

Memory and Memories in Early Christianity

Edited by
SIMON BUTTICAZ and
ENRICO NORELLI

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament*
398

Mohr Siebeck

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

Herausgeber/Editor

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398



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Proceedings of the International Conference
held at the Universities of Geneva
and Lausanne (June 2–3, 2016)

Edited by

Simon Buttica and
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Mohr Siebeck

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This publication has been made possible thanks to support from the *Swiss National Science Foundation*, from the *Conférence des Universités de Suisse occidentale*, from the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies with the *Institut romand des sciences bibliques* at the University of Lausanne and from the Faculty of Theology at the University of Geneva.

e-ISBN PDF 978-3-16-155730-9

ISBN 978-3-16-155729-3

ISSN 0512-1604 (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament)

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

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The book was typeset by Martin Fischer in Tübingen using Times typeface, printed by Gulde Druck in Tübingen on non-aging paper and bound by Buchbinderei Spinner in Ottersweier.

Printed in Germany.

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations	VII
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SIMON BUTTICAZ and ENRICO NORELLI

Introduction	1
------------------------	---

I. Memory Studies and Nascent Christianity: Challenges, Approaches and Problems

SANDRA HUEBENTHAL

“Frozen Moments” – Early Christianity through the Lens of <i>Social Memory Theory</i>	17
--	----

ADRIANA DESTRO and MAURO PESCE

Remembering and Writing: Their Substantial Differences	45
--	----

JENS SCHRÖTER

Memory and Memories in Early Christianity: The Remembered Jesus as a Test Case	79
---	----

II. Memory, Authority and Modalities (Personal, Ritual, Textual, etc.)

SIMON BUTTICAZ

The Transformation of “Collective Memory” in Early Christianity as Reflected in the Letters of Paul	99
--	----

JUDITH M. LIEU

Letters and the Construction of Early Christian Memory	133
--	-----

CHRISTOPH MARKSCHIES

Erinnerungen bei Irenaeus an Figuren des apostolischen und nachapostolischen Zeitalters	145
--	-----

III. Memory, Identity and the Construction of Origins

DANIEL MARGUERAT

De Jésus à Paul : l'invention du christianisme dans les Actes des apôtres . . . 157

CLAUDIO ZAMAGNI

Reinventing Christian Origins: Competing Conceptions in the
Christianity of the Second Century 177

ENRICO NORELLI

La construction polémique des origines chrétiennes par Marcion 193

CECILIA ANTONELLI

La construction de la mémoire des « origines » par Hégésippe chez
Eusèbe à travers deux modèles en dialogue : Jérusalem et la famille de
Jésus, Corinthe et Rome et ses apôtres et disciples 219

IV. Early Christianity, Memory and Theology

JÖRG FREY

The Gospel of John as a Narrative Memory of Jesus 261

ANDREAS DETTWILER

Erinnerung und Identität – Erwägungen zur Pragmatik
und Theologie des Kolosser- und Epheserbriefes 285

JEAN ZUMSTEIN

La mémoire créatrice des premiers chrétiens 313

List of Contributors 327

Index of Sources 331

Index of Modern Authors 347

Index of Selected Topics 355

List of Abbreviations

AB	The Anchor Bible
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums (Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity)
<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
ANTF	Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
<i>ASE</i>	<i>Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi</i>
ASNU	Acta seminarii neotestamentici upsaliensis
ATHANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
BBB	Bonner Biblische Beiträge
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETHL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BK	Biblischer Kommentar
BPat	Bibliotheca patristica
BSGRT	Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana
BsR	Beck'sche Reihe
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BThS	Biblich-theologische Studien
BTS	Biblical Tools and Studies
BU	Biblische Untersuchungen
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche
CAnt	Christianismes antiques
CAT	Commentaire de l'Ancien Testament
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CF	Cogitatio Fidei
CNT	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
ConBNT	Coniectanea Neotestamentica or Coniectanea Biblica: New Testament Series
<i>CrSt</i>	<i>Cristianesimo nella storia</i>
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CUF	Collection des universités de France

<i>EC</i>	<i>Early Christianity</i>
<i>EHPR</i>	<i>Etudes d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i>
<i>EKK</i>	<i>Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar</i>
<i>ET</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
<i>EtB</i>	<i>Etudes bibliques</i>
<i>ETHL</i>	<i>Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses. Louvain Journal of Theology and Canon Law</i>
<i>ETR</i>	<i>Etudes Théologiques et Religieuses</i>
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>EvT</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
<i>EWNT</i>	<i>Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i>
<i>FB</i>	<i>Forschung zur Bibel</i>
<i>FRLANT</i>	<i>Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments</i>
<i>G. C. S.</i>	<i>Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten (drei) Jahrhunderte</i>
<i>G. C. S. NF</i>	<i>Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte. Neue Folge</i>
<i>GNT</i>	<i>Grundrisse zum Neuen Testament</i>
<i>GTA</i>	<i>Göttinger theologische Arbeiten</i>
<i>HBS</i>	<i>Herders Biblische Studien</i>
<i>HNT</i>	<i>Handbuch zum Neuen Testament</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HTS</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Studies</i>
<i>JAC</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSHJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period</i>
<i>JSJSup</i>	<i>Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSNT.SS</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament. Supplement Series</i>
<i>JThS</i>	<i>The Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>KEK</i>	<i>Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament</i>
<i>KNT</i>	<i>Kommentar zum Neuen Testament</i>
<i>LCL</i>	<i>Loeb Classical Library</i>
<i>LCPM</i>	<i>Lecture cristiane del primo millennio</i>
<i>LeDiv</i>	<i>Lectio divina</i>
<i>LNTS</i>	<i>Library of New Testament Studies</i>
<i>MoBi</i>	<i>Le Monde de la Bible</i>
<i>MThS</i>	<i>Marburger theologische Studien</i>
<i>NA.NF</i>	<i>Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen. Neue Folge</i>
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
<i>NICNT</i>	<i>New International Commentary on the New Testament</i>
<i>NRTh</i>	<i>Nouvelle Revue Théologique</i>
<i>NT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NT.Sup</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum. Supplements</i>
<i>NTOA</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus</i>
<i>NTD</i>	<i>Das Neue Testament Deutsch</i>

NTL	New Testament Library
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OECS	Oxford Early Christian Studies
OLA	Orientalia Lovanensia Analecta
ONS	Origini. Nuova serie
ÖTK	Ökumenischer Taschenbuch-Kommentar
PIRSB	Publications de l'IRSB
QD	Quaestiones Disputatae
RB	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
RevBen	<i>Revue Bénédictine</i>
RevSR	<i>Revue des sciences religieuses</i>
RGG	<i>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i>
RHPR	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i>
RivBib	<i>Rivista Biblica</i>
RivBib Suppl	Rivista Biblica. Supplementi
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
RSC	<i>Rivista di storia del cristianesimo</i>
RSR	<i>Recherches de Science Religieuse</i>
RTL	<i>Revue théologique de Louvain</i>
RTP	<i>Revue de théologie et de philosophie</i>
SANt	Studia Aarhusia Neotestamentica
SBA.NT	Stuttgarter biblische Aufsatzbände. Neues Testament
SBL.DS	Society of Biblical Literature. Dissertation Series
SBL.MS	Society of Biblical Literature. Monograph Series
SBL.SP	Society of Biblical Literature. Seminar papers
SBL.SS	Society of Biblical Literature. Semeia Studies
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SC	Sources Chrésiennes
SE	<i>Studia evangelica</i>
SEA	<i>Svensk exegetisk Årsbok</i>
SEA	Studia ephemeridis "Augustinianum"
SNT	Studies in the New Testament
SNTS.MS	Society for New Testament Studies. Monograph Series
SNTU.A	<i>Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt. Serie A</i>
SPAW	Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften
SRB	Supplementi alla Rivista Biblica
STAC	Studien und Texte zur Antike und Christentum
StANT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
StNT	Studien zum Neuen Testament
StPatr	Studia Patristica
StTh	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
StUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
TANZ	Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
ThHK	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
ThKNT	Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
ThZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>

<i>TLBl</i>	<i>Theologisches Literaturblatt</i>
<i>TRu</i>	<i>Theologische Rundschau</i>
<i>TSAJ</i>	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
<i>TU</i>	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
<i>ThWAT</i>	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i>
<i>ThWNT</i>	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i>
<i>UNT</i>	Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>UTB</i>	Uni-Taschenbücher
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
<i>VCSup</i>	Vigiliae christianae Supplements
<i>WBC</i>	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WMANT</i>	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>WuD</i>	<i>Wort und Dienst</i>
<i>WUNT</i>	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZKG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte</i>
<i>ZKT</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie</i>
<i>ZNT</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Neues Testament</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
<i>ZThK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

Introduction

SIMON BUTTICAZ and ENRICO NORELLI

1. The Bible and Social Memory Studies: Current Trends¹

Only recently have theories of social memory entered the mainstream of Biblical Studies.² Although the birth of the so-called “social memory approach” can be traced back to the interwar period – beginning with the work of the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs³ and then expanding into the human and social sciences in the 1960s and 70s⁴ – it was first in the 1980s that “social memory studies”⁵ began to influence Bible research, particularly among scholars of the New Testament.⁶

¹ Chris Keith has recently produced two detailed summaries of the current state of research, appearing in successive issues of the journal *Early Christianity*: Chris Keith, “Social Memory Theory and Gospels Research: The First Decade (Part One),” *EC* 6 (2015): 354–76; Id., “Social Memory Theory and Gospels Research: The First Decade (Part Two),” *EC* 6 (2015): 517–42.

² This has often been remarked upon, for example by Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher, “Jesus Tradition as Social Memory,” in *Memory, Tradition, and Text. Uses of the Past in Early Christianity* (ed. Eidem; SBL.SS 52; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2005), 25; Werner Kelber, “The Works of Memory: Christian Origins as MnemoHistory – A Response,” in *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, 229.

³ Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (Paris: PUF, 1952 [1925]); Id., *La mémoire collective* (Paris: PUF, 1968 [1950]).

⁴ Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, “Social Memory Studies: From ‘Collective Memory’ to the Historical Memory of Mnemonic Practices,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 25 (1998): 105–40, esp. 106–8.

⁵ For a brief definition, see Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, “Social Memory Studies,” (1998): 112: “We refer to ‘social memory studies’ as a general rubric for inquiry into the varieties of forms through which we are shaped by the past, conscious and unconscious, public and private, material and communicative, consensual and challenged. We refer to distinct sets of mnemonic practices in various social sites, rather than to collective memory as a thing. This approach [...] enables us to identify ways in which past and present are intertwined without reifying a mystical group mind and without including absolutely everything in the enterprise.”

⁶ Chris Keith, who has been following memory approaches to the study of the New Testament for some time, identifies as the earliest such analysis that of Georgia M. Keightley on 1 Thessalonians (Ead., “The Church’s Memory of Jesus: A Social Science Analysis of 1 Thessalonians,” *BTB* 17 [1987]: 149–56; cf. Chris Keith, *Jesus’ Literacy. Scribal Culture and the Teacher from Galilee* [London/New York: T&T Clark, 2011], 51).

How are we to explain the relatively long period of neglect?⁷ While there is no single explanation, this critical “myopia”⁸ was undoubtedly linked to the dominant understanding of memory in twentieth-century New Testament studies, one that focused on prominent individuals and was generally repetitive in nature. Two approaches will illustrate the epistemological and methodological postulate that underscored research at that time: a) form criticism, developed at the turn of the 20th century, and b) work on the historical figure of Jesus, privileged by the students and followers of Birger Gerhardsson (beginning in the 1960s).

Firstly, form criticism:⁹ although the concept of ‘memory’ is not an explicit area of interest in either Martin Dibelius’ or Rudolf Bultmann’s work, those theorists nonetheless “focused their attention on these small units of tradition as possible loci for traces of authentic memories of Jesus,”¹⁰ discriminating “between ‘memory,’ understood as personal recall, and ‘tradition,’ a term that comprehended both the ‘forms’ these recollections took in oral preaching and teaching and all the processes by which the Gospel writers patched those pieces together.”¹¹ Reduced to small, static kernels and confined within this interpretive framework, memory proved to be an inadequate conceptual tool for investigating the historical Jesus or the emergence of the Gospel tradition.¹² Furthermore, memory and tradition were seen as heterogeneous ideas: whereas *memory* constituted the ‘authentic’ and immutable basis of traditions passed on among the first Christian communities, *tradition* was a pliable category;¹³ it was the product of the earliest Christians’ inventiveness and its later crystallization represented a corruption of the *ipsissima vox Jesu*.¹⁴ Yet, while form criticism did not actively exploit the notion of memory, it did pave the way (thanks to its sociological perspective) for one of the most promising avenues of social memory studies as applied to the New Testament, namely the reconstruction of various communicative occasions or “situations” (i. e., Rudolf Bultmann’s treasured *Sitz im Leben*) in the first Christian communities: it was both within and for these groups that the Gospel tradition was developed and shaped.¹⁵

⁷ For the following we draw on the excellent critical introduction to memory studies by Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher, “Jesus Tradition as Social Memory,” 25–42 and on Werner Kelber, “The Works of Memory,” 229–247.

⁸ So Werner Kelber, “The Works of Memory,” 231.

⁹ See Werner Kelber, “The Works of Memory,” 230–1.

¹⁰ Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher, “Jesus Tradition as Social Memory,” 29.

¹¹ Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher, “Jesus Tradition as Social Memory,” 29.

¹² Cf. Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher, “Jesus Tradition as Social Memory,” 27.

¹³ Cf. Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher, “Jesus Tradition as Social Memory,” 29–31.

¹⁴ Cf. Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher, “Jesus Tradition as Social Memory,” 30–1.

¹⁵ Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher, “Jesus Tradition as Social Memory,” 32: “Consistent with the form-critical model, social memory theory views present social realities as decisive factors in the constant rearticulation of a community’s salient past, and it contends that the past is never objectified apart from the frameworks for memory supplied by present circumstances.” Cf. also Jens Schröter’s contribution to the present volume: “Like Halbwachs, the form critics

Another example of this individualizing and repetitive (if not positivist) limiting of memory can be seen in what is commonly referred to as the “Scandinavian school.”¹⁶ As a critical reaction to *Formgeschichte*, this new approach grew out of the work by Harald Riesenfeld¹⁷ and Birger Gerhardsson,¹⁸ and was continued by Rainer Riesner¹⁹ and Samuel Byrskog.²⁰ It located the origin of the Jesus tradition not in the kerygma of the post-Resurrection communities, but rather in the memory of the disciples of Jesus – “the only teacher”²¹ – who had produced a doctrine and instructed his students to memorize it. The process of learning and transmission that already existed for Rabbinic Judaism and, more broadly, in the ancient world, provided a plausible framework for this model. “‘Memory’ was therefore first introduced into Jesus research as a paradigm for the continuity of the Jesus tradition from its origin in Jesus himself and its oral transmission by his early followers, before becoming a written tradition in the Gospels. Memory designated the preservation and transmission of the tradition by individuals and its stabilization by way of rote learning, and eventually its textualization.”²²

Only progressively have historians of Christianity and Bible scholars shifted away from this conception of memory toward a sociological and constructivist approach. It is in the context of research into the historical Jesus and the Gospel tradition that enthusiasm for social memory studies is now especially lively, as detailed in Jens Schröter’s contribution to the present volume (“Memory and Memories in Early Christianity: The Remembered Jesus as a Test Case”). Indeed, theories of social memory allow us to study the Gospel tradition as one

were not primarily concerned with the past itself, but rather with the meaning of the past for the present. Moreover, like Halbwachs, the form critics were not concerned with the preservation of memories by individuals. Rather, both Halbwachs and the form critics emphasized the collective or social dimension of memory. As members of a community, individuals participate in and contribute to the shared memory of that community. Their personal recollections thereby become part of a broader concept of memory as the tradition of a community.” (Id., “Memory and Memories in Early Christianity: The Remembered Jesus as a Test Case,” 88).

¹⁶ Here and for what follows, see Jens Schröter’s contribution to the present volume (“Memory and Memories in Early Christianity,” 79–96) as well as Werner Kelber, “The Works of Memory,” 231–4.

¹⁷ Harald Riesenfeld, “The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings,” in *Studia Evangelica* (ed. Kurt Aland et al.; TU 73; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1959), 43–65; Id., *The Gospel Tradition* (Philadelphia/Oxford: Fortress Press/Basil Blackwell, 1970).

¹⁸ Birger Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript. Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (ASNU 22; Lund/Copenhagen: Gleerup/Munksgaard, 1961); Id., *Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity* (ComBNT 20; Lund: Gleerup, 1964).

¹⁹ Rainer Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer. Eine Untersuchung zum Ursprung der Evangelien-Überlieferung* (WUNT 2.7; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1981).

²⁰ Samuel Byrskog, *Jesus the Only Teacher: Didactic Authority and Transmission in Ancient Israel, Ancient Judaism and the Matthean Community* (ConBNT 24; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1994).

²¹ Compare the title of Samuel Byrskog’s PhD thesis: *Jesus the Only Teacher* (1994).

²² Jens Schröter, “Memory and Memories in Early Christianity,” 88.

large memory project, undertaken by the various groups who believed in Jesus, with the origins of Christianity being continuously subjected to a process of re-examination and reconfiguration in light of the demands and opportunities of the present time.²³ This process tells us as much about the beginnings of Christianity (specifically, of Jesus and his movement) as it does about the many and varied receptions thereof during the first generations of the common era.

The possibilities of memory approaches are not limited to this one field of investigation. Indeed, many New Testament questions and textual issues lend themselves to reexamination with these tools.²⁴ The gradual shift from orality to writing around the years 60–70,²⁵ the construction of “apostolic memories” (Peter, Paul, the Twelve, etc.) in support of the “invention” of a golden age of Christianity,²⁶ the different and competing memories of Christianity’s origins attested in ancient Christian literature,²⁷ and the advent of normative texts that

²³ E. g., here and below (in chronological order): Jens Schröter, *Erinnerung an Jesu Worte: Studien zur Rezeption der Logienüberlieferung in Markus, Q und Thomas* (WMANT 76; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1997); Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher (ed.), *Memory, Tradition and Text*; Anthony Le Donne, *The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Son of David* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009); Sandra Huebenthal, *Das Markusevangelium als kollektives Gedächtnis* (FRLANT 253; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014); etc.

²⁴ Here and below, also: Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher, “Jesus Tradition as Social Memory,” 25 and 39–42.

²⁵ Tom Thatcher, “Why John Wrote a Gospel: Memory and History in an Early Christian Community,” in *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, 75–97; Id., *Why John Wrote a Gospel. Jesus – Memory – History* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006); Werner Kelber, “The Works of Memory,” 221–48; Chris Keith, “Prolegomena on the Textualization of Mark’s Gospel: Manuscript Culture, the Extended Situation, and the Emergence of the Written Gospel,” in *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity. A Conversation with Barry Schwartz* (ed. Tom Thatcher; SBLSS 78; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 161–86; etc.

²⁶ François Bovon, “The Apostolic Memories in Ancient Christianity,” in *Studies in Early Christianity* (ed. Id.; WUNT 1.161; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 1–16; Coleman A. Baker, *Identity, Memory and Narrative in Early Christianity. Peter, Paul, and Recategorization in the Book of Acts* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2011); Simon Buttica, “The Construction of Apostolic Memories in the Light of two New Testament Pseudepigrapha (2 Tim and 2 Pet),” *ASE* 33 (2016): 341–63; Id., “‘Le récit des événements accomplis parmi nous’ (Lc 1,1). Oeuvre de Dieu ou actes d’apôtres ?” *RTP* 148 (2016): 607–26; Sandra Huebenthal, “Pseudepigraphie als Strategie in frühchristlichen Identitätsdiskursen? Überlegungen am Beispiel des Kolosserbriefs,” *SNTU.A* 36 (2011): 61–92; Enrico Norelli, “La notion de ‘mémoire’ nous aide-t-elle à mieux comprendre la formation du canon du Nouveau Testament ?,” in *The Canon Scripture in Jewish and Christian Tradition/Le canon des Écritures dans les traditions juive et chrétienne* (ed. Jean-Daniel Kaestli and Philip Alexander; PIRSB 4; Prahins: Zèbre, 2007), 176–80; Markus Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter in Ancient Reception and Modern Debate* (WUNT 1.262; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); Benjamin L. White, *Remembering Paul. Ancient and Modern Contests over the Image of the Apostle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); etc.

²⁷ Enrico Norelli, “La construction des origines chrétiennes. Quelques étapes aux deux premiers siècles,” in *Los comienzos del cristianismo. IV Simposio Internacional del Grupo Europeo de Investigación Interdisciplinar sobre los Orígenes del Cristianismo (G. E. R. I. C. O.)* (ed. Santiago Guíjarro; Bibliotheca Salmanticensis. Estudios 284; Salamanca: Publicaciones Universidad Pontificia, 2006), 205–16; Id., *La nascita del cristianesimo. Le vie della civiltà*

served as “lieux de mémoire,”²⁸ count among the numerous possible applications of this innovative approach. Work in these directions has already begun and includes, we hope, the contributions to the present volume.

2. Memories about Jesus in Earliest Christianity: Through Crisis to (Relative) Stabilization

The history of Christianity is the history of people, groups and institutions who ascribed to Jesus of Nazareth, mostly (but not always) seen as a divine being having manifested itself in our world as a man called Jesus, a unique role as a mediator between God and the humans, and adopted his person and message as the essential reference giving meaning and norm to human existence. Since Jesus was a man who lived in a specific time that belongs to the past for all believers in him, what we usually call faith in Jesus expresses itself as reference to a time past. Of course, faith in Jesus implies considering him as active in the present of the believer, and groups playing down his historical person in favour of the eternal divine Lord have never lacked. However, even such groups have always admitted that Jesus's earthly activity was essential in order to effect what they usually call salvation. Therefore, reference to Jesus includes reference to a moment of past history, which also implies narrating a story located in the past. As every story, such a narration establishes and communicates a meaning, which in this case is perceived as essential for the system of beliefs, values and practices that structures the life of people adhering to Jesus. The beginnings of this story go back to people who were in actual contact with Jesus and sooner or later transmitted to others what they had retained of their experience, including of course their own understanding of it.

Therefore, communication about Jesus was made of memories from the very beginning. Now as such contacts with him were of different kinds and the ways their actors interpreted them were also unavoidably different, there never was *one* (single) memory about Jesus. The groups who received these recollections preserved, elaborated and circulated them further because they were deemed seminal to their faith. So they had to be adapted to the various cultural systems and subsystems to which believers in Jesus belonged, as well as to the needs and concerns produced by their respective situations.

(Bologna: Società editrice il Mulino, 2014); Sandra Huebenthal, *Das Markusevangelium als kollektives Gedächtnis*, etc.

²⁸ Enrico Norelli, “La notion de ‘mémoire’,” 169–206. See also David Aune, *Jesus, Gospel Tradition and Paul in the Context of Jewish and Greco-Roman Antiquity. Collected Essays II* (WUNT 1.303; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 303–27, especially 320–7; Simon Buttica, “The Construction of Apostolic Memories,” 341–63, in line with Nora's concept of “lieu de mémoire”.

Jesus's words and story, retold and updated, stood as the normative origin, so that any institution and any discourse within the groups of believers had to legitimate itself by leading the other members of the group to recognize that it was consistent with what was accepted as coming from Jesus. At the same time, as Jesus had left no writings, his normative words had been transmitted by his disciples: therefore, to define who, among his immediate followers, had been entitled by Jesus to faithfully forward his teachings was a crucial issue. What mattered was not only the contents of memories of Jesus, but also the identity of those supposed to possess a genuine understanding of him and of his teachings. This is why early Christian memories were structured around two poles: "the Gospel and the Apostle," as rightly stressed by François Bovon years ago.²⁹ Even a text consisting entirely of Jesus's words, like the *Gospel according to Thomas*, needs an introductory statement: "These are the secret sayings which the living Jesus spoke and which Didymos Judas Thomas wrote down".³⁰ In this case, what appears to be thematized is the (immediate?) written redaction of Jesus's words by a disciple who received them orally directly from him. In fact, such a representation does not seem to go back to the first years of the handing on of the Jesus tradition. In Paul's authentic letters, for instance, we do not find any concern for a faithful transmission of such a tradition through written texts: of course, the bribes of traditions about Jesus we find in his letters are written, but he clearly does not draw on written sources and he feels free to modify the stories, sentences and formulas he is quoting.³¹ He obviously does not worry about the fact that in most instances his addressees (or, for that matter, his hearers when he gave oral instructions during his stay in the churches he had founded) will not be able to distinguish, in the traditions he is handing on to them, what he himself has received from what he has added when passing them on.

²⁹ François Bovon, *L'Evangile et l'Apôtre. Le Christ inséparable de ses témoins* (Aubonne: Editions du Moulin, 1993); Id., "La structure canonique de l'Evangile et de l'Apôtre," *CrSt* 15 (1994): 559–76.

³⁰ NHC II 2: 32,10–11; we are quoting the translation by Thomas O. Lambdin in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English. Third, completely revised edition* (ed. James M. Robinson; New York: Harper Collins, 1990), 126.

³¹ Just a couple of examples. As is well known, Paul appears to reproduce in part very exactly the traditional structure of the formula quoted in 1 Cor 15:3b–7, but at the same time, he obviously adds v. 6b and the last item of the series, his own experience of the Resurrected Christ in v. 8; moreover, it is quite possible that he combined two formulas, the one beginning with Peter with the one beginning with James; finally, he may be responsible for the chronological succession created by repeating εἶτα and ἔπειτα, which is not at all unimportant because it makes the whole series point towards his own experience. Another famous example is the λόγος κυρίου referred to in 1 Thess 4:15–17, where he clearly modifies the pre-existing statement in order to answer the Thessalonians' worry; for an analysis from that point of view, see Enrico Norelli, "La notion de 'mémoire'," esp. 177–8; Id., "Alcune tendenze attuali nello studio della prima trasmissione di detti e fatti di Gesù," in *La tradizione di Gesù. Le tradizioni su Gesù* (ed. Dario Garribba and Marco Vitelli; Oì christianoi 19; Trapani: Il pozzo di Giacobbe, 2014), 11–58, on this point 41–56, and the contribution of Simon Buttica in the present volume.

Problems arose in the following generations, when memories handed on and modified several times spread in forms contradicting each other and new created “memories” were added to them claiming to be words of Jesus or revelations and stories going back to his disciples, such an attribution being essential in order to lend them authority. Oral transmission and the circulation of written texts went hand in hand, but being able to show that both went back to authorized bearers of Jesus’s genuine message had become urgent. The crisis of the pattern of oral transmission becomes obvious in the preface to the work of Papias of Hierapolis, *Exegesis of the Oracles of the Lord* (written probably about 110/115), just as he tries to reassert its validity:

And I shall not hesitate to append to the interpretations all that I ever learnt well from the presbyters and remember well, for of their truth I am confident. For unlike most I did not rejoice in them who say much, but in them who teach the truth, nor in them who recount the commandments of others, but in them who repeated those given to the faith by the Lord and derived from truth itself; 4. but if ever anyone came who had followed the presbyters, I enquired into the words of the presbyters, what Andrew or Peter or Philip or Thomas or James or John or Matthew, or any other of the Lord’s disciples, had said, and what Aristion and the presbyter John, the Lord’s disciples, were saying. For I did not suppose that information from books would help me so much as the word of a living and surviving voice.³²

In Papias’s mind,³³ oral transmission has the advantage of allowing control over the chain of memory bearers, thus ensuring the relation to the original witnesses, Jesus’s disciples. According to him, such a principle must also apply to the writings containing memories about Jesus: therefore Papias recounts the origin of Mark’s gospel by referring to a story about Mark as Peter’s interpreter who had written down the latter’s preaching. At the beginning of this story however, he states that it has been handed down (no doubt in oral form at first) by “the presbyter” (Eusebius, *HE* 3.39.15). This can explain why the last sentence of the above quotation favours information from “a living voice” over information from books. We might think that the voice of books is more “permanent” or “stable” (which might be, in the present context, a better translation of *μενούσης*, translated by Kirsopp Lake as “surviving”) than “the living voice”; but what Papias no doubt means is that the oral transmission of memories through a

³² This extract from Papias’s five-volume lost work has been preserved by Eusebius of Caesarea, *HE* 3.39.3–4. We quote the translation by Kirsopp Lake in *Eusebius, The Ecclesiastical History I* (LCL; Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 1926) and reprints, pages 291–3. This passage has caused a lot of ink to flow. For a detailed commentary, we refer to Enrico Norelli, *Papia di Hierapolis: Esposizione degli oracoli del Signore. I frammenti* (Lecture cristiane del primo millennio 36; Milano: Paoline Editoriale libri, 2005), 244–80.

³³ For further details, here and below: Enrico Norelli, “La notion de ‘mémoire’,” 169–206, esp. 183–94; Id., “Papias a-t-il utilisé un recueil ‘canonique’ des quatre évangiles?,” in *Le Nouveau Testament. Regards nouveaux sur l’histoire de sa formation* (ed. Gabriella Aragione et al.; MoBi 54; Genève: Labor et Fides, 2005), 35–85.

succession of teachers and disciples can easily be checked so as to warrant the authenticity of a given set of memories, even in the case of books (as Mark's Gospel), because it allows us to relate them to a genuine apostolic witness. At the same time, the fact that Papias hastens to write down in a comparatively long work the stories and words of Jesus he could gather and considered as reliable shows that after all, he is aware that trusting oral tradition will no longer be the safest way of sifting memories about normative Christian origins.

A few years after him,³⁴ Marcion of Sinope gave the problem a dramatically acute formulation by refusing any tradition about Jesus and his message other than the one contained in Paul's letters and in one gospel very close to what was to become Luke's canonical Gospel. Discarding the bulk of oral memory and most of the memory preserved in written form save a well-defined group of writings, he devoted himself to restoring what he deemed to be their original version. In his opinion, these writings had been corrupted by direct and indirect disciples of Jesus who had completely misunderstood the latter's teaching, founded on the distinction between the Creator of this world, who is the God revealed in the Jewish Bible, and Jesus's Father. Of course, this interpretation of Christian identity implied a very specific memory of Jesus and of Christian origins, constructed by Marcion through an interpretation of the writings he admitted. Among other things, Marcion's option represented an extreme solution to the problems created by the oral transmission of normative memories. The formation of a New Testament (the collection was not closed until the second half of the 4th century, and some uncertainty remained even beyond that time, but the process was already well advanced by the end of the 2nd century) also favoured written texts (now permanently linked with some of Jesus's disciples) as bearers of normative memories, but it did not eliminate oral tradition so radically as Marcion had done.

3. Memories, Memory and Authority

In actual fact, the interplay of orality and writing never came to an end. It is largely admitted today that the oral transmission of memories played a role even in the synoptic tradition, a field traditionally dominated by attention to the relationship between written documents. This complex issue cannot be developed here. Let us just sketch a very short reflection on the Gospel of Mark as a memorial construction.³⁵ There are excellent reasons to think that this work is based on small units separately handed on orally and maybe partially in writing,

³⁴ For further details, see Enrico Norelli, "La notion de 'mémoire'," 169–206, esp. 183–202 and Id., "La construction polémique des origines chrétiennes par Marcion" in the present volume.

³⁵ On this topic, see now Sandra Huebenthal, *Das Markusevangelium als kollektives Gedächtnis*.

as well as on a Passion narrative, the core of which was formed very early after Jesus's death. This Gospel is therefore backed up by real memories which were reworked and transformed during their transmission, rather than by one structured and consistent memory of Jesus. The *formgeschichtliche Schule* proved that its chronological and geographical framework as a whole is the evangelist's construction.³⁶ This construction is influenced by a representation of Jesus linked with a theological interpretation by the evangelist of the believer's existence, in other words to a present concern of the author and his community.

Can Mark's narrative construct, then, be labelled as a memory of Jesus? The book depends on several, already elaborated recollections that convey a plurality of memories rather than just one.³⁷ The redactional contribution of the evangelist as such is no act of memory, because he had definitely never met Jesus and, notwithstanding the ancient tradition first recorded by Papias, it is extremely doubtful that he was acquainted with any direct disciple of Jesus. However, this construction of Jesus and of his message must have been influenced by the reception of the Jesus tradition in the author's community. Therefore, the Gospel of Mark presupposes processes that were founded on recollections and influenced by those shared frames that Maurice Halbwachs named "cadres sociaux de la mémoire." It is true that in a group, there is no unified memory, but a plurality of personal recollections,³⁸ because its members share memories but everyone elaborates them in a different way. Of course, a group as such has no memory comparable to that of an individual. However, a group may adopt as normative reference an image of its past worked out on the basis of inherited memories. The catalyst of such an elaboration is no collective mind or soul of the group itself, which does not exist, but a strategy implemented by a leadership; this is a kind of process well known in political or religious communities.

As a matter of fact, the construction of a memory meant to function as a body of rules for a group has much to do with the structures and relationships of power and authority inside the group itself. If the people who develop an image of the past of the group, especially of its origins, exert a recognized authority, the acceptance of this memory by the group itself is more or less easy. Of course, this image cannot be completely alien to memories already shared by the group (resp. by the groups that concur to form a new collective entity in need of a new, unifying memory) because if it were so, this might either produce a crisis of the collective identity or delegitimize the leadership who proposes the new collective memory. But if the members of the group accept the new construction

³⁶ The demonstration by Karl Ludwig Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu* (Berlin: Trowitzsch, 1919) remains perfectly valid.

³⁷ On the plurality of partial memories and their different locations, see now Adriana Destro and Mauro Pesce, *Le récit et l'écriture. Introduction à la lecture des évangiles* (original Italian edition, 2014; CAnt 7; Genève: Labor et Fides, 2016).

³⁸ As asserted by Joël Candau, *Anthropologie de la mémoire* (Paris: Colin, 2005), 65–9.

as compatible with the representations of their past already familiar to them, the new image can become a “collective memory,” not because it has been spontaneously produced by a collective consciousness, but because the community receives it as an adequate representation of its past. From then on, it will of course influence the ideas and practices of the community itself.

In ancient Christianity, such processes were often set in motion through the composition, usage or rewriting of apocryphal texts that could at any time be transformed and adapted to new needs, unlike canonized writings. A local church could always modify an existing mission narrative or create a new one in order to prove its own apostolic origin and so, if necessary, to emancipate itself from a higher authority, thus becoming autocephalous.³⁹ This happened with the *Acts of Barnabas*, compiled about 485–488 in order to make the church of Cyprus independent from the Antiochene patriarchate.⁴⁰ Again, it was always possible for a bishop to introduce a new important feast and devotion in his diocese by spreading an allegedly apostolic narrative about an event of the origins that needed celebration. This was the case with archbishop John of Thessalonica who, in the first decades of the 7th century, introduced the feast of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary, explaining in a long homily that the feast had been celebrated at the time of the apostles but had since then fallen into disuse because of the heretics who had distorted and corrupted the foundational narrative written and handed on by the apostles. However, he added, he wished now to relate the genuine, apostolic story of the Dormition so that the community might start honouring the Virgin again. It is superfluous to say that his homily reproduces the same kind of works he is condemning as heretical, several of which have come down to us; but as the story was now told and warranted by ecclesiastical authority, it necessarily had to be authentic and became part and parcel of the official memory of the local church, as it had become in many other churches from the 5th century onwards.⁴¹

4. Memory and Faith: Two Interconnected Ideas

In the context of ancient Jewish and Christian literature, memory is not merely a valuable tool for describing and analyzing how the past was shaped to construct a common identity in the present.⁴² It is also a semantic category with signifi-

³⁹ Cf. Maïeul Rouquette, *Etude comparée sur la construction des origines apostoliques des Eglises de Crète et de Chypre à travers les figures de Tite et de Barnabé* (2 vols.; [as yet] unpublished PhD dissertation: May 2017).

⁴⁰ See Enrico Norelli, “Actes de Barnabé,” in *Ecrits apocryphes chrétiens* II (ed. Pierre Geoltrain and Jean-Daniel Kaestli; Bibliothèque de la Pléiade; Paris: Gallimard, 2005), 617–42, and above all, now, the PhD dissertation by Maïeul Rouquette, *Etude comparée sur la construction des origines apostoliques des Eglises de Crète et de Chypre*.

⁴¹ For these and other examples, see Enrico Norelli, “La notion de ‘mémoire’,” 169–206.

⁴² Cf. e.g. Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher (ed.), *Memory, Tradition and Text*; Stephen C. Bar-

cant theological implications and intrinsic to the self-conception of the groups under investigation.⁴³ In his influential study of ancient “cultural memory,” Jan Assmann noted the significance of remembering in the theology of ancient Israel, with the Book of Deuteronomy exploiting and placing at the heart of the Babylonian captivity the “memory of the exodus.”⁴⁴ There is a simple explanation for this.

Believing in a God whose creationary and redemptive authority formed the basis of all human history, ancient Israel and the first followers of Jesus were unable to bypass story and memory as tools for the grounding and preservation of their faith: memory was an ineluctable part of their spiritual identity.⁴⁵ As the historian François Hartog writes, “la révélation est histoire et, depuis la sortie du paradis, le temps des origines s’est mué en temps historique. Aussi, le récit biblique, historique dans son économie profonde, se doit-il d’être la mémoire de

ton, Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Benjamin G. Wold (ed.), *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity. The Fifth Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium (Durham, September 2004)* (WUNT 1.212; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007); Tom Thatcher (ed.), *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*.

⁴³ Several classic studies have highlighted the importance of this theme and the category of memory in ancient Christian and Jewish writing. It is worth recalling these studies, given that contemporary biblical exegesis is now showing renewed enthusiasm for the notion of memory. In chronological order: Otto Michel, “μνήσκονται κτλ.,” *ThWNT* 4 (1942): 678–87; Nils Dahl, *Jesus in the Memory of the Early Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1976), 11–29; Pierre Bonnard, “L’anamnèse, structure fondamentale de la théologie du Nouveau Testament,” in *Anamnesis. Recherches sur le Nouveau Testament* (ed. Id.; Cahiers de la RTP 3; Genève/Lausanne/Neuchâtel, 1980), 1–11; Jean-Daniel Kaestli, “Mémoire et pseudépigraphie dans le christianisme de l’âge post-apostolique,” *RTP* 43 (1993): 41–63. See also, recently, Stephen C. Barton, Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Benjamin G. Wold (ed.), *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity* and the contribution of Jean Zumstein in the present volume.

⁴⁴ Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization. Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 175–205.

⁴⁵ Following Nils Dahl, *Jesus in the Memory of the Early Church*, 13: “The God of Israel was a God who acted and manifested himself in history. That is why the memory of his work of salvation and his commandments had a fundamental importance in the religion of Israel,” and, regarding liturgical formulas and other confessions of faith among the early Christians, on page 20: “Christ and the salvation of God are remembered in the same way that Israel remembered the mighty deeds of its God in former times.”; Stephen C. Barton, Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Benjamin G. Wold, “Introduction,” in *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity*, 1: “[...] the study of memory and remembrance is especially important in relation to the Judeo-Christian tradition because being human according to this tradition involves the ongoing discovery that *time has a particular shape*. It is shaped by humankind’s relationship with God, a relationship that can be put into words in the form of a narrative with a past, present and future. This narrative tells the story of God as creator and redeemer and of humankind as created and redeemed. In other words, study of memory and remembrance in Judaism and Christianity is a way into discernment of the nature and character of God and of what it means to be and to live as the people of God” (italics in the original). François Bovon, for his part, argues that for the double narrative of Luke, “distance chronologique et proximité émotionnelle sont inséparables aussi bien dans l’historiographie biblique que profane. Notre identité, notre existence même sont faites par les événements qui se sont ‘accomplis’. Foi et mémoire ne font qu’un pour Israël” (Id., *L’évangile selon saint Luc* (1,1–9,50) [CNT IIIa; Genève: Labor et Fides, 1991], 38).

cette marche du temps et des hommes.”⁴⁶ The anamnestic rhetoric that pervades the ancient Jewish and Christian texts is a reflection of this: corresponding to the injunction to “remember” (*zakhor*), that recurs throughout the Hebrew tradition (appearing no fewer than 169 times), is the order to “do this in remembrance of me” (NKJV), which lies at the heart of the Eucharistic tradition reflected in the writings of Paul (1 Cor 11:24–25; cf. Luke 22:19).⁴⁷ In both cases, it is to the memory of God and his exploits that his people are directed, if they wish to be saved (Deut 8:18); the act of forgetting, on the other hand, becomes synonymous with “sin” and idolatrous deviance.⁴⁸ Similarly, it is not a coincidence that the Gospels are referred to as the “memoirs of the Apostles” (ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων) in the work of Justin Martyr (e.g., *Dial.* 100.4, 101.3, 102.5, 103.6.8, 104.1, 105.1.5.6, 106.1.4., 107.1).⁴⁹ the evangelical narrative was born out of the semantically and spiritually fruitful crossover between Jesus’ past and the witnesses’ present, furnishing a memory of the work and life of Jesus Christ that functioned as a founding story of Christianity.⁵⁰

5. From Jesus to Irenaeus: Trajectories, Forms and Modes of Memory

The thirteen contributions to this volume stem from an international conference held on the 2nd and 3rd of June 2016 at the Universities of Geneva and Lausanne (Switzerland). By adopting a multidisciplinary approach, the aim of that conference was to demonstrate the rich potential of memory studies for our understanding of Christian origins, building on the work outlined above and posing new questions. Indeed, one of the significant contribution of this volume is its mixture of different approaches – anthropological, sociological, historical, literary, and theological – to the study of memory and memory processes in the investigation of the beginnings of Christianity; our aim was not merely to apply an analytic and interpretive tool (i.e., theories of social memory) to the literature and history

⁴⁶ English translation: “The Revelation is history and, from the moment humans left paradise, the time of origins was transformed into a time of history. Moreover, the biblical narrative – historical in its profound economy – must be the memory of this forward movement of time and of human beings.” François Hartog, *Evidence de l’histoire. Ce que voient les historiens* (Cas de figure 5; Paris: Éditions EHESS, 2005), 14 (our translation).

⁴⁷ Cf. Nils Dahl, *Jesus in the Memory of the Early Church*, 21. See also Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor. Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1989).

⁴⁸ On this, see William Horbury, “The Remembrance of God in the *Psalms of Solomon*,” in *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity*, 111–28, especially 112–9.

⁴⁹ Cf. Helmut Koester, “From the Kerygma Gospel to Written Gospels,” *NTS* 35 (1989): 361–81, especially 377–80.

⁵⁰ With Nils Dahl, *Jesus in the Memory of the Early Church*, 26–9. See also, in the present volume, Jean Zumstein’s contribution “La mémoire créatrice des premiers chrétiens.”

of nascent Christianity, but also to identify socio-religious echoes of the notion of memory in the ideology and language of the first followers of Jesus.⁵¹ Along these lines, four broad research approaches were explored (I–IV) and they have dictated the arrangement of the studies published here (cited after their titles):

I. Memory Studies and Nascent Christianity: Challenges, Approaches and Problems

- “‘Frozen Moments’ – Early Christianity through the Lens of *Social Memory Theory*” (S. Huebenthal)
- “Remembering and Writing: Their Substantial Differences” (A. Destro and M. Pesce)
- “Memory and Memories in Early Christianity: The Remembered Jesus as a Test Case” (J. Schröter)

II. Memory, Authority and Modalities (Personal, Ritual, Textual, etc.)

- “The Transformation of ‘Collective Memory’ in Early Christianity as Reflected in the Letters of Paul” (S. Buttica)
- “Letters and the Construction of Early Christian Memory” (J. M. Lieu)
- “Erinnerungen bei Irenaeus an Figuren des apostolischen und nachapostolischen Zeitalters” (Ch. Marksches)

III. Memory, Identity and the Construction of Origins

- “De Jésus à Paul : l’invention du christianisme dans les Actes des apôtres” (D. Marguerat)
- “Reinventing Christian Origins: Competing Conceptions in the Christianity of the Second Century” (C. Zamagni)
- “La construction polémique des origines chrétiennes par Marcion” (E. Norelli)
- “La construction de la mémoire des ‘origines’ par Hégésippe chez Eusèbe à travers deux modèles en dialogue : Jérusalem et la famille de Jésus, Corinthe et Rome et ses apôtres et disciples” (C. Antonelli)

IV. Early Christianity, Memory and Theology

- “The Gospel of John as a Narrative Memory of Jesus” (J. Frey)
- “Erinnerung und Identität – Erwägungen zur Pragmatik und Theologie des Kolosser- und Epheserbriefes” (A. Dettwiler)
- “La mémoire créatrice des premiers chrétiens” (J. Zumstein)

⁵¹ Along similar lines to the volume edited by Stephen C. Barton, Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Benjamin G. Wold, *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity*.

Before inviting the reader to discover the research presented in this volume, we would like to thank certain people and institutions. Without the help of the following, this publication would not have been possible: the *Swiss National Science Foundation* (SNSF), the *Conférence des Universités de Suisse Occidentale* (CUSO), the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies together with the *Institut romand des sciences bibliques* (IRSB) at the University of Lausanne, and the Faculty of Theology at the University of Geneva, who all provided funds for the conference upon which this volume is based and/or helped finance translations. We also thank the publishers Mohr Siebeck in Tübingen, Dr. Henning Ziebritzki, Editorial Director, as well as Prof. Jörg Frey, Chief Series Editor, who kindly accepted this work into the series *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament I*.

In addition, Cecilia Antonelli, Priscille Marschall, Hélène Grosjean and Antoine Sordet were vital helpers – efficient and competent in equal measure – in the running of the research symposium and the production of these proceedings. Hélène Grosjean and Antoine Sordet also prepared the indexes for the volume. Our sincerest gratitude to all.⁵²

⁵² We would also like to thank Mr. Jasper Donelan for his collaboration in the English translation of the present introduction and Ms. Véronique Wezranowska for its English proofreading.

I. Memory Studies and Nascent Christianity: Challenges, Approaches and Problems

“Frozen Moments” – Early Christianity through the Lens of *Social Memory Theory*

SANDRA HUEBENTHAL

Abstract

The concept generational gap (30–50 years) and floating gap (80–120 years), developed in social memory theory to get a better grasp not only of the distinction between collective memory and cultural memory, but also for processes of media change, textualization and canonization in collective memory, can also be used to get a fresh view on questions of the textualization of the New Testament and periods in Early Christianity. This contribution teams findings of social memory theory with observations from biblical scholars regarding these questions and explores the potential of a social memory theory-sensitive epoch model both for the understanding of Early Christianity and readings of early Christian texts as snapshots – frozen moments – of early Christian identity construction.

Informed by the cultural turn, I tend to read Biblical texts as artefacts of group memory.¹ This decision involves the question: What kind of group memory? Jan Assmann, building on the work of Maurice Halbwachs, has in his intriguing work introduced the idea of cultural memory which – simply speaking – understands texts as canonized normative and formative founding stories of a certain group.² Cultural Memory treasures the origins, the remote past a group refers to. Cultural Memory is formal, ceremonial, consists of codified or even canonized signs and is mediated through education. Identity is established through one’s relation to the received tradition. To adapt a famous phrase from Paul Watzlawick: *It is impossible not to relate to your tradition*. Cultural memory is what seems to have always been there and shapes our identities – whether we are aware of it or not and whether we like it or not. One of the most important characteristics is its temporal structure: Cultural memory deals with the remote past and how it shapes our identity, our present and our future.

¹ First drafts of this paper were presented at the New Testament Research Seminar, University of St Andrews, and at Neutestamentliches Oberseminar, Universität Mainz. The discussions were of great help for developing the concept that will hopefully be seeing a much more thorough investigation and detailed reflection in the near future. I would like to thank all students and colleagues who have shared their ideas and critical questions. N. T. Wright merits a special note of gratitude for encouraging me to use the title “frozen moments.”

² Cf. Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (5th ed.; München: Beck, 2005) and Jan Assmann, *Religion und kulturelles Gedächtnis: Zehn Studien* (2nd ed.; München: Beck, 2004).

One of Assmann's examples to illustrate the mechanisms of cultural memory was the Book of Deuteronomy.³ Thus, the whole idea became quickly known to Old Testament/Hebrew Bible scholars and saw a controversial discussion. This is especially true of the idea of the *generational gap* in Deuteronomy that was expressed through the 40 years in the desert. The idea was criticized and Assmann was often accused of having taken it a little too literally. The underlying idea thus had little chance to gain currency in the exegetical guild. This is unfortunate as it might yet prove fruitful for some issues that New Testament exegesis struggles with, but which never made it onto our agenda.

As the generational gap is not part of cultural memory, it was of minor importance to the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible scholars who discussed Assmann's ideas. Besides the suspicion that Assmann might have taken the 40 years literally, this would be another reason why the idea has not been introduced to New Testament studies. It's about time to correct this mistake. The *generational gap* is meaningful for us and our work insofar as the New Testament texts and their distance from the events they reflect does not belong to the realm of *cultural memory*, but to the realm of *collective memory*. Or, if the times of crisis are your landmark: it is not (only) the *floating gap* of roughly 80–120 years after an event that stimulates the relevant processes of text production and media change New Testament scholars are dealing with, but even more the *generational gap* after roughly 40 years (or in case you prefer less fixed time corridors: 30–50 years).

For scholarly work, it is not sufficient to acknowledge that *cultural memory* has found its way into Biblical Scholarship. The change of paradigm that social memory theory brought about is much more sophisticated and merits being received and applied to our questions accordingly.

The accusation Assmann found himself being charged with is indeed unfair as the 40 years he assumed for the *generational gap* are also a genuine biblical category. Unfortunately, the Egyptologist Assmann has concentrated his research on the book of Deuteronomy. This might be one explanation for the fact that he overlooked that 40 years play a much more prominent role in the Bible and that especially the author of Acts is a supporter of his idea that 40 years mark the end of a generation of contemporary witnesses.⁴ Assmann's oversight is comprehensible. It indicates, however, the research limitations of individual disciplines and makes a powerful case for inter- and transdisciplinary research. As the patron saint of the *generational gap* has his dealings in the New Testament, Jan Assmann, who focussed on an Old Testament text, might have simply missed this support to his theory.

³ Cf. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 196–228.

⁴ Cf. Ibid., 217: "40 Jahre bedeutet das Ende einer Generation von Zeitzeugen."

1. Generations in Acts

A brief glance at what happens in Acts is in order, before we turn to a closer look at how social memory theory can contribute to our understanding of Early Christian literature. Our "hero" in Acts, is Stephen. In 6:13–14 he is accused by false witnesses who say "This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed down to us." Read through the lens of social memory theory, Stephen is accused of violating the common cultural frame of reference and thus falling out of the interpretative community. Tora and temple are "canonical" in the sense that they are constitutive for the identity of Second Temple Judaism.

Acts 6:13–14 makes explicit that the whole argument is about the localization in cultural frames or the question which stance to take on tradition. If we are applying Maurice Halbwachs's categories, "taking a stance" is specific to *social memory*, but not to *collective memory*. Halbwachs's theory in a nutshell would run like this: In the case of *social memory*, identity formation takes place within a given social frame while *collective memory* fabricates and provides frames for future processes of identity formation.⁵

The Stephen episode thus deals with the trouble the characters experience within the process of claiming and defending their identity constructions within a given socio-cultural frame. This identity construction is challenged as being out of compliance with the majority. For all those who belong to *the way* as Luke terms the early followers (Acts 9:2; 18:25, 26; 19:9, 23; 24:14, 22), being part of Second Temple Judaism constitutes their identity and they are unwilling to reject it. Stephen's sermon is a good example of the tendency to inscribe oneself into the normative and formative tradition of Second Temple Judaism. Stephen delivers a "canonical" sermon insofar as he refers back to Moses as part of common tradition in an emic perspective. For him the Scriptures of Israel are canonical insofar as they are identity markers. Peter has already done something similar in Acts 2–4 when he interpreted Jesus with reference to Israel's history.

What makes Acts 7 intriguing from a social memory perspective is the fact that Stephen plays with the *generational gap* when he uses the reference to 40 years to make his case. Acts is not the only biblical text using this time span, but Stephen does so in an unexpected way. He divides Moses' life into three peri-

⁵ Cf. Maurice Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective* (Bibliothèque de l'Évolution de l'Humanité 28; Paris: Albin Michel, 1997 [original edition 1949/1950; German: *Das kollektive Gedächtnis*; Stuttgart, 1967]) and Id., *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (Bibliothèque de l'Évolution de l'Humanité 8; Paris: Albin Michel, 2001; original edition 1925, German: *Das Gedächtnis und seine sozialen Bedingungen*; 3rd ed.; Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006). For a more nuanced discussion of Halbwachs cf. Sandra Huebenthal, *Das Markusevangelium als kollektives Gedächtnis* (FRLANT 253; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 126–31.

ods of 40 years. As the audience (both in Acts and today) know from the book of Deuteronomy (31:2; 34:7) that Moses died at the age of 120,⁶ no one stops short when Stephen says that Moses at the age of 40 killed an Egyptian (Acts 7:23–24). No one is surprised that at the age of 80, after he had spent 40 years in Midian where he fathered two sons, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning bush (Acts 7:30). Nevertheless, both numbers appear nowhere in the Old Testament. Only the 40 years in the desert are referred to.

In his sermon, Stephen mentions three periods of forty years, each corresponding to roughly one generation. The logic of this classification works, for we can vividly imagine that Moses could only appear as an Israelite when he was grown up and that he had to hide after killing the Egyptian at least as long as the witnesses were alive – or to be on the safe side: for one generation. The same explanation is given in Numbers 14:33–34; 32:13; Joshua 5:6 and Psalm 95:10 for the forty years in the desert: “until all the nation, all the warriors who came out of Egypt, perished, not having listened to the voice of the Lord.” The forty years – or one generation – are deeply rooted in biblical tradition and Stephen uses that tradition in his sermon.

The book of Acts would make for an interesting case for a social memory reading even apart from the Stephen episode, as it allows for observations on two different levels.⁷ On the level of characters it is – as we have just seen – about *social memory* or identity formation within a given frame. On the level of the whole text Acts is, however, about *collective memory* and the fabrication of new frames for future – Christian – identity constructions. The same holds true for the other narrative texts of the New Testament. As the Gospels and Acts narrate *social memory*, they create *collective memory* and thus fabricate new frames of reference for Early Christian identity constructions.

2. Generations and Caesurae in the Exegetical Discourse

Stephen is not the only one who works with “generations.” Epochs or eras are still en vogue when it comes to understanding one’s own history, as well as the concepts of “caesura” and “change of time.” Times of crisis and scenarios of change have been well established as stimulants for text production and change

⁶ The Jewish wish “Ad Meah ve’esrim” (to one hundred and twenty) is derived from Moses’ age as stated in the Torah. The fact that Moses’ burial place is unknown turns him into an even more interesting *Erinnerungsfigur* (memory figure).

⁷ Acts does not treasure direct Jesus memories (the ascension had already been covered in Luke 24:51), but narrates the struggles of the early followers on their way to identity. According to Acts 11:26, it was in Antioch where they were first called “Christians.” This also means that calling the original community, the “Jerusalem Urmemeinde,” “Christian” or “the earliest Christians” would at least for Acts 1:1–11:25 be an anachronism.

of media in our discipline. Even though the *generational gap* has not yet found its proper place in our discourses, the 40 years appear frequently in the pertinent publications.

"Generation" and "epoch" are commonly used in research on pseudepigraphy. I've chosen a passage from Udo Schnelle's *Introduction to the New Testament* – which is widely used in Germany – as a representative position. Similar arguments can be found in most of the introductory literature.

Schnelle claims that New Testament pseudepigraphy can be narrowed down to the time between 60 and 100 C. E., with the Protoperipaulines and the Letters of Ignatius serving as respective borders. He understands the time between 60 and 100 C. E. as an epoch of change and reorientation in the history of Early Christianity. The generation of the first witnesses was already dead, organizational structures for the whole of the church ("Gesamtkirche," thus: the whole of the church, not the whole of the churches) had not yet seen the light of day; offices and functions within the communities only started to emerge and the problem of the delayed parousia became prominent. Furthermore, there were first persecutions and the painful process of the "parting of the ways." Intensive arguments with heretics among the communities also shaped that period. As there were no longer people who had authority for the whole of the church, Schnelle argues further, the authors of pseudepigraphic letters appealed to the authorities of the past in order to accomplish their objectives in a changing situation of ecclesiastical history. Pseudepigraphy as well as anonymity were literary devices to gain influence and find adequate practical solutions dealing with the problems and conflicts in the last third of the first century. New Testament pseudepigraphy, Schnelle concludes, was thus integrated in a particular situation in the history of the church and ought to be understood as a successful attempt to come to terms with the core issues of the third generation of early Christianity. The goal of New Testament pseudepigraphy was not simply to secure the continuity of the apostolic tradition after the deaths of the apostles. In fact, the guiding idea was to re-voice the authority of the apostles in the context of the new situation. By referring back to the origins of tradition, they justified the authoritative character of their re-interpretation in the face of changed situations and new problems.⁸

⁸ Udo Schnelle, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (4th ed.; Göttingen: UTB, 2002), 327–8 (translation SH). The German original reads: "Die ntl. Pseudepigraphie ist zeitlich deutlich eingrenzbar, die meisten pseudepigraphischen Schriften entstanden zwischen 60 und 100 n. Chr., wobei die Protoperipaulinen und die Ignatiusbriefe die jeweilige Grenze bilden. Der genannte Zeitraum stellt innerhalb der Geschichte des Urchristentums eine Epoche des Umbruchs und der Neuorientierung dar. Die Generation der ersten Zeugen war gestorben, eine gesamtkirchliche Organisation existierte noch nicht, innergemeindliche Ämter bildeten sich erst heraus, die Problematik der Parusieverzögerung trat voll in das Bewußtsein, es gab erste umfassende Verfolgungen und schließlich bestimmten sowohl die schmerzliche Loslösung vom Judentum als auch die intensive Auseinandersetzung mit Irrlehrern in den eigenen Reihen jene Zeit.... Weil es keine Persönlichkeiten mehr gab, die eine gesamtkirchliche Autorität besaßen, griffen die Ver-

Udo Schnelle is not an isolated voice. The tendency to distinguish different generations or epochs can be found across the board. Depending on the underlying idea of Early Christian generations, pseudepigraphy is either dated into the second or – more commonly – third generation and usually understood to be a comprehensible and necessary historical and theological phenomenon. Schnelle regards New Testament pseudepigraphy as a “theologically legitimate and ecclesialogically necessary attempt to maintain the apostolic tradition in a situation of change and at the same time provide the necessary answers to new questions and situations.”⁹

The generic model supported by many scholars identifies three different stages. The first generation of original Christians is followed by a phase with orthonymous text production in the second generation (Paul) and a phase of pseudepigraphy and anonymous text production (both letters and narrative texts) in the third generation. As regards the texts of the third generation, pseudepigraphy refers back to the second generation and the anonymous Gospels refer back to the first or original generation of Christianity. It is only in the fourth generation, after a tradition has been established which could be referred to, that the authors – the great grandchildren as it were – dare again to write in their own name. The different suggestions to describe the time of pseudepigraphy as an epoch further share the tendency to establish a clear line between the pseudepigraphic phase and the following orthonymous fourth generation (see Table 1, p. 23).

It is striking that Schnelle and Roloff – although working with different numbers – both offer a time span of 40 years and make use of the term “generation.”¹⁰ Like Pokorný/Heckel,¹¹ they date the Apostolic Fathers or “church authors” (“Kirchenschriftsteller”) later, distinguishing them clearly from the pseudepigraphic phase. Taking both observations together, we are witnessing on the one hand

fasser pseudepigraphischer Schreiben auf die Autoritäten der Vergangenheit zurück, um ihren jeweiligen Zielen in der sich wandelnden kirchengeschichtlichen Situation einen adäquaten Ausdruck zu verleihen. Pseudepigraphie war ebenso wie Anonymität ein literarisches Mittel, um in den Problemen und Konflikten des letzten Drittels des 1. Jhs. n. Chr. Einfluß zu gewinnen und sachgemäße Lösungen zu finden.... Die neutestamentliche Pseudepigraphie war somit in eine ganz bestimmte zeitgeschichtliche Situation eingebunden und muß als gelungener Versuch der Bewältigung der zentralen Probleme der dritten urchristlichen Generation gesehen werden. Das Ziel der ntl. Pseudepigraphie bestand nicht nur darin, die Kontinuität der apostolischen Tradition in der Zeit nach dem Tod der Apostel sicherzustellen. Vielmehr sollte vor allem die Autorität der Apostel in der Gegenwart neu zur Sprache gebracht werden. Indem die Verfasser sich auf die Ursprünge der Tradition beriefen, begründeten sie den Verbindlichkeitsanspruch ihrer Neuinterpretation angesichts der in der Gegenwart neu aufgebrochenen Probleme.”

⁹ Schnelle, *Einleitung*, 329 (translation SH).

¹⁰ Cf. Jürgen Roloff, *Einführung in das Neue Testament* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1995), 194: “Es handelt sich bei dieser Pseudepigraphie um ein spezifisches Phänomen der dritten christlichen Generation, das im Zusammenhang mit der Autoritätskrise der Zeit zwischen 80 und 120 zu sehen ist.”

¹¹ Petr Pokorný and Ulrich Heckel, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

Orthonymous texts	Pseudepigraphy (letters) Anonymous texts (gospels)	Apostolic Fathers (orthonymous)
Schnelle	60–100	Ignatius’ letters serve as border
Roloff	80–120	Mid-second-century
Pokorný/ Heckel	Last third of the first century (But: 2 Peter: 110–130!)	The authors of 1 Clement (96–100), Ignatius of Antioch (110–114), Polycarp (110–115) or Hermas (2nd century) write again in their own name

Table 1: Exemplary temporal frame for pseudepigraphy in current exegetical literature

the tendency to describe pseudepigraphy as a phenomenon of the last third of the first century and on the other hand the tendency to defend the turn of the century as the end of the era. Francis Watson has recently described a similar phenomenon for the production of the canonical Gospels in his book *Gospel Writing*.¹²

In both cases, we can observe a tendency or an unintentional attempt to separate what is by definition inseparable, namely the asynchronicity of social processes. In the case of pseudepigraphy, this implies that it is highly likely that in one place the production of pseudepigraphy continued while somewhere else this phase had already come to an end. Like the quest for the *Parting of the Ways* there is no fixed date, because we are not dealing with an event, but with a process. When one takes a closer look at the above-mentioned Introductions to the New Testament, this becomes obvious from their attempts to date

¹² Cf. Francis Watson, *Gospel Writing: A Canonical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 5: “A picture begins to emerge of a research paradigm in which the construction of the object of investigation – the gospel testimony to Jesus – is determined by three fundamental decisions. The first is the decision to establish a *terminus ad quem* at the end of the first century, the date assigned to ‘the fourth gospel’ which completes the canonical collection. In contrast, the second century is designated as the period of the earliest ‘apocryphal’ gospels, the most important of which – the *Gospel of Thomas* – is conventionally dated to c. 110–140 to prevent any confusion with the canonical four. On this account, the ecclesial distinction between canonical and noncanonical gospels is a straightforward extrapolation from their period of origin; the year 100 C.E. is projected back onto early Christian history so as to establish a boundary between two epochs of gospel writing. Against this, we should recognize that the canonical/noncanonical distinction is not given with the texts themselves but arises out of their reception. Gospel writing proceeds unabated before and after the moment we refer to as the ‘end of the first century,’ and it is this ongoing process that is presupposed in the retrospective differentiation of the canonical few from the noncanonical many.”

the particular texts. Pokorný/Heckel, for instance, date 2 Peter around 110–130 C. E. – which would be after the “official end” of the pseudepigraphic phase at the end of the first century *and* contemporary with the letters of Ignatius and Polycarp (or even later).

Another peculiarity of the above argument for the formation of an “era of pseudepigraphy” is the fact that the authors usually argue exclusively from an emic point of view. The notion that pseudepigraphy as a strategy and the problems of the third generation it addresses could be relevant beyond the developments in Early Christianity is not addressed and the idea that this might not be a Christian singularity but rather an anthropological constant is rarely considered. To put it differently: An etic perspective on the phenomenon as just another example for the development of a *New Religious Movement* is never discussed, nor even mentioned. Approaching the issue from a cultural science or social memory perspective, it is, however, hard to avoid that comparison. This does not entail a denial of the specific Christian aspects. In my opinion, nothing is subtracted from the emic perspective of a unique phenomenon when an etic social memory perspective extends it. On the contrary, broadening the scope can be quite helpful to obtain a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms.

Martin Ebner’s contribution, „Von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des 2. Jahrhunderts“, in *Ökumenisches Handbuch Kirchengeschichte* is another good example of the tendency to argue with generations and phases. Ebner’s attempt to link Early Christian generations/phases to the findings of cultural memory theory makes his contribution particularly interesting for our considerations.

In spite of gaps and grey zones, Ebner argues, the data allows for a categorization that leads to a *periodization* of the history of Early Christianity (“Urchristentum”). According to his model, the texts of the first phase could be characterized as *functional literature* (“Gebrauchsliteratur”) with the authentic Pauline letters serving as examples. This type of literature deals with actual problems in the communities and replaces oral communication. The second phase then is understood to be *memoria literature*. The caesura of memory literature coincides with the death of the great apostles: James in 62 C. E., Peter and Paul presumably during the great Neronian persecution in 64 C. E. From a cultural anthropological perspective, Ebner argues, the textualisation of their heritage coincides rather accurately with the time span of 40 years, when eye-witnesses cease and memory has to be transferred from *communicative* to *cultural memory*. Regarded historically, the year 70 C. E. was crucial for original Christianity: With the destruction of the Second Temple, the core identity marker of Second Temple Judaism was destroyed on the one hand while on the other hand Jesus’s doom prophecy against the temple, which led to his death, was fulfilled in a most humiliating way for the Jewish people. For all those who referred to the Jew Jesus, Ebner continues, this means that they have to address the question which stance they take on their Jewish roots and how they process this catastrophe theologically.

While the first caesura comes forward quite clearly, Ebner concludes, the second caesura which indicates the end of original Christianity is much more difficult to grasp. As regards content, it is best attached to the fact that Christian authors – once more clearly distinguishable – deliberately come forward, advertise or defend their religious beliefs, but in any case seek dialogue with their Pagan contemporaries. One example of this new phase are the writings of the Christian apologetics, which start with Justin, around 150 C.E.¹³ In his latest book *Die ersten 100 Jahre des Christentums*, Udo Schnelle underlines this divide with the observation that the Christian apologies are a particular *Gattung* of the new epoch.¹⁴

Adding Ebner's observations to the approaches already mentioned, we gain a picture of the earliest Christian time that looks roughly like this (see Table 2, p. 26).

What I find most intriguing about the model are the two caesuras. Ebner locates the first caesura after 40 years – together with Stephen and Jan Assmann you could say: after one generation. The second caesura is rather blurred, but nevertheless clearly after around 150, which would mathematically be roughly 120 years after the founding event.¹⁵ Ebner regards the first caesura as congruent with the transition from *communicative* to *cultural memory*.

¹³ Martin Ebner, "Von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des 2. Jahrhunderts," in *Von den Anfängen bis zum Mittelalter* (vol. 1 of *Ökumenische Kirchengeschichte*; ed. T. Kaufmann et. al.; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006), 16 (translation SH). The original German reads: "Trotz dieser Leerstellen und Grauzonen ist folgende Kategorisierung möglich, die zugleich zu einer Periodisierung der Geschichte des Urchristentums führt: Die Schriften der ersten Phase lassen sich als Gebrauchsliteratur charakterisieren, exemplarisch repräsentiert durch die (authentischen) Paulusbriefe. Sie behandeln konkrete Gemeindeprobleme und ersetzen die mündliche Kommunikation. Die Schriften der zweiten Phase lassen sich als Memoria-Literatur begreifen.... Die Zäsur der Memoria-Literatur fällt ungefähr mit dem Tod der großen Apostel zusammen (Jakobus: 62 n. Chr.; Paulus und Petrus vermutlich während der großen neronischen Verfolgung: 64 n. Chr.). Kulturanthropologisch gesehen trifft die Verschriftlichung des Erbes ziemlich genau mit dem Zeitraum von 40 Jahren zusammen, in dem die Zeitzeugen aussterben und die Erinnerung deshalb vom kommunikativen ins kulturelle Gedächtnis überführt werden muss. Historisch gesehen war das Jahr 70 n. Chr. für das Urchristentum entscheidend: Mit der Zerstörung des Tempels von Jerusalem fiel einerseits das Identitätssymbol des Judentums in Schutt und Asche, andererseits wurde die Unheilsprophetie Jesu gegen den Tempel, die ihm den Tod eingebracht hat, in für das jüdische Volk erniedrigender Form eingelöst. Für alle, die sich auf den Juden Jesus beriefen, stellte sich damit die Frage nach ihrer Einstellung zu ihren jüdischen Wurzeln und der theologischen Verarbeitung dieser Katastrophe. Während diese erste Zäsur deutlich hervortritt, ist die zweite Zäsur die dann das Ende der urchristlichen Zeit anzeigt, schwierig zu fassen. Inhaltlich lässt sie sich am besten daran festmachen, dass christliche Schriftsteller – jetzt wieder eindeutig identifizierbar – bewusst nach außen treten, für ihre religiöse Einstellung um Verständnis werben bzw. sie verteidigen, auf jeden Fall aber den Dialog mit der Paganen Bevölkerung suchen, wie es in den Schriften der Apologeten, beginnend mit Justin, ab etwa 150 n. Chr. der Fall ist."

¹⁴ Udo Schnelle, *Die ersten 100 Jahre des Christentums: 30–130 n. Chr.* (Stuttgart: UTB, 2015), 27–8. In this book, Schnelle also works with four early Christian generations.

¹⁵ With those numbers, the accustomed dating of *1 Clem* (96–100), Ignatius (110–114)

<i>Time</i>	<i>Texts/Genre</i>	<i>Pragmatics</i>
<i>Foundational Event: Life, Ministry, Death and Resurrection of Jesus</i>		
30–70	Authentic Letters (Paul)	<i>Functional Literature:</i> Deals with concrete issues (of a particular group/community), replaces oral communication
<i>Destruction of the Temple, Death of Eyewitnesses</i>		
70–150	Gospels, Deuteropauline Letters, Pastoral and Catholic Letters (Pseudepigraphy)	<i>Memory Literature:</i> Remembers Jesus and his heritage, extrapolates traditions
<i>Blurred Caesura</i>		
150–300	Authentic Letters (Apostolic Fathers):	<i>Functional Literature:</i> Deals with concrete issues (of a particular group/community), replaces oral communication
	Community orders/Church Orders (Didache)	Identity is constructed and safeguard- ed <i>ad intra</i> , drawing from (alleged) authorities. Later texts again refer back to the times of founding or its authorities (the later, the more florid)
	Apologies Acts of Martyrs (starting with Polycarp)	Dialogue <i>ad extra</i> Fostering identity <i>ad intra</i>

Table 2: Epoch model of Earliest Christianity I

3. Generations and Gaps in Social Memory Theory

At this point, it is helpful to pause for a moment and take another look at the categories and models of cultural and social memory theory which have been developed and inspired by building on the indispensable pioneering work of Maurice Halbwachs and Aleida and Jan Assmann.

The trinity consisting of *social*, *collective* and *cultural memory* suggested by Aleida Assmann that also parts with the concept *kommunikatives Gedächtnis* seems to be the best basis for the development of a matrix introducing different

and Polycarp, *Phil* (110–140), of course, causes problems. This might be one reason why the caesura is characterized as “blurred” or as Ebner puts it “schwierig zu fassen” (Ebner, “Von den Anfängen,” 16). Cf. also Schnelle, *Die ersten 100 Jahre*, 27: “Das Jahr 70 leitet die letzte Epoche des frühen Christentums ein, deren Ende schwer zu bestimmen ist. Allerdings kann für die Zeit um 130 n. Chr. eine deutliche Verschiebung auf mehreren Ebenen festgestellt werden.”