past', pp. 157-68 (167: 'To the extent that Bauckham wishes to argue that the participating eyewitnesses remained influential also when they were no longer present in the transmitting groups and the Christian communities, he might wish to expound more clearly how that influence became manifest in those regular settings where certain people, probably teachers, in different cities around the Mediterranean area met together in order to remember and discuss the past.'

should be drawn between the eyewitness information and the oral tradition, while positing that the reliability of the Jesus traditions was not based on the original eyewitnesses but on the reliability of the oral Jesus tradition in more removed contexts.¹²⁸³ In his response to Dunn, Bauckham distinguishes between the early and the late work of Gerhardsson and suggests diverging from the former view, namely, that the twelve controlled the whole process of the transmission of the Jesus traditions, and speaks of ‘especially authoritative status,’ rejecting ‘exclusive authority’.¹²⁸⁴

The final issue of Bauckham’s thesis has to do with his application of social-scientific methods, namely the concepts of individual and collective memory, as well as eyewitness memory, to the question of eyewitness testimony in the Jesus traditions.¹²⁸⁵ As was the case with Byrskog’s *Story as History*, Bauckham has also been criticized for undermining the collective aspect of memory in favor of the individual aspect.¹²⁸⁶ Although he discusses Halbwachs’ ‘social determinism’ and, quite reasonably, uses Barbara Misztal’s ‘intersubjective approach’ to find balance between excessive individualism and social determinism, Bauckham seems to be countering a ‘presentist’ view of social memory, which may be congruent with a primary target of his criticism, namely the form-critical notion of flexible anonymous community tradition, although this is a view that is supported by few Jesus scholars.¹²⁸⁷ None of the scholars placed within the memory approach in this dissertation subscribe to such a view of social memory theory.

A few points need to be made on Bauckham’s application of eyewitnesses memory, and specifically recollective memory, to the question of eyewitness testimony. First, Bauckham’s argument that eyewitness accounts are rapidly honed into standard ‘forms’ is plausible, and it can be supported by the notion that each rendering of an oral-traditional story is a fresh performance, not a revised version of the previous rendering; this can be taken to imply that the form of an account

1283 Dunn, ‘Eyewitnesses and the Oral Jesus Tradition’, in Dunn, *The Oral Gospel Tradition*, pp. 213-29 (223, 225-29).

1284 Bauckham, ‘In Response’, pp. 225-53 (243).

1285 Cf. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 310-18, 319-57.

1286 Rodríguez, *Structuring*, pp. 41-42, 46-47 (46-47); Bird, *Gospel*, pp. 96-97 n. 96, 106-7 n. 122; Eve, *Behind*, p. 154.

1287 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 153-54; cf. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 310-18. Bauckham’s discussion indicates that he is criticizing a presentist view of social memory in which the past is completely transformed by the present needs of the community. Cf. the other views discussed above in Ch 3.

is not an indicator of the length of the transmission process.¹²⁸⁸ Eve indicates, however, that Bauckham's way of separating 'the non-empirical quest for meaning from the empirical facts narrated' is not justified. While narrativization is not simply distortion, but rather a prerequisite for the communication of a memory, in the case of the Gospel pericopae, which are essentially events frequently narrated, it is hard to imagine how the quest for the meaning could have shaped the narrative form without also reshaping the empirical facts to some extent.¹²⁸⁹ Second, not all the factors that Bauckham lists in favor of the reliability of recollective memory are relevant. Eve points out that, for example, that 'irrelevant detail,' and 'point of view' cannot be taken to support the accuracy of recall; 'emotional involvement' is also uncertain, because a strong emotion can have either a distorting or preserving effect. Also, Bauckham argues that 'unique or unusual events' and 'salient or consequential events' can be memorable, but ignores the reality that fictitious accounts can also appear memorable. Third, Bauckham ignores the fact that the frequent rehearsal of the Gospel material by eyewitnesses does not equate to accurate rehearsal; through frequent rehearsal, a memory gets fixated in the standard form of the narration, which is not the same as the original experience. Eve concludes from these and other points that Bauckham has not demonstrated that eyewitnesses *did* or *must* have remembered everything with reasonable accuracy, even though they theoretically *could* have done so; he has not demonstrated that the Gospels are the result of accurate eyewitness testimony.¹²⁹⁰

In sum, Richard Bauckham presents a straightforward and bold argument for the view that the canonical Gospels are based on direct eyewitness testimony.

1288 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 154-55; cf. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 335-38, 346-51.

1289 Eve, *Behind*, p. 155. Eve notes that Bauckham could claim that such distortions may occur, but they would not affect the core meaning of the event.

1290 Eve, *Behind*, pp. 155-56. On these points see also Redman, 'How Accurate Are Eyewitnesses?', pp. 177-97. Redman presents a case against Bauckham's optimistic conclusions about the reliability of the eyewitness memory and testimony in light of eyewitness psychology and psychological research on telling stories. Redman notes that during the early period of eyewitness transmission of the Jesus traditions, the eyewitnesses to Jesus' ministry functioned like any other eyewitnesses anywhere else, vulnerable to all distortions of memory. She contends that Bauckham's claims to the accuracy of eyewitness testimony proves nothing and sheds no light upon the historical Jesus. Even if the parts of the Gospels were controlled by eyewitnesses for some time before they were written down, they are no more accurate than if we suppose heavy redaction. Besides arguing that Bauckham's work does not provide empirical evidence for the historicity of the Gospels, Redman suggests as the main contribution of her investigation that the eyewitness effect can be taken into account when studying the variations of the tradition, often attributed to redactors. For a more optimistic view, see McIver, 'Eyewitnesses as Guarantors of the Accuracy of the Gospel Traditions in the Light of Psychological Research', pp. 529-46.

It was first noted that Bauckham's argument should be evaluated on historical terms, although some have suggested that Bauckham's category of 'testimony' allows for uncritical treatment of the Gospels. Some of Bauckham's arguments are more persuasive than others, but the overall impression is that the connection between the Gospels of Mark, Luke, John, and Matthew and the early Christian eyewitnesses is not as strong as Bauckham envisages.

3.9 CONCLUSION

Some of the most significant representatives of the memory approach to the study of the historical Jesus were critically evaluated in this chapter. In order to draw some conclusions, the distinct ways in which the representatives of the memory approach attempt to distinguish themselves from earlier scholarship are recognized:¹²⁹¹

(1) There is a consensus within the memory approach that the form-critical understanding of the pre-Gospel oral tradition as an anonymously and uncontrollably transmitted tradition that can be studied with a 'literary mindset' needs to be discarded. Also, the memory approach generally views Birger Gerhardsson's view of the rabbinic transmission of the Jesus tradition as too rigid, although there is some variation in the harshness of the critique; the value of his notion of *memorization* is recognized within the memory approach. Werner H. Kelber's original split between orality and textuality is deemed too sharp, but the value of Kelber's contribution to the memory approach is generally recognized; for example, his rejection of the criteria of authenticity, as well as the formulation of the Jesus traditions, in light of the conceptual category of memory, are viewed very positively by some within the memory approach (for example, Rafael Rodríguez). The contribution of Kenneth E. Bailey's view of the informal controlled tradition, which was based on an anecdotal evidence, is recognized especially by James D. G. Dunn, who employs Bailey's basic model in his discussion on oral transmission. If it were not for Dunn's (and N. T. Wright's) use of Bailey, his model would probably not have gained much scholarly attention. Bailey's model is not widely discussed by others within the memory approach.

¹²⁹¹ See Ch. 1.2:

2. How does the memory approach attempt to distinguish itself from earlier scholarship, namely, form criticism and its alternatives, with regard to the question of the transmission of the Jesus traditions and the task of reconstructing the historical Jesus?

(2) The application of oral hermeneutics to the question of the transmission of the Jesus traditions is another area where the memory approach, or at least some scholars within it, challenge earlier scholarly viewpoints. Dunn's notion, according to which the variation between the Synoptic Jesus traditions ought not to be explained simply through the authors' use of literary sources but as a result of oral retellings of the Jesus traditions, undermines the age-old assumptions of source criticism; also, in light of John Miles Foley's terminology, Rodríguez's view of the Gospels as 'Voices from the Past', that is, as widely accepted traditional performances, leads Rodríguez to speculate about the necessity of the Two-Source theory but he chooses not to pursue the question much further. On the other hand, there is some common ground between the memory approach and earlier scholarship. Richard A. Horsley (notwithstanding his views on 'the Q speeches'), Dale C. Allison, and Anthony Le Donne prefer not to distance themselves from the traditional source-critical theories but seem to accept the idea of Markan primacy and Two-(or Four-)Source theory. Chris Keith attempts to identify his study of the Jesus-memories with the earlier method of redaction criticism.

(3) While applying social memory theory to the Jesus traditions and adhering to the idea that there is no uninterpreted past available for the scholar, the memory approach also distinguishes itself from any presentist interpretations of the pioneer of social memory theory, Maurice Halbwachs. The presentist view, namely, the idea that the present needs and interests of the community completely absorb and transform the past actuality of Jesus, is rejected and deemed reminiscent of the outdated early form-critical notions that correlated a form of tradition with a specific *Sitz im Leben*. For example, Keith argues that, while the actual past cannot be accessed, it can be discussed on the basis of the Jesus-memories. Rodríguez speaks of the continuity in terms of the historical reputation of Jesus and competing historical images. Also, Allison, who refers to memory studies, not foremost in terms of social memory but in terms of the (un-)reliability of human memory, argues for a continuity against naïve apologetic trust and hyper-skepticism.

(4) A major difference between the memory approach and earlier scholarship has to do with the question of the historicity and authenticity of the Jesus traditions. While maintaining that there is no access to an uninterpreted past, the memory approach also argues that there is no access 'behind' the text with the criteria of authenticity. For Chris Keith, the memory approach is about the return to the text (in terms of Ricoeur, 'a second naïveté in critical Jesus research').

Whatever their differences, most scholars within the memory approach find no use for the criteria of authenticity or the 'authenticity language'. Dunn, Horsley, Rodríguez, Keith, Allison, as well as Richard Bauckham from the perspective of eyewitness testimony, are all very dismissive of the criteria-based earlier Jesus scholarship. In his study of 'Jesus the apocalyptic prophet', Allison suggests that instead of the authenticity of individual Jesus traditions one should focus on larger themes in the Gospels (hence, the principle of recurrent attestation). However, Anthony Le Donne's work is an important exception to the rule, as it aims to appropriate the criteria of authenticity as a part of his method for studying the Jesus traditions from the perspective of memory. Le Donne attempts to refine the traditional language of 'historicity' and 'authenticity' by addressing whether a tradition has its basis in invention or memory/perception.

(5) The notion that the Jesus traditions can only be used to discuss 'Jesus remembered' leads the memory approach, some within it in more articulated ways than others, to downplay the age-old distinction between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith; the levels of the historical figure of Jesus and the post-Easter Christ are merged, as it is only the *impact* Jesus had on his first followers that can be studied by the Jesus scholar. Bauckham is the most vocal scholar in this regard, advancing an argument about the Jesus of testimony which is not merely historical but also theological in nature, while the works of Dunn, Keith, and Rodríguez indicate that the historical Jesus is merged with the Christ of the early Christian faith in the Jesus tradition. This means, consequently, that the historical Jesus is beyond the scholar's reach. In this sense, one may speak of a paradigm shift from the 'historical' to a 'remembered' Jesus.

(6) An obvious difference between earlier scholarship, including Gerhardsson, whose focus is not on *memory* per se but on the ancient teaching method of replication and *memorization*, and the memory approach has to do with what kind of language is used about the Jesus traditions; generally, the memory approach attempts to formulate historiographical methods of studying how ancient people preserved and appropriated the past in light of the conceptual category of memory. For example, Rodríguez applies such language ('the installation of Jesus in early Christian memory') to some of Jesus' healings and exorcisms, Keith studies Jesus' literacy and his conflicts with the Jewish scribal elite in light of the Jesus-memories, and Le Donne applies his hermeneutic of mnemonic triangulation to the title Son of David, which he views as a category of early Christian social memory.

(7) Finally, contrary to form criticism's neglect of important and authoritative individuals and eyewitnesses of Jesus, and building upon the foundation laid by Gerhardsson's notion of the collegium of the Twelve as the early guarantors of the reliability of the transmission of the Jesus traditions, some scholars within the memory approach (in contrast to others) place a considerable weight on eyewitness testimony and eyewitness memory. For Samuel Byrskog, on the one hand, the ancient notion of *autopsy* ('eyewitness testimony') is an important concept, as he argues that there was an interest in 'historical factuality' among ancient historians, including the Gospel authors; Byrskog stresses certain individual eyewitnesses but does not downplay the importance of theological interpretation by viewing their testimony naïvely as a guarantor of the 'historicity' or 'authenticity' of the Jesus traditions. Richard Bauckham, on the other hand, distinguishes himself from much of earlier scholarship by beginning with a straightforward theological apologetic for 'the Jesus of testimony'; albeit not far from Dunn's notion of Jesus' *impact*, this category is more specific. Bauckham is bolder than Byrskog in arguing that the Gospels are based rather directly on eyewitness testimony. Both Byrskog and Bauckham have been criticized by others within the memory approach for downplaying the social aspect of memory in favor of individuals and critiquing a presentist view of social memory theory which is supported by few scholars. The main research problem of the dissertation, namely, whether the memory approach constitutes a coherent school of thought in historical Jesus research, is addressed in the concluding discussion below.

4 CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

This study has provided a broad perspective on the current state of historical Jesus research, especially regarding the recent methodological developments that have taken place. First, after discussing the history of Jesus scholarship and the idea of Quest as a research problem, four earlier views on the transmission of the Jesus traditions were outlined and evaluated in order to provide a meaningful context for the discussion on the memory approach. It was recognized that these predecessors of the memory approach, namely, early form criticism (Dibelius, Bultmann), the formal controlled tradition (Riesenfeld, Gerhardsson), the radical discontinuity view (Güttgemanns, Kelber), and the informal controlled tradition (Bailey), with their flaws and positive contributions, were important for understanding the memory approach. Secondly, with a necessary introduction to the conceptual category of individual and social memory, the different representatives of the memory approach (Dunn, Horsley, Rodríguez, Keith, Allison, Le Donne, Byrskog, Bauckham) were presented and critically evaluated. Finally, the main research question of the dissertation, namely, whether the memory approach constitutes a coherent methodological school of thought in historical Jesus research, remains to be addressed. The critiques of the various contributions of the memory approach are here discussed in light of the four subquestions.¹²⁹²

(A) With regard to the use of standard source-critical hypotheses for historical Jesus research, such as the Two-(or Four-)Source theory, the proponents of the memory approach represent a variety of views. In some cases, the adoption of oral hermeneutics leads to methodological disinterest in source-critical presuppositions. The explanation offered by Dunn (who does not discard the Q hypothesis altogether) of the variations between the Synoptic Jesus traditions as ‘oral variants’ or ‘oral retellings’ instead of the results of literary copying is not entirely convincing; Matthew and Luke, if they knew Mark from memory, could

¹²⁹² See Ch. 1.2:

3. Does the memory approach constitute a methodologically coherent school of thought in historical Jesus research?

A. How are source-critical hypotheses, such as the Two-(or Four-)Source theory, viewed within the memory approach?

B. What is the role of the criteria of authenticity in studying the Jesus traditions within the memory approach?

C. Does the memory approach shed new light on the question about the distinction between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith?

D. Is the memory approach a new beginning or a dead end for historical Jesus research?

have worked with Mark without direct access, and Dunn's examples do not deviate from how ancient authors would have used literary sources. Not even visual contact with one's literary sources would always ensure the copying of the exact wording. Albeit building upon the traditional views of Markan primacy and the Q hypothesis, Horsley's case is also found somewhat wanting. He underestimates the role played by written texts in first-century Judea and Galilee, arguing for the far-fetched view of the oral composition of Mark's Gospel and vague settings for 'the Q speeches'. Further, Rodríguez's notion of the 'variant instantiations' of the oral Jesus traditions may be vulnerable to some of the same criticisms as Dunn; albeit not focused on the question of the literary relationships between the Gospels, Rodríguez's view may still downplay the role of the Gospel authors as writers of texts.¹²⁹³

Since scholars have to work with the written Gospels, there remains a need for some historical hypotheses about their literary composition, even with everything that an oral hermeneutic can add to the discussion. The memory approach has not changed that. In fact, many within the memory approach take the standard solution for the Synoptic Problem at face value (Allison, Le Donne); there are others who can be placed within the memory approach and would argue that source criticism and its results are central after the rise of memory studies (e.g. Hübenthal, Kirk). This variety of views points to the conclusion that, regarding source-critical hypotheses, the memory approach is not one coherent school of thought.

(B) As for the use of the criteria of authenticity for studying the Jesus traditions, most of the representatives of the memory approach are very critical and skeptical, attempting to redefine the principles of discussing the historicity of the Jesus traditions. Dunn, for one, initially lacked a theoretical framework for discussing social memory and memory distortion, which gave the impression that memory was referred to as a rather simple guarantor of continuity from Jesus to the Gospels. Rodríguez's discussion on the notion of the historical reputation of Jesus offers a starting point of sorts but the idea could be developed further.

With the criteria of authenticity gone, the question remains *how* the issue of historicity should be addressed. Keith's rejection of the criteria of authenticity is

1293 Cf. the critical statement from a scholar who is generally sympathetic towards Rodríguez's view (in Rodríguez, *Structuring*) and can be viewed as a member of the memory approach: Kirk, *Q in Matthew*, p. 19: '[w]hile [Rodríguez] is able to deliver a robust account of variation in the synoptic tradition he struggles to explain, and therefore is forced to marginalize, its patterns of agreement, and his case studies are mostly of low-agreement parallels.'

largely based on the criteria approach's indebtedness to form criticism, specifically the post-Bultmannian scholars who developed form criticism on the basis of a specific notion of the transmission of the Jesus traditions as individual units; while Keith's 'return to the text' does yield concrete results regarding Jesus' literacy/illiteracy and his conflicts with the religious elite of his time, and is by no means a rejection of a historical view of the Jesus traditions, relating all of the 'mnemonic evidence' of the gospels to the question of 'historicity' without reference to at least some principles behind the traditional criteria seems to be challenging. Albeit generally skeptical of the criteria, Keith is open to the possibility that some principles may still be useful, yet places the burden of proof on those who wish to integrate the traditional methods with the memory approach.

The challenge that occurs when the criteria of authenticity are altogether discarded becomes more evident in Allison's work, which attempts to replace the criteria with the principles of recurrent attestation but ends up, in John P. Meier's words, 'muddling through' the Jesus tradition with his 'scholarly instinct' (in other words, commonsense), not offering a viable overall method for the study of the historical Jesus. While Keith's view offers *a way forward* with some distinctive contribution to the field and Allison's principle of recurrent attestation cannot be entirely dismissed, there are unique events in Jesus' life (Jesus' baptism, his activity at the temple, his crucifixion), recorded in the Jesus tradition, the locations of which are hard to detect in a balanced picture of the historical Jesus without the criteria of authenticity (so Hägerland; cf. Allison, Keith, Rodríguez). In fact, Allison refers to some principles of the criteria despite seemingly rejecting them.

In contrast, Anthony Le Donne finds a plausible way of combining memory studies and the criteria of authenticity; he is able to discuss the 'historicity' and 'authenticity' of the Jesus traditions after refining the terms in light of the memory approach; while a non-perceived or non-remembered Jesus is never to be achieved, one can postulate, through a careful application of the criteria, whether a Jesus tradition has its basis in memory/perception or invention. No matter how weak or strong the conclusions, some kind of defined principles are needed for discussion about 'historicity'.

Of course, the need for defined principles is not denied by the proponents of the memory approach (although at least Allison can be criticized for incoherence in this regard). There is, however, a great difference between the different proponents of the approach when it comes to the nature of the needed principles. While many

regard the criteria of authenticity epistemologically beyond repair, some hold on to them, yet not uncritically. Due to the difference, it remains, on the one hand, the job of those who dispense with the criteria to explain how the entire Jesus tradition can be discussed historically without recourse to the criteria; on the other hand, if one is to hold on to the criteria, their ongoing relevance and usefulness must be demonstrated with the necessary epistemological modification. In sum, the role of the criteria of authenticity is still up for debate within the memory approach.

(C) Concerning the question about the long-upheld distinction between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith, the suggestion of some (in particular, Bauckham) within the memory approach – namely, that the ‘historical’ Jesus is merged with the Christ of faith due to there being only the Jesus remembered – is at risk of fideism; does such a hermeneutic mean that no historical Jesus can be reconstructed other than one seen through faith? It is recognized that one cannot objectively access the historical actuality of Jesus, rather only interpretations of it; however, this should not lead to an uncritical reading of the Gospels as historical sources.

While Dunn’s reassertion of Kähler’s notion may be somewhat misleading, his conclusions regarding the historical reliability of the Jesus traditions do not display such a problem to a large extent. The issue is more pertinent in Bauckham’s treatment of the ‘Jesus of testimony’. Albeit helpful as a theological talking point, Bauckham’s category (‘Jesus of testimony’) may have come in the way of the careful historical investigation of the Gospels, becoming more of a tool of harmonization than a useful theological/philosophical category that is willing to recognize, beside the unity, the simultaneous tension between history and theology; Bauckham’s reading of the Gospels becomes easily coerced (cf. his idea of ‘historical fact’ regarding John and Mark). Of course, this is always a matter of perspective to some degree; there is no historical research free from presuppositions. Nonetheless, some common principles against which different readings are evaluated are needed.

One may legitimately state that any scholar who emphasizes the merging of the historical Jesus with the Christ of faith is not studying the ‘historical’ Jesus in a traditional sense. The difference between Bauckham and some others within the memory approach (e.g. Keith, Rodríguez) is that the latter do not argue that, in general, the historical Jesus is merged with the Christ of faith, but rather that the historical Jesus is merged with the Christ of faith *in the tradition*.

Epistemologically, this is a different claim from what is indicated by Bauckham's 'Jesus of testimony'. Thus, Keith, Rodríguez, and others in a similar vein do not become vulnerable to the criticism of fideism. Within the memory approach, there are different views on the relationship between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith, which has different consequences for the historian's task.

Can we, then, speak of a methodically coherent school of thought in Jesus scholarship? It has become clear in this dissertation that there are grounds for speaking about the memory approach as a school of thought of its own. However, regardless of its distinctive features, including an emphasis on epistemology and the hermeneutics of interpretation, the memory approach displays such a wide variety of methodological viewpoints that it cannot be deemed one *coherent* school of thought. Surely, if one still wants to adhere to a research-historical narrative of 'Quests' even in some qualified sense, naming the memory approach 'the Fourth Quest' for the historical Jesus would be too bold a move.¹²⁹⁴

The question of the historicity of the Jesus tradition cannot be avoided even after the introduction of social memory theory, with its hermeneutical consequences, and the serious study of oral tradition to historical Jesus research. Those placed within the memory approach would hardly claim to avoid tackling the question of historicity, but there remains some considerable differences regarding the question within the approach. Also, while many of the emphases of the memory approach are definitely to be welcomed by Jesus scholars, in the big picture, focusing on sociological and psychological issues is not a new thing in historical Jesus scholarship; it is commonplace to note that the scholarship of the so-called Third Quest period was especially interested in sociological viewpoints regarding the historical Jesus. One quickly runs into trouble trying to define the memory approach as a completely new beginning for historical Jesus research; this would be a hazardous move, as the career of, say, Richard A. Horsley spans well into the same period as much of earlier scholarship, for instance, the work of Werner H. Kelber. This only confirms that suggesting rigid research-historical outlines can be an arbitrary enterprise.

There is no turning back from the reality that the language that is used when

1294 Cf. Bernier, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, p. 162: '[t]he Third Quest sought to dispense with the myth of rupture between Judaism and Jesus, and for the most part, it succeeded in this aim,' and '[t]he Fourth Quest... is focused upon dispensing with the myth of a rupture between Jesus and Christianity'. However, see the discussion on the problematic nature of the Quest-language in ch. 1.1.

referring to the Jesus traditions has changed; in this sense, one can speak of a methodological shift in historical Jesus research, a *paradigm shift* in a qualified sense. However, as long as there is a case to be made for the continuing necessity of some of the traditional methods rejected by many within the memory approach, even if considerably refined, there will hardly be a consensus that *a new beginning* is the proper nomenclature to describe the memory approach to the Jesus traditions and the historical Jesus. The variability of methods within the memory approach calls for more methodological clarification and helps to underline the reality that it is not meaningful to attempt to put together a number of scholars and call them ‘a Quest’ for the historical Jesus. While there are grounds for speaking of the memory approach as a school of thought, however diverse the methodological choices of its different proponents, the research-historical narrative ought not to be understood in terms of rigid and uniform ‘Quests’. Reality always tends to evade neat categorizations.¹²⁹⁵

It has become clear that the memory approach attempts in many ways to distinguish itself from earlier scholarship, for example, through the redefinition of the Jesus traditions as instances or categories of early Christian social memory. This is as such a significant research-historical development in historical Jesus research. Nevertheless, the memory approach is a methodologically diverse approach which entails both (1) a tendency to distance itself from earlier methods of studying the Jesus traditions, as evinced, for example, by the large-scale rejection of the criteria of authenticity and the deemphasizing of source-critical hypotheses in light of an oral hermeneutic by some scholars, (2) and a tendency to appropriate older methods, such as the criteria of authenticity, in light of the hermeneutics of the memory approach. These tendencies cannot, however, be detected in a clear-cut fashion, as one memory-approach scholar can take the traditional source-critical solutions at face value, while abandoning the study of the authenticity of the Jesus traditions, and another scholar can offer a thorough hermeneutical framework for studying the historical Jesus in light of social memory theory, while attempting to appropriate the criteria of authenticity for discussing the historicity of the Jesus traditions in a modified sense. Furthermore,

1295 Cf. Le Donne, ‘The Quest of the Historical Jesus’, pp. 63-86, who is skeptical of the Quest language, while acknowledging the importance of many of the same significant figures and turns in the history of research as within the standard story of historical Jesus research (i.e. First Quest, No Quest, New Quest, Third Quest).

some scholars emphasize the questions of eyewitness testimony and eyewitness memory, while others do not discuss these matters at length.

Consequently, it is not reasonable to attempt to categorize different scholars within the memory approach based on a set of strict criteria. There are different strategies and methodological starting points within the memory approach. It can be concluded that the memory approach offers *ways* forward for historical Jesus research. While the memory approach displays a methodological shift in the sense that it redefines the language and categories used about the Jesus traditions, due to the methodological diversity, one ought to refrain from declaring it a new beginning for historical Jesus research (let alone 'the Fourth Quest').

Whatever the flaws of the present study, I consider its main contribution its definition of the methodological viewpoints both within earlier scholarship (form criticism with its alternatives) and the memory approach with regard to the nature and transmission of the Jesus traditions in early Christianity. It is made clear in this study that the memory approach can only be properly understood within the context of ancient media studies and their bearing on the question of the transmission of the Jesus traditions; the diversity of scholarship conducted within the memory approach was demonstrated. It was also noted that, while the memory approach reasonably rejects any naïve notion about access to the historical actuality of Jesus, the concept of the remembered Jesus (or 'Jesus of testimony') ought not to be used to grant the Gospels a special status as historical sources. Neither naïve apologetic trust nor hyper-skepticism toward the material is warranted. Hopefully, the study has furthered the discussion on the role of the concept of memory, as well as memory studies, in the field of historical Jesus research.

Some future prospects for the study of the Jesus traditions and the historical Jesus may be presented. There remains a need for dialogue between the different methodological choices within the memory approach; can the traditional methods be combined with new insights, maybe redefining the former in light of the contribution of ancient media studies and social memory theory? As the new ways of conducting research can be subjected to some valid criticisms, it may be fruitful to apply, for instance, Anthony Le Donne's method to a wider body of the Jesus traditions despite the fact that some of his views have been met with skepticism among other proponents of the memory approach. This would mean that the epistemology of historicity, authenticity language and the criteria of authenticity needs to be further addressed; if there is no role for the criteria, like

many would argue, how can the question of historicity be addressed? Is one left with no possibility of speaking about the historicity of singular events (for example, the temple incident, the crucifixion) described in the Jesus traditions? Can the historicity of the Jesus traditions be discussed in a modified sense, for example, a described event having its 'basis in perception'? It is noteworthy that even some of those who reject the criteria due to their epistemological presuppositions either openly continue to refer to some of the principles behind the criteria or at least leave open the possibility that some principles may still be useful. The fact that the question of 'historicity' is not settled calls for further discussion.

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SVENSK SAMMANFATTNING

Den här avhandlingen fokuserar på det aktiva internationella forskningsområdet där olika teorier om minne (t.ex. socialt/kollektivt och individuellt minne) och mediastudier (t.ex. studie av muntlig tradition och historia) tillämpas på studien av den historiske Jesus. Huvudsyftet är att undersöka om *memory approach* utgör en sammanhängande metodologisk forskningstrend. Avhandlingen undersöker hur de grundläggande principerna i *memory approach* skiljer sig från tidigare forskning och om en ny början inom Jesusforskning kan talas om. Undersökningen fokuserar på den forskningshistoriska diskussionen om naturen och processerna för traderingen av Jesustraditionerna i den tidigkristna rörelsen, vilket är ett centralt forskningsproblem för både tidigare historisk Jesusforskning och *memory approach*.

Efter en kritisk diskussion om begreppet 'quest for the historical Jesus', diskuteras i kapitel 2 det gamla tyska formkritiska paradigmet (2.1: Martin Dibelius och Rudolf Bultmann), liksom några av deras viktigaste kritiker. Dibelius och Bultmanns grundläggande principer om muntliga Jesustraditioner är en meningsfull forskningshistorisk utgångspunkt, eftersom deras synpunkter, som har varit globalt mycket inflytelserika i årtionden, har framkallat starka kritiska reaktioner från *memory approach*. Tre alternativa modeller för det formkritiska paradigmet presenteras och kritiseras: den formella kontrollerade traditionen (2.2: Harald Riesenfeld, Birger Gerhardsson), den radikala diskontinuitetssynen (2.3: Erhardt Güttgemanns, Werner H. Kelber) och den informella kontrollerade traditionen (2.4: Kenneth E. Bailey).

Kapitel 3 är tillägnat åt *memory approach*, nämligen, forskare som på olika sätt använder teorier om minne på (re)konstrueringar av den historiske Jesus. Fokuset är på socialt och individuellt minne (3.1). Huvuddelen av kapitlet består av en analys och kritik av de studier som använder minnet som begreppsmässig kategori (3.2: James D. G. Dunn; 3.6: Dale C. Allison), *social memory theory* (3.3: Richard A. Horsley; 3.4: Rafael Rodríguez; 3.5: Chris Keith; 3.7: Anthony Le Donne) och olika studier av muntlig tradition (särskilt Dunn, Horsley, Rodríguez) på frågan om traderingen av Jesustraditionen. Begreppet ögonvittnesbevis, de tidiga kristna ögonvittnens roll och den specifika kategorin av individuellt minne, ögonvittnesminne, är också behandlade (3.8: Samuel Byrskog, Richard Bauckham). Skillnaderna mellan *memory approach* och tidigare

forskning analyseras i förhållande till traderingsmodeller och rekonstruktioner av mediesituationen i den första århundradets kontext.

Några av de viktigaste slutsatserna i studien är följande. Det finns ett samförstånd inom *memory approach* att den formkritiska förståelsen av Jesustraditionen som en anonym och okontrollerat tradition som kan studeras med en 'litterär tankegång' måste kasseras. Tillämpningen av en oral hermeneutik på frågan om traderingen av Jesustraditionen är ett annat område där *memory approach* utmanar tidigare forskningens synpunkter. Inom *memory approach* ses Jesustraditionerna som tidiga kristna minnen av Jesus. Det finns ingen tillgång till den faktiska historiska Jesus 'bakom' texten. Därför kan man tala om ett paradigmskifte från studien av den historiske Jesus till studien av minnets Jesus.

Sammanfattningsvis är *memory approach* en metodiskt varierad tankeskola som innebär både (1) en tendens att avstå från tidigare metoder för att studera Jesustraditionerna, vilket exempelvis framgår av en storskalig avvisning av de så kallade autenticitetskriterierna och en avbetoning av traditionella källkritiska hypoteser i ljuset av en muntlig hermeneutik, och (2) en tendens att omdefiniera äldre metoder i ljuset av hermeneutiken av *memory approach*. Det finns olika strategier och metodologiska utgångspunkter inom *memory approach*. Slutsatsen kan dras att *memory approach* erbjuder *vägar framåt* för Jesusforskning men det utgör inte en sammanhängande metodologisk forskningstrend. Medan *memory approach* visar ett skifte i den meningen att språket och kategorierna som används om Jesustraditionerna omdefinieras, borde man avstå från att förklara det en ny början för Jesusforskning (eller 'the Fourth Quest').

Tuomas Havukainen

The Quest for the Memory of Jesus: A Viable Path or a Dead End?

This study is focused on the active international field of study in which various theories of memory (e.g. social/collective memory and individual memory) and ancient media studies (e.g. study of oral tradition and history) are applied to historical Jesus research. The main purpose of the dissertation is to study whether the *memory approach* constitutes a coherent methodological school of thought. The dissertation discusses in what ways the *memory approach* distinguishes itself from earlier research and whether one can speak of a new beginning in historical Jesus research. A central focus of the study is the research-historical discussion on the nature and processes of the transmission of the Jesus traditions in early Christianity, which is a significant research problem for both earlier historical Jesus research and the *memory approach*.