

# Metamorphoses



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# Metamorphoses

Resurrection, Body and Transformative Practices  
in Early Christianity

Edited by  
Turid Karlsen Seim and Jorunn Økland

Walter de Gruyter · Berlin · New York

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## Introduction

TURID KARLSEN SEIM AND JORUNN ØKLAND<sup>1</sup>

In this volume we explore how ideas and experiences of transformation were expressed in early Christianity, asking the following questions: In which ways and to which extent did the faith in an individual resurrection accommodate processes of transformation? What were the frameworks within which transformative ideas such as resurrection and also experiences of having become "a new being" were shaped? Which analogies did they refer to, and what were the parameters by which transformation was noted and actually asserted? How did taxonomic patterns, that is constructions of an ordered design of the created world, accommodate or challenge transformative movements?

The focus on transformation helps connect various topics that so far have been studied separately or from the perspective of a particular discipline or selection of sources. In addressing the questions, we draw on the rich diversity of Christian and Jewish groups and beliefs and discover ever again that, even in controversy, the boundaries between them are often blurred and porous. While taking chronology into account, we hesitate to speak of development in evolutionary terms. Since the religious, philosophical and cultural environment was significant for the formation and articulation of their beliefs, we examine how they depended upon and actively exploited existing forms of thought, speech and behavior – that is how they yielded to given discourses while slowly establishing new ones. The establishment of new forms of behavior means that it was possible to connect faith in resurrection and ethical ideas and practices pertaining to a new life.

What we learned is laid out in the many essays that constitute the corpus of this volume. They speak for themselves but are briefly introduced in the outline below. It is, however, necessary in this introduction to comment more comprehensively on the broader framework of metamorphosis. In addition we have to reflect on the fact that the trans-

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<sup>1</sup> Turid Karlsen Seim is professor and director of The Norwegian Institute in Rome, University of Oslo, Italy; Jorunn Økland is professor at the Centre for Gender Research, University of Oslo, while at CAS: Senior Lecturer at the Department of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield, UK.

formation of gender plays less of a role in this volume than one might have hoped or planned (see separate section below).

## Metamorphosis and Resurrection as Reflection on the Self

It has been claimed that the stories of metamorphoses of humans or deities that have been passed down to us from the ancient world represent a narrative way of getting at issues of self, personal identity, and the paradox or problem of change in human selves and shapes.

Ancient philosophers addressed the same concerns in other terms and genres, and many of the contributions in this volume refer to their discussions: what remains of the past through sudden changes, or through sets of changes? How can this inconstant, changeable and material body accommodate and help one hold on to identity, continuity and eternal life?

As will become clear in this volume, the same concerns and questions that were addressed in the stories of metamorphoses or in philosophical discussions over sameness, permanence and change were also addressed by the stories of resurrection. As Karen King notes in her essay, "Christians shared the ancient conviction that fleshy bodies are subject to the same conditions of mutability and instability that applies to all matter ....bodies were constantly metamorphosing throughout people's lives." Richard Sorabji has analysed these ancient convictions in more detail. To the crucial question "what makes an individual the same person over a period of time?" Sorabji answers with Heraclitus, Plato, Aristotle – *and* with the early Christians and their belief in resurrection.<sup>2</sup> It is on the basis of such thematic resemblances that are evident to scholars even far outside the biblical field, that many contributors to this volume have chosen to consider resurrection as one form or sub-category of metamorphosis, and also as an adjustment of the concerns generating stories of metamorphoses into an emerging Christian worldview. If Christianity started with the resurrection of Christ, stirring the hope that also those who belonged to him would resurrect, it is perhaps no surprise that resurrection rather than metamorphosis more generally became the focus of the debates over change and transformation of human selves and shapes.

Tales about transformation, *Metamorphoses*, formed a well-known genre in antiquity. Such narratives of metamorphosis told about hu-

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2 Richard Sorabji, *Self: Ancient and Modern Insights about Individuality, Life, and Death* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 57-78.



mans or deities who emerged as animals, plants, or differently-looking humans. Some element of their original abilities, qualities or mentalities was always retained, such as the ability to speak or reason. Best known today is the 15 volume work by Publius Ovidius Naso, written at the dawn of the first century CE. The perspective on metamorphosis presented there is that the world is constantly undergoing transformation. Individual stories in his work sample spectacular transformations that seemingly disregard the normal boundaries and order of nature, as human beings may be transformed to animals, plants or rocks. However, the stories do not represent a *liebhaber's* collection of curiosities. They are to Ovid intriguing expressions of the Heraclitean principle of *panta rei*, the fluidity of all forms. The constant, underpinning question remains whether there is any permanence or continuity in this fluidity and if so, whether it can be traced and recognised. In most of the stories the metamorphosis implies that the bodily human form disappears, yet some personal characteristics endure and become even more obvious since so much else has changed. The transformation helps in fact make manifest a constitutive continuity. Change represents a paradox, in that it presupposes its own opposite: non-change or sameness.

About 150 years later, Apuleius wrote another famous *Metamorphoses*, more often today called the *Golden Ass* (*asinus aureus*). It tells the story of Lucius who rather naively rubs himself with a magic ointment and is transformed into an ass even if he keeps his human mind. Notwithstanding its more entertaining qualities, Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* emphasizes the polarity between Lucius' magically induced transformation to an ass and his recovery to humanity made possible only through divine intervention.

There are great differences between Ovid and Apuleius, but they are mentioned as illustrations of how tales of transformation do address significant questions about the ontological or ethical status of a certain taxonomic order. Which features carry continuity or reveal a continued presence in a different form? Are continuity and/or recognisability always important? Which are the structuring principles in such a taxonomy? Are certain taxonomic boundaries considered unfringeable, that is: did it have absolute limits so that certain transformations were unacceptable, even unthinkable, and which categories were used as boundary-markers? Taxonomic presuppositions such as these most often remain implicit to a degree that when they become explicit one is unaware of their significance.

In our context, it is further interesting to note that Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was produced in the Augustan era and thus was contemporary to some of the Jewish writings mentioned in this volume, and preceded

many of the Christian writings under discussion by just a few decennia. One could therefore reflect on whether the more general notions of metamorphosis in this period also in a more direct way contributed to the development of resurrection as a central focus in Christian thought. The belief in resurrection provided a similar opportunity to reflect on the metamorphosis of the body and whatever was retained in the process through death and resurrection.

The relationships between the narratives of metamorphosis in Ovid, Apuleius and other Graeco-Roman authors and the Christian and Jewish texts of resurrection and various forms of heavenly experience or exposure will, however, not be further explored in this volume. The essays provide close readings of the Jewish and Christian texts without taking this larger framework much into consideration and rather drawing on philosophical texts. It is, however important to highlight the larger phenomenon of metamorphosis narratives and its inherent questions because they have provided a general frame of reference for much of the reading work carried out in the essays. It is also clear that the vocabulary and conceptual repertoire of metamorphosis unlocked the texts in new ways for the contributors, so that many of the innovative qualities of the project are a direct consequence of the invocation of this repertoire.

But metamorphosis and resurrection tie in with broader debates also today. The nature of the self and of identity have been much debated topics, not only in contemporary philosophy, but also in broader intellectual discussions in the late or post-modern period.<sup>3</sup> The connection is well stated by Caroline Walker Bynum:

"We are, as these odd old tales suggest, shapes with stories, always changing but also always carrying traces of what we were before. ... Indeed I would suggest that we, as we reflect on the European tradition of metamorphosis, are like another of Ovid's transformations: Narcissus. For even if we gaze at our own reflection when we bow low over the pool of our literary past, that gazing is a mark of who we are, and who we are is, in part, what we have been. The stories of our high tradition, like our folklore, are a significant component of what we think with. Hence our self-reflexivity, our tendency to study ourselves, is a mark of the self we carry with us as we bend over the pool."<sup>4</sup>

Bynum's quote makes clear how the latest preoccupation with the self and identity is just another twist in a very old habit of self-reflection (in both meanings of the term), which also contributes to a further devel-

3 See e.g. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

4 Caroline Walker Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 188-9.

opment of our selves. But the quote also brings to the surface some of the historical discourses enclosed in the modern concepts and debates, which then can be seen as containing and continuing old tensions. It must also be acknowledged, however, that some of the aporias of previous moments of self-reflection may have been resolved along the way. The essays offered here add further detail to the image we see as we bend over the pool – perhaps also showing someone we had never imagined could be ourselves.

Whose image do we see? It is clear that when the first Christians looked in the mirror, dimly, who they saw was not primarily themselves, but Christ, since their own selves in some sense had been replaced with Christ in baptism. They were “being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another” (2 Cor 3:18). Transformation thus can also be seen as a disciplinary and ethical programme – including transformation as designed by a hierarchical configuration of gender; martyrdom and the ascetic *agon* as transformation, and the idea that likeness to the angels might be attained and life in paradise rehearsed already before physical death. By Jesus’ resurrection death was rendered invisible as one always looked past and beyond it; there is indeed in most of the material a remarkable disinterest in physical death.

Frequent address of christological issues is inevitable in a volume where resurrection and transformation into the image of Christ are key topics. Some of the essays revisit the relationships between the death and resurrection of Christ and the death and resurrection of all believers (one of the themes in 1 Cor 15). Others nuance the picture of the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

## Missing Gender?

A type of change that has been frequently addressed in recent scholarship on Early Christianity the last 20-30 years is gender transformation: In many Early Christian texts women are described in male terms, embodying male virtues and even going through physical changes that give them a more male appearance. Within the context of a project on metamorphosis, body and transformative practices, Early Christian notions of gender and gender-bending have a self-evident place – from the outset. Still, apart from a few exceptions, gender is less in focus in the essays presented here. And the essay that focuses the most on gender transformation concludes on a “negative” note, that the stories of women becoming male in Early Christian texts are not as widespread

as recent literature might suggest. Still, this does not lead us to conclude that gender was an unimportant site of transformation in Early Christianity. Several of the contributors have spent much of their time previously researching exactly that, and even had plans for continuing this vein of research as part of the project. But it became clear as the project settled, that gender transformation and gender bending have been so intensely researched in recent years that other types of human transformation are now in more urgent need of analysis and interpretation. Perhaps gender transformation needs eventually to be inserted back into the larger picture. The current volume thus represents a way of transferring some critical insights and methodological advances from the area of gender studies to the study also of other human phenomena in the ancient world. A short perusal of the bibliography should make clear the debt to feminist and other gender critical methodologies, although gender is neither a *primary category* of analysis nor a primary thematic focus of analysis. It should, however, be remembered that there are no stories of women making heavenly journeys, and not all believers in the resurrection believed in the resurrection of women. Some believed that women would be resurrected as men or as “genderless” beings still defined in masculine terms.

### Research Process

This collective volume is based on the joint work of an international research group studying *Metamorphoses: Resurrection, Taxonomies and Transformative Practices* at the Centre for Advanced study (CAS) at the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters in Oslo during the academic year 2006-2007.<sup>5</sup> A generous grant made it possible for the group to work together over a longer period of time, and even if the composition of the group changed during the year, we maintained a collective working pattern in order for the individual contributions to be shaped by an interactive process within the group. The weekly group meetings were instrumental in this respect. Here we discussed work in progress and pondered at close hold many of the texts which are included as primary sources in this volume. First drafts of the essays in this volume were first presented at a CAS-conference in June 2007 and since revised in light of the exchange. This process of ongoing mutual response is evident from the many cross-references in the volume. It is equally evident that the project did not assume an overarching theoretical model but

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5 For further information see [www.cas.uio.no](http://www.cas.uio.no).

left each participant with the freedom to contribute from his or her own theoretical position, method and field of expertise. This did not create tensions but rather a multifaceted ongoing exchange that allowed for complexities to be appreciated, proving fruitful for the wide-ranging outcome.

## Outline of the Volume

### I The Case of Jesus

The story about the death and resurrection of Jesus is at the core of early Christian beliefs, and some will say that it is also at the beginning of it. The essays by Turid Karlsen Seim and Adela Yarbro Collins consider ideas and practices in antiquity which may have informed the narratives about Jesus' resurrection and ascension in the gospels of Luke and Mark, whereas Karen King in her essay discusses the significance of the many stories of multiform appearances of Jesus in various stages of life.

*Turid Karlsen Seim* studies the relationship between the resurrection and the ascension stories in Luke-Acts with a particular look to the significance of spatial movement and the qualities of Christ's resurrected body. Before the ascension, which represents the closure of Jesus' mission on earth, he is described in more physical terms than anywhere else in the gospels' post-resurrection stories, because he is still on earth. The ascension story has, apart from some form-critical studies, been under-researched, probably because of a certain embarrassment felt by scholars of a scientific age which no longer believes heaven to be "up there". Are the qualities of Jesus' body subject to change by his move from earth to heaven? Seim answers in the affirmative and draws on other texts where the shape and quality of the resurrected body are dependent on the place where it occurs, e.g. 2 *Baruch* and 1 Corinthians 15. She also explores the appearances from heaven in Acts. In the narrative of Luke-Acts, spatial categories as they intertwine with temporal, are fundamental in defining and redefining bodies. Consequently, they are also fundamental in defining who belongs to this world/time and who are considered worthy of experiencing the resurrection of the dead and attaining the other world/time.

*Adela Yarbro Collins* explores two models, which she thinks Mark had for his portrayal of the divinization of Jesus. The story of the empty

tomb is a Markan innovation, implying that Jesus has left the world of human beings and been transferred to the heavenly world. The first model is Elijah, whose appearance at the transfiguration of Jesus reveals that Jesus' resurrection would be analogous to the transferal of Elijah to heaven. Both events occur by the will and power of God and nothing remains on earth from their bodies. However, Elijah does not die and is not exalted to the same degree as Jesus. The second model is the apotheosis of Roman emperors with the story of Romulus as the prototype. Several early Christian writers allude to this legend, and Arnobius uses it to support Christian beliefs about Jesus' death and resurrection/ ascension. While seeking out similarities with the Markan account and the story of Elijah, Yarbrow Collins explores the various Roman accounts of the legend as well as ideas and practices associated with the divinization of Roman emperors, which she assumes were familiar to the author and ancient audiences of Mark. Like the emperors, Jesus dies before being exalted to heaven, but whereas Jesus gained in power, they had less after death. By imitating the imperial practice of deification, Mark positions Jesus as the true *divi filius* vis-à-vis Rome and the emperor, challenging their claim to divinity by replacing them.

In relation to texts where Jesus is portrayed as a child, an old man or as being polymorph, *Karen King* discusses various strategies that Christians developed for squaring the mutability of aging with the belief in the human potential for immortality with its required immutability. Attention might be shifted from the body to the condition and development of the soul; one stage in life might be seen as representing the transcendent ideal; or polymorphic visions in which the multiform appearance of Jesus at different life stages made them see beyond the metamorphoses of materiality to the unitary spiritual reality. Most attractive to King is a strategy that calls upon believers not merely to see beyond the material to the spiritual but to see the divinity in all stages and circumstances of Jesus' life – also his childhood and his suffering and death. This enables them to cultivate their spiritual connection to God in every stage of their own life, and to see God in their fellow human beings. By cultivating the capacity to see what is spiritual already in this life of the flesh, to see past the flesh and its metamorphoses, they are able not only to face death in joy but to ignore it as a lie that Jesus rendered invisible

## II Paul and Claiming Paul

### A. Paul

In studies of early Christian notions of metamorphosis and resurrection, it is obvious that much space will have to be given to Paul and 1 Corinthians 15. Paul's Corinthian correspondence and especially this chapter captured much scholarly imagination and represented a certain centripetal power in the project. No less than three essays in this volume include readings of 1 Corinthians 15, and another three essays include discussions of its later impact. Even in the other parts of the volume there are frequent references to 1 Corinthians 15 and certain other passages in 2 Corinthians, such as in Seim's essay in part I, which bases much of its treatment of taxonomy on 1 Cor 15.

The three essays dealing at some more length with 1 Corinthians 15 proper share a further feature. They are informed by broader philosophical discussions, ancient and modern, which are not directly invoked by Paul himself but still seen by the authors of the essays as useful interpretive keys to unlocking this very rich text.

By using modern, materialist theories of the self, in particular Rosi Braidotti's understanding of the self as nomadic, as something always in process, always metamorphosing into something different, *Jorunn Økland* interprets 1 Corinthians 15 and 2 Corinthians 12.1-7. In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul emphasizes sequences but implicitly also the metamorphosis from corruptible to incorruptible, from weak to strong, from animate to pneumatic – without any soul to guarantee the continuity. The continuity is situated in Christ whose image they carry who are "in Christ". Paul is lost for words in face of such a complete metamorphosis, yet he argues for a continuity that is not self-identical but metamorphic. Does the plant remember that it once was a seed? In 2 Corinthians 12.1-7, Økland takes at face value Paul's claim of an actual experience and tries to understand "the alterity of his perceptions". His dilemma in the passage is that he remembers experiencing something that he cannot properly account for, something that transgressed his previously held world-views and notions of the body. This makes the nicely ordered cosmologies of 1 Corinthians 15 collapse. Paul talks of himself as not necessarily self-identical. Only God and Christ seem to hold it together. Økland concludes that the quest for continuity is a misdirected tracing of the lost soul. Instead she follows Braidotti in speaking of an "in-between" subject or an embodied memory.

*Vigdis Sonje-Møller* takes as her point of departure the problem of change in Greek philosophy: If the visible world is a reflection of the

static world of ideas, how can one account for change? Parmenides concluded that change cannot really exist. Plato was obsessed with change because it could not be rationally explained, still it occurs. He situated change by invoking a place outside of place and time: it lurks between motion and rest and occurs suddenly, in a short moment. Songe-Møller introduces Paul and 1 Corinthians 15 into this debate and explores the parallels, but also the differences, between Paul's statement that, "we will all be changed, in an instant" (15:52) and Plato's notion of sudden change. She points out that whereas Plato tried to account for change in general by an extraordinary and inexplicable moment, Paul explained an extraordinary change, namely the resurrection, with reference to a unique moment. It is this shared notion of the radical and abrupt change, the singular and unpredictable event, that has also made philosopher Alain Badiou interested in Paul. Songe-Møller includes a discussion of his interpretation of Paul with reference also to Paul's conversion experience as narrated in the Acts of the Apostles.

Reading 1 Corinthians 15 together with a range of other texts (Phil 3:2-21; 2 Cor 2:14-5:10; Rom 8:9-13) Troels Engberg-Pedersen explores the idea of complete and incomplete transformation in Paul. He finds that a full and complete *cognitive* transformation happened when Paul and his addressees became Christ followers and received the cognitive and material *pneuma*. Then follows a period of gradual, *physical* transformation through this life, which is where Paul and his addressees find themselves as he writes. This material transformation will be completed at the resurrection of the dead. The gradual, physical transformation has two intimately connected sides: the body of flesh and blood literally dies gradually until it shares completely Christ's body at his death while at the same time the *pneuma* is already at work transforming the body. Against most interpreters, Engberg-Pedersen holds that flesh and blood will not in some sense be "shed" in such a way that it is only what remains that will be resurrected. In Paul's body there is the concomitant and simultaneous presence of the life of Jesus (for which the *pneuma* is responsible) and Jesus' death, which is seen in Paul's mortal flesh. Also in Romans 8:10 Paul states that the Romans are in fact dead, and the *pneuma* is now at work in them, generating life.

### B. Claiming Paul

The impact of 1 Corinthians 15 and other Pauline passages is traced in various ways in the essays by Outi Lehtipuu, Einar Thomassen and Hugo Lundhaug. These essays make clear that for many early Chris-



tians, Paul was someone whose authority was not likely to be contested, regardless of the side of the debates on which one was located. The section of the book dealing with Paul and his early readers is entitled "Paul and Claiming Paul" rather than "Paul and his earliest reception history" or similar, because it becomes evident that some of the interpretations beyond receiving Paul and using Paul to think with, are also about claiming Paul and donning his authority.

Including works of Irenaeus and Tertullian as well as the Gospel of Philip, *Outi Lehtipuu* studies the debates on the resurrection in Early Christian texts, especially how the transformation of the body was envisaged with reference to the Pauline statement "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God" (1 Cor 15: 50). One side took this verse to mean that only the "soul" element of the human would be resurrected, the other side that the earthly body of flesh would be resurrected, in perfected form. It is the latter side, represented by Irenaeus and Tertullian, who had the harder task, and they also at times admit that Paul comes dangerously close to teaching spiritual resurrection. Their view was partly developed in opposition to those who understood the verse in more spiritual terms and who considered the verse irreconcilable with any faith in the resurrection of a body made of earthly, human flesh. Lehtipuu points out that both Paul and other early traditions of resurrection were ambiguous enough for diverging views to develop, and that the different interlocutors regarded themselves as the best Pauline interpreters. The underlying agenda concerned who could rightfully claim to be a Christian. Notions of resurrection thus functioned as a boundary marker dividing people into "us" and "them".

*Einar Thomassen* delineates how the soteriological process by Valentinian texts can be variously portrayed as a manifestation of the latent spiritual seed, so that when the Savior-Light appears he draws to himself those who share his fundamental nature; as a divine pedagogy, an education or maturation whereby the seed, sometimes seen to be weak, incomplete, womanish and deformed, will mature to be receptive of the Savior; or as a transformation from a state of deficiency to completeness where the language of biological generation with its multiplicity of connotations is symbolically displayed. The inconsistencies are looked at diachronically since the Valentinian texts employ images and motifs charged with a prehistory which inevitably has left layers of meaning. Thomassen also explores "the logical architecture" of the Valentinian system, its groundwork being a dynamic monistic ontology using the notions of extension and contraction deriving from the roots as Neo-Platonism in Late Hellenistic monistic Neopythagoreanism. Finally, he

reflects on the puzzle inherent in the very concept of transformation: one desires to be saved as oneself and at the same time as something other than what one is here and now. The Valentinian material shows some of the contradictory ways this dilemma is dealt with in a system where oneness is the supreme value but duality refuses to be eliminated.

By examining “metaphorical blends” in the Treatise on the Resurrection, *Hugo Lundhaug* explores how they shape as well the rhetorical exposition as the doctrinal understanding of resurrection, in close interplay with Scriptural exegesis (primarily Pauline texts – 1 Cor 15:44, 2 Cor 4:16-5:4, Rom 7:22-23). Resurrection is strongly affirmed but in a manner that speaks of two different kinds of flesh and also two different kinds of bodies, one that dies and one that lives on. It represents the uncovering of an internal, invisible body within the outer visible body which is destined to die. The uncovering seems to take place when, in the resurrection, the spiritual swallows the psychic and fleshly person. Resurrection involves an ascension in connection with which the inner members, “thought” and “mind”, will receive new flesh of a different kind. The conceptual blend of resurrection, birth and death facilitate an original interpretation of the much debated metaphor of old age as “a χρόσιον of the body”. The material body and life provide the place and time needed for a pregnancy to develop towards the birth of the new and superior resurrection body immediately upon the death. Resurrection may be acquired also before death, by practicing an ascetic life, and perhaps also by way of a necessary initial reception through a (baptismal) ritual involving dying, resurrecting and putting on Christ.

### III. Formation and Transformation of Selves

The last section in the volume deals more thematically with issues of formation and different forms of rituals and practices that in various ways are defined by transformative categories.

*István Czachesz* focuses on grotesque stories of inter-species metamorphosis, bodies without clear boundaries and bodies that behave in unexpected ways. The grotesque is preoccupied with bodily boundaries and limits, and how these are negotiated, blurred and exceeded e.g. through metamorphosis between basic categories such as human, animal, plant, artifact and natural object. The most common forms of metamorphosis are between human and animal or deity and animal. Human characteristics such as the ability to speak are retained, which may reflect that texts are written to humans who see themselves as the

centre of the universe. Still an ability to speak violates basic expectations about animals. In order to understand why the grotesque was seen as an effective and clearly favored persuasive tool by Early Christian authors, Czachesz draws on cognitive theory in establishing a taxonomy of the grotesque. Appealing to innate perceptions of fundamental differences between human, animal, plant, artifact and natural object, and also activating fundamental feelings of fear and disgust, the mind more easily grasps and remembers grotesque images because they violate expectations and create feelings of disgust or empathy. Since they are more easily remembered, they are also strong persuasive tools.

*Antti Marjanen* shows how gender transformation already early on was a symptom of spiritual advancement in Christian circles, but became increasingly more important as seen in the Christian martyrdom accounts. In these accounts feminine gendered language is used to represent weakness, irrationality, passivity, and spiritual inferiority. Marjanen notes that the examples of full transformation of women into men are very few. Instead, he finds numerous accounts of women martyrs, who overstep ordinary gender roles and assume masculine qualities. This applies above all to women gladiators, athletes and soldiers, but also women martyrs who advocate the Christian truth by rhetorical means behave in a masculine way. Even if some feminine qualities were useful in a martyr situation, like endurance and patience, there was never a question of men incorporating these qualities and thus crossing the gender boundary in the opposite direction. In the end, Marjanen wonders if the emphasis on masculine qualities in the women martyrs was not only a symptom of their spiritual perfection, but also due to the fact that such qualities (e.g. firmness and force) were actually *required* in the situation.

*Denise K. Buell* focuses especially on inter-species metamorphosis, i.e. transformation that challenges the boundary between human and divine. But first she asks what sense it makes to speak about transformation, including conversion, within anthropological paradigms where the human person is not an independent, autonomous and self-identical individual as modern notions of the self assume, but a site of contestation for various external powers, demonic or divine. Buell analyses this complex field, particularly the various metaphors, using Mary Keller's notion of "instrumental agency". Tatian and Clement of Alexandria describe the human as a living and moving statue in which the numinous power dwells. For the Christian person, *pneuma* and *logos* are the transformative substance and force that have entered into the person and changes it from within. These views also translate into ethi-

cal practices. First, the human ought to be trained to be the perfect instrument for the divine. Second, since the body's orifices and their associated senses were particularly vulnerable to attack, these were sites of particularly intense regulation. Third, since some transformation was indeed possible, acting as a divine instrument also meant attracting divine power which in turn could lead some Christians to transform across a species boundary – from human to divine.

*Samuel Rubenson* introduces the letters of Ammonas from mid-fourth century Egypt and explores how they speak about bodily experiences of transformation and heavenly realities. Comparing them with the better known letters of Antony, he questions the assumed polarization between a mystical and a philosophical tradition in early Egyptian monasticism. In the letters of Ammonas there is no reference to resurrection of the body nor is there any indication of an ontological dualism between flesh and spirit. Ideas of spiritual growth and of bodily experiences of heavenly and divine realities are predominant, including a gradual transformation of “the body of corruption”. The recipients are encouraged to strive for such experiences, which are seen as constant facts being described primarily in sensual terms. By means of divine power the ascetic labor becomes easy, marked by freedom, joy, sweetness and rest. It entails revelations and knowledge of secrets set in heaven but the content of these are not communicated in writing but only in personal encounters. The transformation of the ascetic takes place in the body and transforms it. Although they foresee a future and final and spatial translation to heaven, everything it signifies is already within reach in the present: the heaven is open and the true light visible; both the spatial and the temporal divide between the divine and the human sphere are transcended.

*John J. Collins* analyses early attestations of ideas of exaltation in Jewish writings, noting that they cannot be categorized in terms of the binary contrast of resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul. Nor is it clear whether they imply a resurrected body of flesh and blood; they refer to the elevated righteous luminous beings, donning a garment of glory. The main part of his contribution deals with the Dead Sea Scrolls. Here fellowship with the angels is constitutive of the sectarian, male celibate community, whose members apparently claim some measure of transformation as a present reality. In the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice the community somehow sees itself as joining the angels in worshipping God without spatially ascending to heaven, but perhaps through repetitive, hypnotic recital. Also the Hodayot speak of the being in communion with angels, including themes of purification and communication of knowledge. While Collins acknowledges that the

hymns retain a strong sense of the flesh-bound state of humanity, he also observes that the idea of communion with the heavenly host means that they regarded themselves as transformed to a considerable degree. There is a remarkable lack of any reflection on death as a problem and no unambiguous references to resurrection. The emphasis is on continuity between life with the angels in the present and its fuller realization in the future. This foretaste was sufficient powerful for mortality to be rendered insignificant.

*Liv Ingeborg Lied* reinterprets the meaning and function of the recognition motif in 2 Baruch 47-52. She traces three periods in God's revelation of history in this text: the first is the perverted period of wicked reign in the corruptible world; the second is the process of change towards eschatological reversal of power in favor of the righteous who are also "those who know". This includes a day of judgment when all will be recognizable in order to be judged – both the living and the resurrected dead will appear unchanged. Lied contests that the text speaks about recognition of the resurrected as a form of identification of the persons they once were (i.e. before they died). Baruch deals with opposing groups: the wicked versus the righteous – and they are recognized in virtue of which group they belong to. The righteous must be recognized so that righteousness will be victorious in the end, in contrast to the wickedness and unfairness of the present world. After the judgment there will be further, but separate processes of transformation for the righteous and the wicked: the righteous to further heavenly splendor and beauty, whereas the wicked will perish with the corruptible world. In the third period (51:7-16) the elevation and transformation of the righteous continues as they enter heavenly world.

## Mapping Convergences

When the results of the manifold contributions in this volume are difficult to summarize, this is no coincidence. Not only do the contributions cover a variety of sources and contexts from a period of several hundred years. Even more important is the shared conviction that, as established borderlines have become blurred, early Christianity and Judaism in a Greco-Roman context can no longer be interpreted in harmonizing and evolutionary terms. In exploring how an inconstant and changeable body is able not just to hold on to, but even develop or gain identity by being transformed, these contributions have cracked open the solidity of long established views. The contributions show that though the term metamorphosis is not used at all in many writings, the per-

spective of metamorphic change was instrumental in readdressing the early Christian faith in resurrection and eternal life.

One all-important location or event of transformation according to early Christians and also many Jewish groups was a future resurrection of the dead, be it universal or not. In a Christian context, the belief in Jesus' death and resurrection further shaped and determined such ideas and served as a primary identity marker. Also the fact that the resurrected Jesus was no longer to be seen in earthly circumstances had to be accommodated. In Part 1 the resurrection/ascension stories in the gospels of Mark and Luke, even if read through very different lenses, converge in illuminating the significance of spatial movement and a transposition from earth to heaven as an ultimate transformative moment.

Jesus' resurrection from the dead was regarded as both unique and prototypical. The prototypical or paradigmatic implication was programmatically developed in various ways. It was perceived in sacramental terms and/or it might be ritually performed and experienced in a communal space set aside for the purpose of worship – shared with the heavenly host. It was translated into ethical practices and further developed into an ascetic discipline bringing about transformation through a gradual spiritual growth into the likeness and perfection of Christ – often expressed in sensual terms. The line of death lost its impact and became porous, and the bodily mutability or transformation caused by the course of time was superseded by an indifference to the physical body as Christians gazed beyond it to the ultimate transformation into glorious light and into a state of timelessness. The religious community provided the home for processes of transformation, and in Christian communities structures were established for promoting and accommodating the cultivation of spiritual discernment and growth. Members were enabled to move beyond the confinements of the constant transformations of the flesh and become perfect instruments for the divine.

The belief in the resurrection of all Christians did not start with the written narratives of the resurrection of Jesus but with Paul's transformation of the discourse on human continuity and change into a discourse on death, resurrection, and salvation. 1 Corinthians 15 has been immensely influential in the history of Christianity, and this volume brings more clearly to light just how important the chapter became as point of departure for further reflection on bodily change and resurrection. The centripetal pull of the chapter also illuminates how and why the pre-existing Greco-Roman discourse on metamorphosis was for a while completely absorbed into the early Christian discourse on the

resurrection of all believers, where contributions were often presented as interpretations of 1 Corinthians 15.

Further, the essays dealing directly with the Pauline text also uncover how the key texts in 1 and 2 Corinthians share an extended interface with the broader Greco-Roman philosophical and literary discussions of continuity, change and metamorphosis. The Pauline texts in question contain the generative questions and constitutive elements behind those broader discussions. But Paul reassembled the pieces in a strikingly different way, which is why the shared interface has not yet been sufficiently recognized.

The necessary focal point for Paul which allowed him to reassemble and restructure the Greco-Roman discourses on human continuity and change was Christ's death and resurrection, which were seen to carry paradigmatic significance. Still, in Paul's own texts "in Christ" is a rather open term compared to what it became later. In the essays presenting us with glimpses of the afterlife of Paul's texts in various groups of early Christianity, it becomes clear how central the Corinthian correspondence was in the early Christian discussions of resurrection and salvation. Since Paul set the agenda early on, he quickly reached authoritative status. This means that in the disputes that followed, all sides had to persuasively argue how Paul fitted best with their perspective, they all had to claim Paul as their own.

Part 2 further demonstrates how the notion of resurrection made already urgent questions of the body and of the human self even more acute. One could therefore conclude that rather than seeing early Christianity as a movement that disparaged or rejected the body, it was a movement preoccupied with the body, its meanings, possibilities and limitations. Transformation was seen to take place in the body as well as transforming the body.

In Part 3, which deals mainly with post-canonical literature, metamorphosis in the traditional, pre-Christian sense returns. This is a curious return given what was said above about the absorption of this discourse on continuity, change and metamorphosis into Paul's discourse on death and resurrection. The explanation is perhaps exactly Paul's reluctance to describe the new and unknown in any detail. What does it mean to be "in Christ," what words did he hear in heaven? Paul describes several movements from known to unknown forms, and he comes close to being apophatic about it. His texts thus become a new episode in the discourse on metamorphosis, in that "from known form to known form" becomes "from known form to unknown form." However, the unknown is hermeneutically very difficult to relate to, the unknown has to turn into something known. So later early Christian

authors in some sense had no choice but to try to fill in the picture. Many later texts carrying the name of Paul expands on 2 Corinthians 12 and intimates what he really saw and heard in heaven, even if Paul in that text insists that it is forbidden for humans to utter the unspeakable words he heard.

This is also the period in which stories of transitions into other existing forms return, i.e. the classical metamorphosis narratives as we know them from pagan literature. Animals and interspecies transformation return, well-known forms again transform into other well-known forms. Thus, such transformation was still seen as conceivable at some level. Multiformity might illustrate several related themes: God's greatness, the multiformity of ways in which God may appear, and ultimately the need to transcend appearances by cultivating inner spiritual wisdom. The spatial and temporal divide is transcended through a foretaste powerful enough for mortality to be rendered insignificant and for resurrection and heavenly translation to be regarded as completion.



## The Resurrected Body in Luke-Acts: The Significance of Space

TURID KARLSEN SEIM<sup>1</sup>

In a speech to an audience of Jews in Pisidian Antioch, Luke has Paul with reference to LXX Psalm 15:10 contrast David and Jesus as follows:

For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, died, was laid beside his ancestors and experienced corruption; but he whom God raised up experienced no corruption (διαφθοράν) (Acts 13:36).<sup>2</sup>

Paul's speech echoes the longer inaugural exposé by Peter at Pentecost, in Acts 2:24-31. Here Peter states that Jesus was crucified and killed, but God raised him up – that is freed him from the pangs of death<sup>3</sup> because death could not hold him in its power. This is presented as a fulfillment of LXX Psalm 15:8-10. Since David, to whom the psalm is ascribed, died and was buried in a grave they still know, he cannot be the one intended by the promise of the psalm. Rather David spoke prophetically of the incorruptibility/resurrection of his messianic descendant who by the witness Peter is identified as “this Jesus” whom God raised up. Jesus was not left to Hades nor did his flesh see corruption – or as some versions to v. 31 interestingly say balancing σάξ with ψυχή: his soul was not left to Hades and his flesh did not see decay.<sup>4</sup> This is language signifying a complete immortality: Jesus, flesh and soul alike, is regarded as imperishable.

The accounts related to Jesus' body and tomb in Luke 24 may seem to affirm this corporeal incorruptibility. When the women arrive in the

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1 Turid Karlsen Seim is professor and director of The Norwegian Institute in Rome, University of Oslo, Italy.

2 If nothing else is mentioned, the translations are from NRSV

3 Codex Cantabrigiensis together with several early translations read “the pangs of Hades”.

4 There is, however, no reason to assume this as the primary reading. It is rather a matter of further precision making clear that whereas σάξ may decay, ψυχή does not decay but may go to Hades. Concerning the idea of incorruptibility and not being left in the Netherworld (Hades or Sheol) see the article of John J. Collins in this volume, where he claims that “the idea of an incorruptible “body” that is not flesh and blood is (...) in fact more typically Hellenistic than the Platonic idea of immortality”.

tomb where they had seen Jesus' dead body been laid, they enter but, contrary to their expectations, they do not find it and the dazzling messengers ask them why they look for "the living among the dead". Jesus is not dead, he has commended his spirit into God's hands (Luke 23:49) and he is not among the dead but among the living.

Jesus' dead body was wrapped in linen cloth and laid in a previously unused tomb (Luke 23:53) but according to the Lukan narrative his body was never anointed for burial. There is no symbolic anointing beforehand as in the gospels of Mark, Matthew and John.<sup>5</sup> When the women who had been with him from Galilee, at early dawn on the first day of the week go to the tomb with ointments and spices they had brought for his body, their preparations are to no avail since his body is not there. The living is not among the dead. God freed him from the pangs of death and did not leave him to experience corruption. Jesus' physical body is resurrected; this is the narrative about how it was not left to perish but returned to the land of the living.

Accordingly, the narratives that follow, about how the risen Jesus appears to his disciples in earthly circumstances, seem to emphasise the incorrupt physicality of his resurrected body. He may seem to arrive from nowhere and vanish suddenly but there are no markers clearly invoking that his appearances should be perceived as epiphanies. He still appears as the Jesus they knew, present among them on earth.

His first appearance to the whole group of disciples in Luke 24:36-43, deals with the implied ambiguities. It happens suddenly while the disciples talk together digesting the stories they have heard about more exclusive showings:<sup>6</sup>

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you'. They were startled and terrified, because they thought that they were seeing a ghost (πνεῦμα). But he said to them, 'Why are you frightened and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have'. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were still disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence. Then he said to them, These are the words that I spoke to you while I was still with you...

5 Mark 14:3-9 par. In the Lukan story about an anointing of Jesus by a sinful woman (Lk 7:36-50) there is no indication that this is a preparation for his burial.

6 As for the narrative and theological strategy in Luke 24, see T.K. Seim "Conflicting Voices, Irony and Reiteration: An Exploration of the Narrational Structure of Luke 24.1-35 and Its Theological Implications" in *Fair Play: Diversity and Conflicts in Early Christianity* (eds. I. Underberg, C. Tuckett, and K. Syreeni. Leiden: Brill, 2002) 151-64.

In this episode divine blindfolding is not a feature; the disciples are not kept from recognizing Jesus as were the two on their way to Emmaus. They are, however, terrified since they take him for a πνεῦμα. The manuscript D clarifies this by introducing the term φαντάσμα “ghost”, which is a possible meaning also of πνεῦμα. The term πνεῦμα appears to be used about those who have passed away. In Hebrews 12:23 they are the righteous in heaven, but in 1 Pet 3:19 it most likely refers to those who are kept incarcerated in Hades.<sup>7</sup> The disciples fear that Jesus is a spirit on walkabout from Hades, and one point of the story may in fact be to counter such interpretations of the resurrection. Its emphatic enlisting of solid physical evidence is notable. He is the same Jesus as they once knew him. Not only is Jesus visibly recognisable, being flesh and bone he may also be touched and, having his bodily functions intact, he also eats. In no other appearance story does Jesus actually eat. Even when there is a meal involved, such as in the Emmaus episode (Luke 24:30) and also in John 21:12-14, the resurrected Jesus takes it upon himself to act as host but does not appear to partake of the food. In Luke 24:41-43 this pattern is remarkably reversed; the disciples feed Jesus and in their presence he eats the food they have prepared.<sup>8</sup> This proves that he is neither a ghost nor an angel, since the belief that angels do not eat ordinary earthly food was axiomatic in Judaism from at least the second century BC.<sup>9</sup>

There is also a bridging reminder to his presence among them in the past in the reference to the word he had spoken while he was still with them (24:44). He is saying nothing that they not already had been told. The way in which this is being expressed, however, is slightly

7 In the much discussed 1 Peter 3:19 the idea, which only just surfaces in the context of encouraging good deeds despite suffering, seems to be that only spirits have access to this place of incarceration after death. It says that Christ was put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in/by which he went and proclaimed to the imprisoned spirits. Some claim that the imprisoned spirits refer to a particular group, but there is no agreement as to whether these are the generation of Noah, cf. v. 20, or the fallen angels of Gen 6:1-6., or indeed all deceased.

8 Whereas an eucharistic reference may be seen in the breaking of the bread at Emmaus in Luke 24:30, A.Lieber “Jewish and Christian Heavenly Meal Traditions.” in *Paradise Now. Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism* (ed. A. D.DeConick; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006) 313-36. is to my mind mistaken in claiming that “these eating episodes cannot be separated from the Eucharistic meal” (p.331), and exploiting the stories extensively as a mystical meal where God is being seen and the esoteric, hidden level of scripture revealed.

9 See D.Goodman, “Do Angels Eat?” *JJS* 37 (1986) 160-175. Cf. also Acts 23:6-8 where the narrator informs the reader that the Sadducees deny the existence of both angels and spirits not as such but as “modes of resurrection”, cf. K. P. Sullivan, *Wrestling With Angels. A Study of the Relationship between Angels and Humans in Ancient Jewish Literature and the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2004) 135.

odd, indicating the difficulties involved in affirming his presence as he speaks as well as the difference of this presence to what it was like before his death and resurrection, when he was still with them. In Acts 1 this difficulty is resolved as his post-resurrection presence is prolonged so that his teaching is resumed for a period of forty days. The purpose of his post-resurrection appearance among them is in each case to re-establish the community of his disciples.

It has been suggested that Jesus in 24:39-41 shows them his feet and hands to display the stigmata so that the disciples can recognise him by the marks of his crucified body. The resurrected Lord is indeed the crucified Jesus of Nazareth. Whereas this is an explicit motif in a similar scene in the Gospel of John (John 20:25-29),<sup>10</sup> it is significantly absent in Luke. Here the hands and feet apparently are the bodily parts that are most easily available to be touched when it comes to probe and prove that the substance of this resurrected body of Jesus is flesh and bone.

Does the slightly ambiguous emphasis on recognition in this episode imply that the resurrected Jesus is not necessarily recognisable in his resurrected appearance? Many interpreters have taken the feature that the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, in Luke's first account of a post-resurrection appearance, do not realize that their unknown companion is Jesus, to indicate that his appearance had been changed. However, in the Emmaus story the disciples' eyes are deliberately being kept from recognising him. The imposed blindness of the two disciples is an important device of suspension, and it lasts until the moment of revealed recognition when the, to them hitherto unknown, traveler breaks the bread at supper.<sup>11</sup> Since the blindness in this case is imposed, the Emmaus story does not undermine the fact that the resurrected Christ is recognisable as the Jesus the disciples knew. Corporeal continuity seems to prevail; the resurrected Jesus is indeed still in the flesh – which has not seen decay.

According to Luke the resurrected Jesus appeared to his disciples during a limited period until he withdrew from them and was taken up to heaven. The closure of Jesus' earthly mission is not his resurrection but his departure by ascension. His earthly existence is prolonged beyond death and grave as he is again with his disciples, re-establishing community. However, his presence among his disciples in this physical form comes to an end after which they no longer see him.

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10 The episode with "the doubting Thomas" appears to assume wounds or marks corresponding to those inflicted on Jesus' body at the crucifixion – with an emphasis on the pierced side which in John has a particular symbolic significance.

11 See Seim, "Conflicting Voices", 160–62.

In Luke this radical change is narratively explained by a transfer of Jesus from earth to heaven employing a spatial cosmology.

In an article on the hermeneutical challenge which Luke's ascension narrative pose, James Dunn notes that the ascension has provoked surprisingly little interest, be it in treatments of the life of Jesus or in Christology, or even in treatments of Christian doctrine.<sup>12</sup> Dunn's explanation of this lackadaisical attitude is that the spatial movement depicted in the episode, is at best puzzling and more likely embarrassing for an age which no longer conceives of heaven "up there". Even if this to Dunn means that the tradition should be pursued in search of a reconstructed factual event behind the narrative,<sup>13</sup> his diagnosis may well be right. Meaning and truth claims are to the so-called modern mind often intimately attached to a kind of scientific or empirical factuality which pre-modern presentations cannot possibly meet. Since a pre-modern cosmology no longer is regarded as scientifically sustainable, Christian theology has tended to submit and take refuge to the future as the last unknown. The temporal, eschatological perspective has therefore become all-predominant and mythological stories about spatial mobility between heaven and earth are left behind. It is, however, important not to oversimplify or misinterpret the spatial approach in crude literal term; a spatial approach may also apply to a mental, symbolic map.<sup>14</sup>

Lately the restoration of mythology and a renewed interest in early Jewish and Christian mysticism and angelology have to some degree changed the situation described above, as has continued form-critical work on the various types of ascension stories. In this article the focus is more limited on the narratives of Jesus' post-resurrection appear-

12 "The Ascension of Jesus: A Test Case for Hermeneutics" in *Auferstehung – Resurrection: The Fourth Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium: Resurrection, Transfiguration and Exaltation in Old Testament, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*. (Eds. F.Avemarie and H.Lichtenberger. WUNT 135; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001) 301-322.

13 In her Harvard 2006 Dissertation, "Lifted Up From the Earth: The Ascension of Jesus and the Heavenly Ascents of Early Christians," 43-44, kindly made available to me, Catherine Playoust critically examines and dismisses such historical reconstructions.

14 Also Playoust, "Lifted Up," 2-15, discusses the embarrassing nature of the doctrine of the ascension for those exposed to Western science and philosophy and the various strategies involved in alleviating the uneasiness. She makes clear that by adopting a spatial understanding of what heaven meant in antiquity she sees herself as parting from those who presume "that language about heavens was frequently used by ancient authors as a metaphor about something else" (p. 8). I think, however, that she here draws to sharp a distinction.

ances and ascension in Luke-Acts in order analytically to trace the significance of space in relation to resurrected body.<sup>15</sup>

The ascension story represents material peculiar to Luke, and it is used twice in remarkably different versions (Lk 24:50-51 and Acts 1:9-11). However, there is every reason to believe that the two versions are meant to refer to the same once-only event. In neither version is there any description or mention of the passage to heaven itself; the ascension is not portrayed as a travel and there is no hint of a conquest of cosmos as Christ travels through the many spheres.

The version in the Gospel is primarily a closing act. It is marked by terms of closure; and its perspective is that of the disciples: Jesus is taken out of their sight. He is no longer visible and touchable in their midst and he never again appears on earth in the form of flesh and bone. There is no reassurance of everlasting ubiquity, no promise that Jesus himself will be with them always and everywhere as it happens in the concluding great commission in Matthew 28:16-20.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, Jesus no longer has his place on earth; he has been shifted to heaven and he has left them behind. However, in his place the disciples will receive the Holy Spirit that he pours out from on high. The Spirit empowers and guides them, indeed becomes the divine presence on earth and in history as the course of events continues to develop through a constantly on-going process of promise and fulfilment. In fact, Jesus had to move to the heavenly space in order for the Holy Spirit to come upon them (Acts 2:33).

The first version of the ascension of Jesus in Luke 24:50-51 seems to follow upon the appearances of the resurrected Jesus within the very same day and it is marked by brevity. The explicit mention that "he was carried up into heaven" is missing in some manuscripts,<sup>17</sup> but the sense of departure is unmistakable as is also the element of divinization as they worship him. It brings the narrative of Jesus' earthly life to an end. The second version, in Acts 1:9-11 is the opening story of Luke's second volume. It serves together with the preface as a rehearsal of or

15 M.C.Parsons, *The Departure of Jesus in Luke-Acts. The Ascension Narratives in Context*. (JSNTSup 21; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987) raises the same question, but his approach is more specifically designed by a particular literary, narrative method.

16 The concluding scene of the Gospel of Matthew is therefore strictly speaking not, as often assumed, a departure scene nor does it tantamount to an ascension. Even if the post-resurrection appearances do cease, the story of the life of Jesus is in Matthew left open and transparent due to his ever-presence with them. Correspondingly, there is no promise of the spirit being sent in his absence.

19 Codex Sinaiticus prior to scribal corrections, D and it. For further assessment see Playoust, "Lifted Up," 48 n.13.

rather a bridge to the Gospel.<sup>18</sup> However, it represents a far more explicit and elaborate story than the one first told, and the ascension is no longer assumed to take place on the very same day as the appearances but only after a period of forty days during which Jesus is “giving instructions through the holy spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen”. This emphasis on the election and instruction of the apostles prepares for the exclusive role of the apostolic collegium in relation to the restoration of the people of God in the first part of Acts.<sup>19</sup>

Differently from the earlier gospel version of Jesus’ ascent, the more detailed second version exhibits according to Gerhard Lohfink the vocabulary and narrative features characteristic of the Gattung “rapture story” (Entrückung):<sup>20</sup> it concludes a person’s time on earth, it is witnessed on earth and narrated from the perspective of these witnesses. In contrast to heavenly journeys where the traveler is bound to return in order to communicate what he has seen or learned, a rapture story assumes that the traveler remains in heaven. It also differs from the category of assumption in that it involves the whole person, soul and body – no trace is left on earth. It is not just a mystical experience of exaltation or the elevation of the soul after death. A further prominent feature of “rapture” is that there is no death experience; it represents a promotion to immortality and deification.

In the Greco-Roman tradition “rapture” seems to have collapsed into a literary convention with which Luke most likely has been familiar as several motifs in his accounts reveal: the cloud, the mountain, the

18 While not underestimating the divergences between the two volumes, I remain convinced that they are written by the same author but that the second volume did not follow immediately and may not have been planned or even foreseen when the first was written.

19 M. C. Parsons explains the seemingly intolerable temporal difference between the two stories in functional, contextual terms, *Departure of Jesus*, 194-95. For further elaboration of the role of the apostles see T.K. Seim, *The Double Message. Patterns of Gender in Luke-Acts* (Edinburgh/Nashville: T&T Clark/Abingdon Press, 1994), 160-62.

Playoust, “Lifted Up,” 48 persuasively counters those who take this Lukan development of the story in Acts to prove that a separate, visible, witnessed ascension as a separate thread from the resurrection/exaltation is a Lukan innovation on which later tradition depends. In fact, “Acts seems to have taken most of the second-century to become widespread and influential” and the first source to refer to a forty-day duration is Tertullian (Apol.21).

20 *Die Himmelfahrt Jesu. Untersuchungen zu den Himmelfahrts- und Erhöhungstexten bei Lukas* (StANT 26; München: Kösel, 1971). Lohfink also claims that Luke was the first to translate and visualize the kerygma of Jesus exaltation into a rapture story. However, by examining several ascension-related texts from the late first to mid-second century AD, Playoust, “Lifted Up,” 47-69, succeeds in demonstrating that exaltation traditions during this period were developed into ascension traditions multiple times without any apparent dependence on Acts 1.

visibility of the event as attested to by eyewitnesses, their joy and their worship. Arie W. Zwiep critically expands Lohfink's use of primarily Greco-Roman sources and claims that even though the rapture category in early Judaism had become somewhat suspect, it was not uncommon towards the end of the first century.<sup>21</sup> It developed according to a fixed pattern, which may be recognized in the Lukan account - especially the version found in Acts. It includes an advance announcement of what will happen, an instruction often lasting for forty days of those who stay behind to ensure that the teaching will not perish; the terms ἀνάλημψις and ἀναλαμβάνομαι to describe the event, and a set terminus ad quem of the raptured person's preservation in heaven and his return for an envisaged role in the eschatological drama.

It is important for Zwiep not only to distinguish between the ascension stories and what he calls "exaltation imagery" but to set them sharply apart. The lack in the ascension stories of any reference first and foremost to Psalm 110:1 but also to Daniel 7:13-14 and Psalm 68:19, which speak of exaltation, makes Zwiep insist that Luke has not intended any connection to be made between Acts 1:9ff and 2:32-36, since here Peter in his speech refers to Psalm 110:1 and uses the language not of ascension but of exaltation. In a narrative perspective Zwiep's assumption is insupportable, and it is possible only because he entertains a sharp division between redaction and tradition and argues on strictly form-critical grounds: The exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of God which Peter refers to in Acts 2:32-36, does not belong to the rapture type of ascension but is rather a heavenly journey. It stems from tradition and is therefore not truly Lukan. But why does Luke have Peter make such a point of it? Theologically, Zwiep claims that the event to which Peter refers, is not the ascension but the resurrection, and the ascension is nothing but the last post-resurrection appearance of Jesus. Luke reserves Psalm 110 exclusively for the interpretation of the Easter event to mark resurrection as exaltation.<sup>22</sup> Zwiep quotes with sympathy Klaus Berger's phrase "Auferstehung in den Himmel hinein" and shares the understanding that the appearances of the resurrected Jesus in Luke 24 are manifestations from heaven of the already exalted

21 Arie W. Zwiep, *The Ascension of the Messiah in Lukan Christology*. (NT S 87; Leiden: Brill, 1997). This monograph has to some part been condensed in the article "Assumptus est in caelum. Rapture and Heavenly Exaltation in Early Judaism and Luke-Acts" in *Auferstehung – Resurrection*, (Eds. F. Avemarie and H. Lichtenberger. WUNT 135; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001) 323-50. The dating of some of the sources on which he draws may be debatable.

22 *Ascension of the Messiah*, 110.



Lord.<sup>23</sup> He comes and goes from above but only during a period of forty days when an exclusive, apostolic instruction takes place (Acts 1:2-8). According to Zwiep, this is how Luke safeguards the authenticity of the Christian kerygma over against Gnostic exploitations of the post-resurrection period of teaching.<sup>24</sup> The appearance stories and the ascension in the Gospel of Luke are subsumed into the version in Acts 1 which is to be regarded as the theologically overruling or more fully accomplished story.

The post-resurrection appearance stories display, according to Zwiep, the appearance of a heavenly being in a human mode of being – to be form-critically distinguished from more spectacular manifestations of the heavenly world. In some odd asides, Zwiep also indicates that even if those who are raptured to heaven in the Jewish and Christian stories were not deified, they had to undergo the necessary physical transformation to fit the heavenly conditions, and moreover that the ascension puts Jesus “on a heavenly sidetrack, waiting for his glorious comeback at the parousia”.<sup>25</sup> The heavenly, possibly transformed Jesus is temporarily up there on a sidetrack until he again is called upon to be part of earthly (?) eschatological events. In this way Zwiep is able not just to combine a spatial perspective with a temporal but to subsume it into an overruling temporal scheme as simply a digression. Whereas the ancient texts move freely within a spatially shaped cosmology as well as mythically conceived sequential narratives in ways that make spatial and temporal categories interact, modern interpreters tend to focus on the temporal, in this case eschatological, dimensions and the temporal categories serve to overrule the spatial categories.

This is not to say that Luke does not expect a return at the end of time of Jesus as the Son of Man. It is also clear that Luke, differently from the promise of the ubiquity of the almighty in the concluding scene in the Gospel of Matthew, sees Jesus as having departed and from above fulfilling the promise that the Holy Spirit be poured out.<sup>26</sup>

23 *Ascension of the Messiah*, 159-63, drawing on J.E. Alsup, *The Post-Resurrection Appearance Stories of the Gospel Tradition. A History-of-tradition Analysis with Text-Synopsis*. (Calwer Theologische Monographien 5. Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1975). See also Adela Y. Collins article in this volume, where she assumes that in the Gospel of Mark, the story of the empty tomb implies that Jesus has been transformed, has left the world of human beings, and has been transferred definitively from earth to heaven. However, Mark does in consequence not narrate the resurrection appearance stories that both he and his audience knew.

24 “Assumptus est”, 347, and more extensively in *Ascension of the Messiah*, 171-75, 188.

25 *Ascension of the Messiah*, 182.

26 In this there is a remarkable affinity, despite the difference in language, between the gospels of Luke and John – by which they differ significantly from the gospels of Mark and Matthew.

However, to speak of “an absentee Christology”, that is “not only his physical absence but also the present inactivity of the exalted Lord”,<sup>27</sup> is to take it too far. In Acts there are, however extraordinary, accounts of two appearances from above - to Stephen and to Paul. It is also the exalted Jesus who according to Acts 2:33 pours out the Holy Spirit that possesses, inspires and guides the followers of Jesus but never becomes their permanent possession. Furthermore, it is inherent to the Lukan concept of remembrance that Jesus continues to be present in the collective commemoration of “what he told them when he was still with them”. The Gospel story concludes by his departure but yet constitutes a continued presence by replacement.<sup>28</sup>

In this present article, Luke’s periodization is of less concern; the focus is rather on the assumed qualities of the resurrected body and the question whether these qualities are subject to change as he moves from earth to heaven, and in case, how he is perceived as being changed.

In 2 Baruch, also called the Apocalypse of Baruch, a Jewish writing from early Second Century CE and preserved in Syriac though originally written in Greek,<sup>29</sup> spatial and sequential, temporal categories interact by serving different purposes. Resurrection is at least in one account described as a two-stage process:

For the earth will surely then give back the dead; it receives them now in order to keep them, transforming nothing in their appearance but as it has received them so it will give them back. And as I have delivered them to it, so it will raise them. For those who are then alive must be shown that the dead have come alive again, and that those who went [away] have come [back]. And when they have recognised those they know now, then judgment will become effective, and that which was spoken of will come to pass.

And after this appointed day is over, the pride of those who are found to be guilty will be changed, as will also the glory of those who have been found righteous. For the shape of the evildoers will go from bad to worse, like those who suffer torment. Again the glory of those who have now been justified (...) their faces will shine even more brightly and their appearance

27 Zwiep, *Ascension of the Messiah*, 182.

28 See T.K. Seim “In Living Memory.... Reflections on “Collective Memory” and Patterns of Commemoration in Early Christianity”, in *Cracks in the Walls. Essays on Spirituality, Ecumenicity and Ethics*, (Eds. E.M. Wiberg Pedersen and J. Nissen. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2005) 93-106.

29 For further presentation and discussion, see the article on 2 Baruch by Liv Ingeborg Lied in this volume. My interpretation draws on hers with some minor divergences. See also G. Stemmerger, *Der Leib der Auferstehung. Studien zur Anthropologie und Eschatologie des palästinischen Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* (ca. 179 v. Cr.[sic] – 100 n.Chr.) (Analecta Biblica 56; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1972) 85- 91.

(or splendour) will then be glorified in transformations, and the form of their face will be turned into the light of their beauty to enable them to acquire and receive the immortal world which is promised to them (2 Bar 50:1-51:3)<sup>30</sup>

In this vision of Baruch, there is first a universal resurrection when the earth gives back the dead. There is at this stage no indication of transformation; they are all in some way recognizable as those whom the earth once received. The continuity and identity of those raised is therefore important but the quality of this identity, namely the features that are subject to recognition, is not necessarily individual. There can, however, be no mistake as to their righteousness or unrighteousness. The judgment is unfailingly just. When recognition has taken place and judgment has been passed accordingly, transformation may happen. Those deemed to be righteous are elevated and their shape is blurred into a luminous beauty. The punishment of the evil-doers is the horror of “the decaying shadows of their former selves” (51:5) but also that they will have to witness the glorious state of “those who are now their inferiors”, as these are transformed to look like angels and are made equal to the stars (51:5, 10). This happens as they attain a timeless world which is now invisible, indeed the “extent of Paradise will be spread before them” 51:11), and in the end their splendour will exceed even the splendour of the angels (51:13).

An interesting and significant element in this two-stage process is the connection established between the shape in which the resurrected appear and the place where it occurs. In the resurrection from the earth, on the earth, the resurrected bodies maintain recognizable features. But during the transposition to “the heights of the world now invisible” an ever increasing transformation to beauty and splendour occurs for those named righteous, whereas the unrighteous is deformed to shadow and nothingness. There is a consistent dichotomy at work, which is expressed morally, visually and spatially.

In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul argues didactically rather than polemically in defense of a resurrection from the dead.<sup>31</sup> In the eschatological scenario of 1 Corinthians 15, there is, differently from 2 Baruch, no universal resurrection. According to the order laid out in the brief apocalypse in vv. 23-28, only those who belong to Christ follow him in being resur-

30 The translation is in this case a blend of various others, included the one by Liv Ingeborg Lied.

31 I agree with Jeffrey Asher’s identification of Paul’s type of argumentation in this chapter as being didactic rather than polemical, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15. A Study of Metaphysics, Rhetoric, and Resurrection*, (HUTh 42; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000) 48-58. For further perspectives on 1 Corinthians 15, see the articles by Troels Engberg-Pedersen and Vigdis Songe-Møller in this volume.

rected.<sup>32</sup> This limitation explains why there in 1 Corinthians 15 is submission or vindication of the powers opposed to God, but no judgment. It represents a clarification of how death ultimately will be destroyed as the last enemy. Cosmology and eschatology are made to intersperse by the way in which spatial categories are matched by temporal or rather sequential categories. Hence, continuity as expressed by recognizability plays no role – like it does in apocalyptic texts such as 2 Baruch where a main purpose is to reassure the righteous that in the end justice will be victorious through a double outcome. Nor is there any need for a two-stage process. In 1 Corinthians 15 resurrection from the dead is not perceived as bodily restoration;<sup>33</sup> rather it involves a transformation, which requires that also those still alive when it happens, are subject to radical change.

In the second part of the chapter, vv. 35-57, Paul addresses in unusually direct terms “foolish” questions pertaining the nature of the resurrected body: “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” (v. 35). He maintains that the relationship between the present body and the one recreated in the resurrection is analogous to that between a seed and the plant growing from it as the seed itself perishes, “dies”. There is some kind of dependency and sequence, but there is no apparent likeness. The analogy covers for continuity, but primarily it allows for this continuity to have an emphasis on difference and contrast.

Fundamental to Paul’s line of argumentation in this second part of 1 Corinthians 15 is a taxonomy, an orderly description of God’s work of creation, its categories and differences, found in vv. 38-41:

Not all flesh is alike, but there is one flesh for human beings, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. There are both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one thing and that of the earthly another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and yet another glory of the stars, indeed, star differs from star in glory.

Jeffrey R. Asher has shown that the varieties of terrestrial and celestial bodies as listed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15.38-41, correspond to descriptions found in ancient Greek and philosophical sources. Still, the correspondence is limited: these lists serve other purposes and, more

32 In her article in this volume, Jorunn Økland, intriguingly explains this as being due to the way in which Paul perceives continuity as being “situated in the one whose image we carry, Christ”, so that “continuity only applies to those who are “in Christ””.

33 This is why Paul takes no interest in the empty tomb, if he at all was familiar with that tradition.

significantly, they lack the contrast established between the two kinds, the locative polarity which argumentatively precedes the temporal. The background or origin of this particular taxonomy therefore remains nebulous.<sup>34</sup>

Paul regards this taxonomy as the divinely created design of creation (1 Cor 15:38-41). Fundamental to it is the division of cosmos into two opposite spaces of habitation, the terrestrial and the celestial. The genus of σῶμα was accordingly divided into two opposite species (heavenly bodies and earthly bodies) and under each of the two species further subdivisions, sharing the same basic quality, might be distinguished. The emphasis is not on the internal classification in each group but on the qualitative difference between earthly and heavenly. The quality of all earthly bodies is carnal even if they do not share the same kind of flesh, whereas the heavenly bodies are characterized by their radiance, δόξα. A certain kind of body belongs to a particular space; it has its own habitat. Σάϛξ is characteristic of and belongs on earth; δόξα is characteristic of and belongs in heaven – these categories serve as spatial boundary markers.

From this follows that “flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of God and the perishable cannot inherit the imperishable” (1 Cor 15:50) <sup>35</sup> Hence transposition from an earthly existence to heavenly is not conceivable without transformation from flesh to glory. In order to move across the divide, radical change or transformation is necessary. This is only possible due to the creative will and power of God, who gives to each a body as he chooses.<sup>36</sup> The taxonomy in 1 Corinthians 15,

34 *Polarity and Change*, 140, In *Hesiod's Works and Days* 276-278 four kinds of terrestrial life-forms are listed: humans, beasts, fish and fowl. Similar lists can be found in Sophocles and Vergil. Greek philosophers also spoke, even after the discovery of the wandering planets, of a threefold division of the sun, the moon and the stars. Asher's work does not solve the problem of the “provenience” of the taxonomy in 1 Corinthians 15. It does, however, represent a major step forward since most commentators on the passage follow the parallels listed by Strack-Billerbeck and assume that the taxonomy represents an allusion either to the classification of animals in Jewish dietary laws or more likely to the priestly account of creation in Genesis 1. At one level this is undoubtedly adequate and there is no contradiction between Gen 1 and Paul's cosmological indications in 1 Corinthians 15. But the similarity is far from striking and especially the emphatic contrast between the two different series of bodies in the Pauline passage is at best implicit in the Genesis account.

35 Which to Asher's mind is the reason why the Corinthians did not believe in the resurrection: it violated the principles of their cosmological doctrine and they probably argued that it is absurd to think that a terrestrial body could be raised to the celestial realm, *Polarity and Change*, 144.

36 In the philosophical context presumed by Jeffrey Asher, transformation or change represented a problem and was not easily accommodated. So also Vigdis Songe-Møller who in her article in this volume explores the paradox of change in Platonic

accordingly, also emphasizes that among terrestrial and celestial bodies alike, differentiation is evident. The differentiation is not so much aimed at hierarchical configurations as at maintaining the creative diversity of the will and power of God – on earth as in heaven. This might mean that the idea of what might be considered transgressive change in itself needed to be bolstered.

The resurrection as Paul sees it, is therefore a transposition from being an earthly creature to becoming a heavenly – in the sense that flesh is perishable and therefore subject to ultimate change: that of corruption through aging and death. Earthly bodies, as constituted by *σάρξ*, do not possess immortality, they are deemed to perish like a seed in the soil. Transposition from an earthly existence to heavenly is not conceivable without transformation from flesh to glory. In an instant the resurrection body becomes a transformed body, conform to the requirements of celestial existence as it by divine creative intervention attains the glorious distinctions of celestial bodies.

The one feature, which in this taxonomy seems to resist adaptation to a divide that can be overcome only by complete transformation, is the assumption (1 Cor 14:40b) that also terrestrial bodies possess *δόξα*<sup>37</sup>. Of course, Paul explicitly states that the *δόξα* of heavenly bodies is different from that of the earthly, but it still means that earthly bodies are not without *δόξα* and that this quality somehow is the reflection of the creator in creation. Human beings as created by God are potentially what one might call “blended beings”.<sup>38</sup>

Are similar taxonomic presuppositions traceable in Luke-Acts? Are spatial boundaries being negotiated in similar ways? The emphasis in the Lukan post-resurrection stories on the physical presence of the resurrected Jesus before he was lifted up, have already been stated. Does,

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philosophy and how parallels may be discerned between Paul and Plato in the way they both deal with change by referring it to “the inexplicable instant”.

37 In order fully to maintain the absolute polarity, Asher cannot possibly accept that the *δόξα* of v. 40b is identical with the *δόξα* of v. 41. He relegates the problem to a foot-note as he establishes a distinct semantic difference between the term *δόξα* as referring to terrestrial bodies (v. 40b) and to celestial bodies (v. 41). In the latter case it simply means light whereas in the first it refers “to the radiance of all created bodies in the cosmos because they are products of God’s creative power” (*Polarity and Change*, 105 n. 38). Cf. also the gender hierarchy in the so-called *kefale*-structure of 1 Cor 11:3-12 where Paul draws on a cosmological order which assumes that human beings as created in God’s image has *δόξα*, as it is hierarchically reflected from God to Christ, from Christ to the man and from man to woman.

38 One might pursue this further by exploring how *δόξα* relates to *πνεῦμα* and vice versa. An indirect contribution to this is Troels Engberg-Pedersen’s article in this volume interpreting Paul’s understanding of body and spirit in light of Stoic philosophy.

however, the corporeal nature of Jesus post-resurrection appearances in Luke 24 essentially or ontologically define the nature of the resurrected body, or does it depend on the earthly location?<sup>39</sup>

The ascension removed Jesus from the eyes of those remaining on earth, and his physical presence among them was brought to an end. However, on two occasions he does act/reappear from on high: to Stephen at his martyrdom and to Paul on the road to Damascus.<sup>40</sup> The story of Paul's conversion is reiterated three times (Acts 9:3-9; 22:6-11; 26:12-18). The three versions are not identical but they are all significantly different from the earlier accounts of Jesus' appearances in the period between his resurrection and ascension. In the last of the three versions, Paul tells King Agrippa about his experience, referring to it as "a heavenly vision" (26:19) - thereby indicating that it was an appearance of the heavenly Jesus. However, all three versions agree that not much was seen apart from a bright blinding light. Jesus' appearance to Paul is not characterized by Jesus' bodily presence but by the absence of any corporeal form. There is no way by which he can be recognized by physical features. Instead, he makes himself known by compelling words identifying the speaker as Jesus, in 22:8 even as Jesus from Nazareth. Thus a striking contrast is established between the reference to the speaker as being the earthly Jesus and the lack of any bodily appearance by which he might be recognized. He can be heard but not seen as he simply appears in or as light. The continuity or identification is by name, but not by flesh and bone.

In Acts 6:15 as the council opens its proceedings against Stephen, one of the seven. Prior to his speech of defense, we are told that as all those who sat in the council looked intently at him, they "saw that his

39 In posing this question I differ radically from Crispin Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts: Angels, Christology and Soteriology* (WUNT 94; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997). To him the spatial dimension is less significant and indeed represents a problem, since he, despite the language of "angelomorph", is concerned with. In his conclusion, p. 250, he claims that "whilst transformation in the Jewish context is frequently achieved on ascent to the heavenly realm, this is nowhere present in Luke-Acts. Rather transformation is possible through association with the incarnational presence of Jesus, the angelomorphic Son of Man".

40 Many of those who have written extensively on the post-resurrection appearance stories, mention also these post-ascension appearances in Acts but they are primarily interested in keeping them form-critically separate from the gospel stories. According to John Alsup they belong to the Gattung of "heavenly radiance appearance" which is of a distinct different but not primary origin (*Post-Resurrection Appearance Stories*, 84-85). To Arie Zwiep Luke's reiterated report of Christ's appearance to Paul on the Damascus road represents a problem which he deals with primarily in terms of how Paul, outside of the constraints of the forty-days scheme, gains authentication of his mission - later confirmed by the apostles in Jerusalem. (*Ascension of the Messiah*, 173-74).

face was like the face of an angel". This may be a premonition of the martyrdom by which the proceedings of the council conclude.<sup>41</sup> In any case it indicates that his countenance was in some way illuminated, but only as a likeness to angels.<sup>42</sup> After Stephen's speech, immediately preceding his execution, it is reported twice that Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, was privileged to gaze into heaven where he saw the δόξα of God and Jesus standing prominently at the right hand of God (7:55-59).<sup>43</sup> "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God", and later he prays in an allusion to Jesus' last word on the cross "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit".<sup>44</sup> In this passage there is an element of recognition but no indication as to particular features of identification. There is in the episode an intriguing interchange of names: The heavenly Son of Man is Jesus and vice versa.<sup>45</sup> The heavenly figure at the right hand of God is Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of Man. As predicted in Luke 22:69, Jesus as the Son of Man has taken his seat "at the right hand of the power of God".

41 Cf. Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*. (Hermeneia .Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987) 48. Also in the story of Jesus' transformation in Luke 9:29 the change of the face is mentioned first. Similar descriptions are found in LXX Daniel 3:92, and later in *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 3, and less parallel in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 12:1: "his face was full of grace", even though this martyrdom also states in 2:3: "The fire of their cruel torturers had no heat for them, for they set before their eyes an escape from the fire which is everlasting and is never quenched, and with the eyes of their heart they looked upon the good things which are preserved for those who have endured (...) shown by the Lord to them who were no longer men but already angels." These examples may be inspired by Acts 6:15.

42 On this I agree with Sullivan, *Wrestling With Angels*, 120-21, and remain unpersuaded by Crispin Fletcher – Louis' attempt at also in this case to see angelization as ontological, that is "something integrated into Stephen's life before his death" (*Luke-Acts*, 96-98).

43 For the discussion as to why Jesus is standing, see; Jacob Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998) 252, with the sound conclusion that "Im Zusammenhang ist aber nur wichtig, dass Jesus sich zur rechten Gottes befindet". Alan Segal suggests that the gaze into the open heaven may indicate that Stephen at the moment of his martyrdom is lifted up, *Life After Death: A History of the Afterlife in the Religions of the West* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 466, 481. See also Zwiep, *Ascension of the Messiah*, 177.

44 For the parallels between Jesus' and Stephens' trials and martyrdoms, cf. Abraham Smith, "'Full of Spirit and Wisdom': Luke's Portrait of Stephen (Acts 6:1-8:1a) as a Man of Self-Mastery", in *Asceticism and New Testament* (Eds. Leif E.Vaage and Vincent L. Wimbush. New York, London: Routledge, 1999) 97-114.

45 This is the only mention of the title Son of Man outside of the gospels and also the only time when it is not used by Jesus himself. Alsup claims that Luke (reluctantly? reworks a Stephen-tradition which contained the account of his martyrdom and vision (its Gattung being "an ἐν πνεύματι representation perhaps influenced by the heavenly radiance type with characteristic mention of light") by the identification of Jesus as the Son of Man (*Post-Resurrection Appearance Stories*, 83).



In Luke the identification of the Son of Man with Jesus is clear. It may, however, be that Jesus moves towards becoming this Son of Man, and that this temporal dimension converges with a spatial dimension between earthly and heavenly existence, most clearly expressed in Luke 12:8-9 "And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God; but whoever denies me before others will be denied before the angels of God." The correspondence between Jesus and the Son of Man is maintained both in relation to a temporal perspective and a difference in spatial allocation.

The Son of Man saying closest to the vision of Stephen in Acts 7:55 is found in Luke 9:26 in a teaching by Jesus on the cost of discipleship (9:23-27). After Jesus has foretold his disciples that the Son of Man will suffer rejection and be killed to be raised again on the third day, he tells them that to follow him will or rather should lead them to lose their life for his sake:

If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it and those who lose their life for my sake will save it. What does it profit them if they gain the whole world but lose and forfeit themselves? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words, of them the Son of Man will be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. But truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.

This promise is in fact fulfilled to Stephen in Acts 6-7. It also leads on to the story about the transformation of Jesus before the eyes of three of his disciples (Luke 9:28-36). By a slight change of wording, so that rather than "in the glory of the Father" as in Mark 8:38, Luke has "in his glory and that of the Father ..." Luke makes the transfiguration an immediate fulfillment of this prediction.<sup>46</sup>

As pointed out above, in the post-resurrection appearance stories in Luke 24 there is an earthly, sarkic ordinariness about Jesus. Also the ascension story describes the departure of Jesus from his disciples and his transposition from earth to heaven without mentioning any transformative traits. His ascent simply means that he disappears from the sight of his disciples and there seems to be no interest in the travel as such. However, in the transfiguration story, which Luke shares with Mark and Matthew,<sup>47</sup> transformative features are predominant. Jesus

<sup>46</sup> See Luke Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (SP 3; Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press 1991).

<sup>47</sup> For discussion of history of tradition and of genre, see Adela Collins, *Mark. A Commentary*. (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007) 414-19. She thinks that it probably was not originally a resurrection-appearance story, but rather evokes an