The Birth and Death of the PreMarkan Passion Narrative: A History of Form Criticism's Most Assured Result

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For the award Doctor of Philosophy

Centre for the Study of Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity
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30 January 2023

Abstract

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This thesis is the first intellectual history of the preMarkan passion narrative, the most "assured result" of form criticism, and traces the development of the hypothesis from its origins in the history of religions school to recent scholarship on the genre of Mark. The five chapters of the thesis demonstrate that the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis is dependent of a form-critical conception of Jesus tradition and all attempts to reconstruct the source rely on this conception of Jesus tradition. The first chapter looks at source criticism and Markan priority and the absence of a premarkan passion narrative before turning to the understanding of Jesus tradition in the history of religions school and the ways that their works influenced the form critics. The second chapter details a form-critical conception of Jesus tradition from the works of Rudolf Bultmann, Martin Dibelius, and Karl Ludwig Schmidt, emphasizing its focus on the individual units of Jesus tradition in the preliterary stage of Jesus tradition. In this framework, the preMarkan passion narrative attained a preeminent status as the only piece of Jesus tradition that from its origin was a connected narrative. Thus, the preMarkan passion narrative is seen as a form-critical construction. The third chapter traces arrival of form criticism and the preMarkan passion narrative into British Gospel scholarship in the works of Vincent Taylor, C. H. Dodd, R. H. Lightfoot, and Dennis Nineham. The fourth chapter describes a "Golden Age" of the quest for the preMarkan passion narrative as the post-Bultmannians identified the death of Jesus as authentic tradition and the redaction critics developed the discipline of Markan redaction criticism in an effort to discern early tradition from Markan redaction. This chapter details the chaos that ensued, with scholars coming to no consensus on the scope, contents, or origin of a preMarkan passion narrative. The fifth chapter traces challenges to the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis from within form criticism and challenges to the form-critical paradigm from orality studies, and redaction-critical studies. These studies overturn all of form criticism's assumptions about the nature of Jesus tradition. The sixth chapter traces attempts to breathe new life into the preMarkan passion narrative through genre studies and the relationship between Mark and the Gospels of John and Peter. Critiques of form criticism and the preMarkan passion narrative also came through genre studies and the relation between the Markan and Johannine passion narrative. These combination of these critiques of form criticism and the preMarkan passion narrative is the demise of the form-critical paradigm.

Declaration of Originality

1. The work in this thesis is my own. It has not been previously submitted for an award at this, or any other, university or institution.

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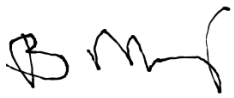

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Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of many people throughout the last five years. I'd like to thank my advisors, Chris Keith and James Crossley, for their support, encouragement, feedback, and the occasional kick in the ass when necessary. I am fortunate to have two supervisors who are not only distinguished in the field but are also excellent human beings who have gone above and beyond. Their influence is apparent throughout my work.

I'd also like to thank Marion Soards for serving as an external advisor to my project. His work on the history of the preMarkan passion narrative laid a foundation laid a foundation for my project. I am grateful that he took the time to read early chapters, provide critical feedback, and point out additional avenues for investigation.

I am grateful to Ruben and Mirjam Zimmermann for hosting me for a month while I attended the German and Theology Summer School at Johannes Gutenberg Universität, Mainz in the summer of 2017. Funding for the summer school was graciously provided by Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD).

Portions of several chapters were presented at conferences at The SBL Midwest Meeting (February 2019 and February 2020), the Bible, Critical Theory, and Reception Seminar (August

2019), and the SBL Annual Meeting (November 2019). The feedback and conversations helped me to clarify and improve my work.

Nathan Shedd and Scott Robertson read early portions of the thesis and provided helpful feedback. They both provided encouragement when I felt like I would never complete the project.

My daughters Adeline and Harriet have brought so much joy to my life. Ever since they learned to open doors (and pick locks!) they have interrupted my writing and research with much needed hugs, kisses, drawings, and snacks.

Finally, it is impossible for me to express my love and gratitude to my wife Sabrina for her love, support, and the immense amount of patience she has shown me over the years. During the five years of this project we have moved three times, raised two children together, made it through a very difficult pregnancy, endured many sleepless nights, dealt with recurrences of my health issues that required several surgeries, quarantined together during a pandemic, and survived a major car accident. Throughout it all she has remained supportive of my education and research. Without her this thesis is never completed.

Brandon Massey
Bartlett, IL
January 2023

Introduction

"More often than not the patterns we spy in history are, like Providence, less than evident. They are then phantasms conjured by our seemingly innate desire to bring order out of chaos, in our case the chaos that is the discipline of New Testament Studies."[1]

Within the last two hundred years, NT scholars have sought to go behind the Gospels and identify the earliest traditions about the death of Jesus. In the mid-twentieth century, the quest for the preMarkan passion narrative was considered one of the hallmarks of critical NT scholarship. In his survey of research into the preMarkan passion narrative, Marion Soards observed, "Few topics, if any, have produced a more fundamental difference of opinion among biblical scholars."[2] This thesis will examine the quest to discover and reconstruct the text of earliest passion narrative within Gospel scholarship (what I refer to as the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis), the factors led to its emergence in early twentieth-century biblical scholarship, how the reconstructed source was utilized in search for historical traditions, the methodological and theological assumptions behind the hypothesis, and ask why attempts to reconstruct the preMarkan passion narrative,

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[1] Dale C. Allison, *Resurrecting Jesus: The Earliest Christian Tradition and Its Interpreters* (New York: T & T Clark, 2005), 15.

[2] Marion L. Soards, "The Question of a Pre-Markan Passion Narrative," *BiBh* 11 (1980): 144–69, here 144. The article was updated and reprinted in M. L. Soards, "The Question of a PreMarcan Passion Narrative," in Raymond Brown, *The Death of the Messiah* (New York: DoubleDay, 1994), 2: 1492–1524, here 1492. Subsequent references are to the appendix in *Death of the Messiah*.

once a hallmark of critical scholarship, is no longer at the center of NT scholarship.[3] The following chapters will demonstrate that the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis arose from a form-critical conception of Jesus tradition and flourished in disciplinary developments that were built upon a form-critical foundation, such as the post-Bultmannian quest for the historical Jesus and the redactional-critical method. The notion of a preMarkan passion narrative is a wholly form-critical concept and the demise of the form-critical conception of Jesus tradition in NT scholarship calls for a re-examination of the quest for the preMarkan passion narrative and ask whether the hypothesis survives the demise of the form-critical method. It is my aim to give the terminology and conceptual framework of the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis a proper burial.

The form-critical method of Gospel studies that dominated scholarship for nearly one hundred years arose in Germany and was initiated by three scholars: Karl Ludwig Schmidt, Martin Dibelius, and Rudolf Bultmann.[4] The term form criticism (*Formgeschichte*) was coined by Dibelius to describe, not a history of forms (*Formengeschichte*), but "a history *based on* form, a form-derived history."[5] Bultmann

[3] Although there are several German phrases used in the scholarly literature to refer to the narrative source that recounts the final days of Jesus (*vormarkinschen Passionsgeschichte*, *Passionsbericht*, *Leidensgeschichte*, and *Passionserzählung*), English-speaking scholarship has adopted the phrase "preMarkan passion narrative." Throughout, I will use "preMarkan passion narrative" but note when the German terminology is significant. Where available, I quote from English translations of German scholarship. If English translations are not available, I have translated myself and noted as such.

[4] Two other scholars deserve mention in the first generation of form-critical scholarship on the Gospels, Martin Albertz and Georg Bertram. Their works, however, did not have the influence of Bultmann, Schmidt, and Dibelius. Bertram's work on the passion narrative will be discussed in chapter 5.

[5] Martin J. Buss, *Biblical Form Criticism in Its Context*, JSOTSup 274 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 287, italics original. Martin Albertz's early form-critical work retained the term *Formengeschichte*. Martin Albertz, *Die synoptischen Streitgespräche: Ein Beitrag zur Formengeschichte des Urchristentums* (Berlin: Trowitzsch, 1921); idem., "Zur Formengeschichte der Auferstehungsberichte," *ZNW* 21.1 (1922): 259–69.

described the process of the application of the form-critical method to the Synoptic Gospels:

> This involved discovering what the original units of the synoptics were, both sayings and stories, to try to establish what their historical setting was, whether they belonged to a primary or secondary tradition or whether were the product of editorial activity.[6]

The form critics sought to establish the laws of oral tradition that governed the Jesus tradition before the composition of the Synoptic Gospels. Although there were significant differences in the approaches and results of these three scholars, several assumptions and conclusions were crucial for their form-critical approaches. The origins of form criticism will be examined in detail in the second chapter, but, in short, four key assumptions shaped form-critical scholarship: 1) the Gospels were neither literary compositions nor biography, but folk literature; 2) prior to the composition of the Gospels, the Jesus tradition circulated in individual units disconnected from any framework for the life of Jesus; 3) these traditions arose from the life settings of the earliest Christian communities; and 4) the evangelists were not authors but collectors and compilers of individual Jesus traditions. There was, however, an exception to the assumption that the pre-literary Jesus circulation circulated as individual units apart from any narrative framework—the preMarkan passion narrative.

When form-critical scholars turned their gaze to Mark 14–16, they detected a coherent narrative seemingly different from the previous thirteen chapters. The narrative unity of Mark 14–16 led these scholars to posit an origin and development unique from the rest of the Jesus tradition. The passion narrative did not progress from unconnected

[6] Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 2–3.

individual units into a loosely connected and artificial framework as did the remainder of the Jesus tradition. Instead, the passion narrative originated as a narrative unit and theories of its development began with the assumption of a coherent narrative that developed into the Markan passion narrative. Ralph Martin referred to the conclusion that the passion narrative was written and preserved as a coherent narrative before the composition of the Gospels as "the most assured result of form criticism."[7] As subsequent chapters demonstrate, this "assured result" was continually repeated by scholars over the last century of Markan scholarship with few scholars dissenting from the accepted position.

Stephen Moore and Yvonne Sherwood described the ways that biblical scholarship created questions that do not have certain solutions:

> Formative biblical criticism reinvented the Bible as a potentially limitless compendium of conundrums and obscurities awaiting solution—the kind of solution that only the professional biblical critic was qualified to propose. Fortunately for the biblical scholar (who, after all, needs job security as much as any professional), most of these problems, and most especially the larger ones, are precisely the sort that do not admit of final solution.[8]

The history of NT scholarship in the twentieth century reveals the reconstruction of a preMarkan passion narrative to be one such problem. Since the rise of form criticism in the late 1910's there have been over fifty attempts to reconstruct the contents and

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[7] Ralph Martin, *Mark: Evangelist and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), 140.

[8] Stephen D. Moore and Yvonne Sherwood, *The Invention of the Biblical Scholar: A Critical Manifesto* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2011), 80. Moore and Sherwood ask, "Is there any article title more reassuringly familiar to the consumer of biblical-scholarly journals than the one that begins 'Once Again: The problem of…?'" The quest for the preMarkan passion narrative contains several "familiar" tiles. E.g. Martin Dibelius, "Das historische Problem der Leidensgeschichte," *ZNW* 30 (1931): 193–201; Gerhard Schneider, "Das Problem einer vorkanischen Passionserzählung," *BZ* 16 (1972): 222–44; Josef Ernst, "Die Passionserzählung des Markus und die Aporien der Forschung," *TGl* 70.2 (1980): 160–80; Soards, "The Question of a PreMarcan Passion Narrative."

development of the preMarkan passion narrative, with little agreement on which verses or words were part of this early narrative source and which were creations of the evangelist.[9] The following sections will provide an overview of the method of intellectual history I will use to understand the rise, dominance, and decline of the form-critical method and the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis in the twentieth-century.

1. Method and Overview of the Thesis

This thesis seeks to answer several interrelated questions—What factors led to the rise of the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis? Why was it among the most crucial tasks for critical biblical scholars in the mid-twentieth century? What social and economic factors influenced the form-critical conception of Jesus tradition? Is the form-critical preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis still viable after the death of form criticism? In order to answer these questions, the history of the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis will be traced, from its origins in the history of religions school in the late 1800s and early 1900s to the critiques of the hypothesis in scholarship in the late 2010s and early 2020s.

The writings of George Steinmetz on sociology in the United States provides a helpful model for tracing the history of a discipline.[10] Steinmetz's approach helpfully

[9] Soards, "The Question of a PreMarcan Passion Narrative,"1493–1517, included 35 scholars in his survey. He did not include scholars whose work did not fit easily into the table he created (1493, n. 3). Although the quest for the preMarkan passion narrative has slowed, recent attempts include Robert Stein, Adele Yarbro Collins, and Joel Marcus. Although reconstructions are rare in current scholarship, the existence of a preMarkan passion narrative remains an assumption in scholarly discourse.

[10] George Steinmetz, "Scientific Authority and the Transition to Post-Fordism: The Plausibility of Positivism in U.S. Sociology since 1945," in *The Politics of Method the Human Sciences: Positivism and its Epistemological Other*, ed. George Steinmetz (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 275–322; George Steinmetz and Ou-Byung Chae, "Sociology in an Era of Fragmentation: From the Sociology of Knowledge to the Philosophy of Science, and Back Again," *The Sociological Quarterly* 43.1 (2002): 111–37.

distinguished between internal and external influences on a field of study. Internal influences include a disciplines' subfields, university systems, and the relation between the researcher and his or her object of study.[11] For historical Jesus research this included things such as form criticism or redaction criticism, the differences between German, British, and American university systems, and the relationship between an individual scholar and the Gospel texts in this era dominated by existentialist questions. External influences are all other sociocultural factors that impact the discipline, such as industrial capitalism, neoliberalism, or other macrosocial factors.[12] Steinmetz labelled this approach "social-epochal" as it seeks to "shed light on the sources of the more widespread and implicit ideas shared by all of the actors in a settled scientific field."[13] Throughout this thesis I will focus on the internal influences within a field of knowledge to trace the ways in which the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis arose and help a prominent place through changes in approach and method of Gospel scholarship. My central claim is that the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis developed from a form-critical conception of Jesus tradition. Methodological innovations in Gospel and historical Jesus research that relied and built upon this conception of Jesus tradition retained the hypothesis. In the latter decades of the twentieth century new approaches to the pre-literary Jesus tradition exposed many of the shortcomings of form criticism. In light of these developments, it is time to question whether the preMarkan passion narrative, form criticism's most assured

[11] Steinmetz, "Scientific Authority," 288.

[12] Steinmetz, "Scientific Authority," 288.

[13] Steinmetz, "Scientific Authority," 291.

result, can stand as a hypothesis within approaches outside of a form-critical conception of Jesus tradition.

The structure of the first three chapters differs from the final two chapters. In these early chapters I trace the development of the conception of the form-critical conception of Jesus tradition in both Germany and Britain by focusing on individual scholars and schools. These scholars—Johannes Weiss, Julius Wellhausen, Hermann Gunkel, Wilhelm Bousset, Karl Ludwig Schmidt, Martin Dibelius, Vincent Taylor, R. H. Lightfoot, C. H. Dodd, and Dennis Nineham—all played a significant role in the establishment of the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis as an "assured result" of scholarship and their conception of Jesus tradition and their reconstructions of the preMarkan passion narrative will be examined in depth.

An explosion of preMarkan passion narratives began in the early 1950s and lasted into the 1980s and the sheer number of reconstructions prohibits the same treatment as the earlier scholars. Instead, these chapters trace developments in the field of historical criticism and historical Jesus scholarship and the ways in which the preMarkan passion narrative remained an "assured result" of critical scholarship as approaches to its reconstruction and development changed over time. Through all chapters, I trace the building blocks of the preMarkan passion narrative—the transmission of oral Jesus tradition as individual units, the supposed uniqueness of Mark 14–16, the independence of John and the Synoptics—and conclude that the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis is not only no longer the "assured result" it was once considered, but is a concept that NT scholars must abandon and develop new ways of conceiving the pre-literary tradition about Jesus' death and the writing of the Gospel of Mark.

1. The Prehistory of the PreMarkan Passion Narrative: From *Urmarkus* to Jesus Tradition in the History of Religions School

Sitz im Leben—small units—oral tradition—genre criticism—history of religion; these are the heirlooms that have been productively used in form criticism.[1]

The 1776 publication of Johann Jakob Griesbach's gospel synopsis marked a major turning point in the study of the relationship and sources for the composition of the Gospels.[2] While there had been earlier synopses, Griesbach's breakthrough was the presentation of Gospel passages in parallel in canonical sequences instead of attempting to harmonize a life of Jesus from the Gospels. This new tool allowed for a literary investigation on the relationship between the synoptic Gospels, the direction of borrowing between them, and the possibility of identifying shared sources.[3] Griesbach used his synopsis to demonstrate his own solution to the Synoptic problem and later synopses likewise were created as supplements to important works on the Synoptic

[1] Hans-Josef Klauck, "Hundert Jahre Formgeschichte: Ein Tribut an die Begründer," *BZ* 64 (2020): 49–84, here 57, my translation.

[2] J. J. Griesbach, *Synopsis Evengeliorvu Matthaei, Marci et Lucae textum Graecum: ad fidem codicum versionum et partum emendavit et lectionis varietatem adiecit* (Halle: Curtius, 1776). For a history of the Gospel synopsis from Griesback to the 1970s, Heinrich Greeven, "The Gospel Synopsis from 1776 to the Present Day," trans. Robert Althann, in *J. J. Griesbach: Synoptic and Text Critical Studies, 1776–1976*, eds. Bernard Orchard and Thomas R. W. Longstaff, SNTSMS 34 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 22–49.

[3] Interestingly, in the 2nd edition of his synopsis, Griesbach included the text of John's passion narrative (John 12:1–8; 18:1–21)

problem.[4] By the mid-nineteenth century, biblical scholars debated all aspects of the Synoptic problem, including the priority of Mark, the existence of s sayings source, Mark's use of Matthew and Luke, the minor agreements of Matthew and Luke, and what sources may lie behind the Synoptic Gospels.

This chapter will examine these source-critical works and observe that as they laid the foundation for Markan priority and searched for sources behind the Gospel, there were no suggestions of a preMarkan passion narrative. The impetus for a preMarkan passion narrative must come from elsewhere and the second section of this chapter argues that the hypothesis arises from a particular conception of Jesus tradition. The premarkan passion narrative is not a source-critical hypothesis, but a form-critical hypothesis. The second half of this chapter traces the conception of Jesus tradition in the history of religions school, whose works were instrumental in the development of the form-critical method. The hint of a preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis may be seen in some history of religions works, but the hypothesis did not come to full bloom until the form critics synthesized the work of the history of religions school in their new approach to the Gospels.

[4] A. Huck, *Synopse der drei ersten Evangelien* (Freiburg: Mohr Siebeck, 1892), was designed to illustrate Holtzmann's theory. On the question of objectivity or neutrality and the construction of a Gospel synopsis, Bernard Orchard, "Are All Gospel Synopses Biased?," *TZ* 34 (1978): 157–61; idem., "The 'Neutrality' of Vertical-Column Synopses," *ETL* 62 (1986): 155–56; James Keith Elliot, "Printed Editions of Greek Synopses and their Influence on the Synoptic Problem," in *The Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck*, eds. F. Van Segbroeck, Christopher M. Tuckett, Gilbert Van Belle, and Joseph Verheyden, BETL 100 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 337–57; David L. Dungan, "Theory of Synopsis Construction," *Bib* 61 (1980): 141–54; John S. Kloppenborg, "Synopses and the Synoptic Problem," in *New Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, BETL 239, eds. Paul Foster, Andrew F. Gregory, John S. Kloppenborg, and Joseph Verheyden (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 51–85.

1. Source Criticism, Markan Priority, and the PreMarkan Passion Narrative

In the early nineteenth century the two contending solutions to the Synoptic problem were the Griesbach hypothesis that Mark used both Luke and Matthew and Johann Gottfried Herder's (1744–1803) theory of oral tradition that was later written in an *Urgospel* that was the source of the Synoptic Gospels.[5] The Griesbach hypothesis was adopted by F. C. Baur (1792–1860), David Friedrich Strauss (1808–1874), and the Tübingen School as they applied their radical criticism to the Gospels that questioned the historical reliability of the Gospel traditions. William Farmer (1921–2000), Bo Reicke (1914–1987), and Hans-Herbert Stoldt (1901–unknown) all argued that Markan priority was adopted for political or theological reasons in response to its use by the Tübingen school.[6] Subsequent scholarship on the period has shown these ideas to be overstated and the rise of the two-document hypothesis and Markan priority arose from an investigation of the texts of the Gospels.[7] This investigation of the text and literary relationship of the Synoptic Gospels resulted in an abundance of possible sources for the Gospels. However, among all of the *Urgospels*, oral Gospels, logia sources, Petrine tradition, and other sources there was no preMarkan passion source.

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[5] Johann Gottfried Herder, *Vom Erlöser der Menschen: Nach underen drei ersten Evangelien* (Riga: Hartknoch, 1796).

[6] William R. Farmer, *The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Analysis* (Dillsboro: Western North Carolina Press, 1976), 28–29, 37, 57, 73; Bo Reicke, "From Strauss to Holtzmann and Meijboom," *NovT* 29.1 (1987): 1–21; Hans-Herbert Stoldt, *History and Critique of the Marcan Hypothesis*, trans. and ed. Donald L. Niewyk (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1980), 1–23.

[7] Christopher M. Tuckett, "The Griesbach Hypothesis in the 19th Century," *JSNT* 2.3 (1979): 29–60; Henning Graf Reventlow, "Conditions and Presuppositions of Biblical Criticism in Germany in the Period of the Second Empire and Before: The Case of Heinrich Julius Holtzmann," in *Biblical Studies and the Shifting of Paradigms, 1850–1914,* JSOTSS 192*,* eds. Henning Graf Reventlow and William Farmer (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1995), 272–90.

1.1 Christian Gottlob Wilke (1786–1854)

Wilke's 1838 work *Der Urevangelist* was influential in swaying the consensus of Gospel scholars toward Markan priority.[8] The solution to the Synoptic problem Wilke presented relied on a thorough analysis of the texts of the Gospels, which he printed and displayed the material common to all three Synoptic Gospels, material common to Matthew and Luke, and material unique to each Gospel. Wilke argued, against the oral *Urgospel* of J. C. L. Giesler and the Aramaic *Urgospel* of J. G. Eichhorn, that Mark was the *Urevangelist* and the source used by both Matthew and Luke.[9] The passion narrative was, of course, included within this version of the Gospel and no preMarkan passion narrative was hypothesized.

1.2 Christian Hermann Weisse (1801–1866)

If Wilke may be credited for helping to establish Markan priority, Weisse may be credited with helping to establish the two-document hypothesis. John Kloppenborg observed that if Weisse's solution had been adopted "the discussion of the Synoptic Problem and Q might have more rapidly reached the consensus that was achieved only a

[8] Christian Gottlob Wilke, *Der Urevangelist, oder exegetisch kritische Untersuching über das Verwandtschaftsverhältniss der drei eresten Evangelien* (Dresden and Leipzig: G. Fleischer, 1838).

[9] Wilke, *Urevangelist*, 680–85. J. C. L. Giesler, *Historisch-kritischer Versuch über die Entstehung und die frühesten Schicksale der schriften Evangelien* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1818), was influenced by Johann Herder's work. J. G. Eichhorn, *Einleigung in das Neue Testament*, 2nd rev. ed., 5 vols (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1820–27), proposed a complex solution to the Synoptic problem, involving an Aramaic *Urgospel* with four revisions of this document before it reached the evangelists. Eichhorn's work was based on Lessing's writings.

century later with the publication of B. H. Streeter's *The Four Gospels* (1924)."[10] Weisse accepted the Papias tradition that Mark preserved the reminiscences of Peter and the Semitisms present in the second Gospel were evidence of its early composition.[11] The Gospel of Mark and the *logia* document were the two sources for Matthew and Luke. In a later work, Weisse amended his solution to the Synoptic problem and added *Urmarkus* into his proposal.[12] Like, Wilke, Weisse did not propose a preMarkan passion source in addition to *Urmarkus*.

1.3 Heinrich-Julius Holtzmann (1832–1910)

Albert Schweitzer observed that Holtzmann's *Die synoptischen Evangelien* was so thorough a demonstration of Markan priority that the was no longer a hypothesis, but an assured result of critical biblical scholarship.[13] Holtzmann departed from previous attempts to solve the Synoptic problem by beginning with the internal evidence of the Gospels rather than the patristic testimony about their origins and relationship.[14] Holtzmann posited an early source, *Urmarcus* or Source A, which was an expanded

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[10] John S. Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 298.

[11] Christian Hermann Weisse, *Der evangelische Geschichte kritisch und philosophisch bearbeiter*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1838).

[12] Christian Hermann Weisse, *Die Evengelienfrage in ihrem gegenwärtigen Stadium* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1856), 155–60. This expanded *Urmarkus* included Matt. 3:7–12/Luke 3:7–9, 17; Matt. 4:3–10/Luke 4:3–12; Matt. 5–7/ Luke 6:20–49; Matt. 8:5–10/ Luke 7:2–20; Matt. 11:2–19/Luke 7:18–35.

[13] Heinrich-Julius Holtzmann, *Die synoptischen Evangelien: Ihr ursprung und geschichtlicher Charakter* (Leipzig: Verlag von Wilhelm Engelmann, 1863); Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede*, trans. William Montgomery (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1968), 202.

[14] Holtzmann, *Die synoptischen Evangelien*, 248–53.

version of the Gospel of Mark that was used by all three Synoptic Gospels.[15] In addition to Source A, Holtzmann found sayings source, which he labelled Source Λ, which Matthew and Luke used independently.[16] In his later writings, Holtzmann dropped *Urmarkus* from his solution to the Synoptic problem.[17] As Wilke and Weisse before him, Holtzmann did not propose a preMarkan passion source but incorporated the passion narrative into *Urmarkus*.[18]

1.4 Markan Source Criticism

None of the major monographs written in the mid- nineteenth century on the Synoptic problem, Markan priority, or the sources of the Gospels posited a preMarkan passion narrative as a part of their solution to the Synoptic problem. Most commentators were concerned with identifying traces of Jesus tradition within the passion narrative that originated with Peter or other eyewitnesses, such as Alexander and Rufus, John Mark, or Simon of Cyrene. In English-language scholarship, the supposed vividness of the Markan narrative, the presence of minute details, and the use of Semitisms were widely agreed to be characteristics of eyewitness tradition.[19] For these scholars, it was a "sober conclusion

[15] Holtzmann's *Urmarkus* included extended sayings of John the Baptist compared to canonical Mark, a long version of the temptation story, the Lukan Sermon on the Plain, the story of the centurion's servant, and a longer version of the Beelzebul story, the story of the woman caught in adultery from John, and Matthew's commissioning of the disciples.

[16] Holtzmann, *Die synoptischen Evangelien*, 168.

[17] Heinrich-Julius Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 2nd rev. ed. (Freiburg im Breisgau: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1886), 363–65.

[18] Holtzmann, *Die synoptischen Evangelien,* 95–99

[19] B. F. Westcott, *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1862), 364–65; Ezra P. Gould, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1896), xii; H. B. Swete, *The Gospel according to St. Mark: The Greek Text with Introduction Notes and Indices*, 1st ed. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1898), lxii–lxiv; Alfred Plummer, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*,

of modern scholarship that in Mark's Gospel we are dealing primarily with Peter's interpretation of Christ after his reception of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost."[20]

There was a single English scholar who observed the differences between the passion narrative and the earlier chapters of the Gospel. H. B. Swete (1835–1917) wrote:

> The narrative of the Passion is on a scale which is out of all proportion to that on which the Ministry is drawn. The subsections become noticeably longer; instruction holds a more prominent position; the terseness of the earlier sayings is exchanged for specimens of more prolonged teaching (e.g. xi 23–25, xii–24–27, 29–31, 38–40); a whole chapter (xii) is occupied by a single discourse; the style is more varied, and the monotonous καὶ gives place more frequently to δὲ or some other equavilant. These are among the signs which point to a partial use in these chapters of a source distinct in character from that which supplied the materials of the first nine or ten chapters.[21]

Swete's observations were made four years before Johannes Weiss's comments on the earlier source of the passion narrative and are likely the earliest observation for a unique passion source. The paramaters of Swete's observations were also larger than most scholars who posited a preMarkan passion narrative and extended the passion back to Mark 11. In the pages of the commentary, Swete made no attempt to reconstruct a documentary source, but instead attempted to identify a Petrine source that began at Mark 14:1: "It is probable that at this point St Mark has availed himself of an earlier document, into which he has worked his recollections of St. Peter's teachings and such other

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CGTSC (New York: Macmillan, 1915), xix; Warren J. Moulton, "The Relation of the Gospel of Mark to Primitive Christian Tradition," *HTR* 3.4 (1910): 406–36, here 421; Allan Menzies, *The Earliest Gospel: A Historical Study of The Gospel according to Mark, with a Text and English Version* (London: Macmillan, 1901), 46–47; O. S. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae: Contributions to the Study of the Synoptic Problem*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1909), 126.

[20] A. T. Robertson, *Studies in Mark's Gospel* (New York: Macmillan, 1919), 46.

[21] Swete, *Mark*, lxi–lxii.

materials as his own residence at Jerusalem has placed within his reach."[22] For Swete, the identification of possible sources allowed him to make judgments on the age, reliability, and historicity of Jesus traditions.

The acceptance of Markan priority led to numerous German publications on the sources of the Gospels, but the possibility of a preMarkan passion narrative did not arise in any of these works. Carl Weizäcker (1822–1899) argued that Matthew, Mark, and Luke are all dependent on an early document *Urmarcus*, which was most closely followed by Mark.[23] Regarding the passion narrative, Weizäcker observed that the Synoptic Gospels were most similar in these passages, but that Mark followed *Urmarkus* more closely that either Matthew or Luke.[24] Bernhard Weiss (1827–1918) argued for the priority of Mark and the use of Q by Mathew and Luke.[25] Weiss argued for the authorship of John Mark (Mark 14:51–52) who authored the passion narrative based on his own recollections aided by other eyewitnesses of the crucifixion.[26]

This summary of source criticism and the establishment of Markan priority in the mid to late nineteenth century reveals that there was no consensus of the existence of a preMarkan passion narrative as there would be a century later. Although Swete made an observation similar to later form-critical scholarship, he did not attempt a reconstruction

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[22] Swete, *Mark*, lxv.

[23] Carl Weizäcker, *Untersuchung über die evangelische Geschichte: ihre Quellen und den Gang ihrer Entwicklung*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1892).

[24] Weizäcker, *Untersuchungen*, 60–65.

[25] Bernhard Weiss, *Lehrbuch der Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Verlag von Wilhelm Hertz, 1886); ET: *A Manual Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. A. J. K. Davidson, 2 vols. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1889).

[26] Weiss, *Introduction*, 2:261.

of the passion source but tried to identify the passion tradition with Peter's reminiscences. The question arises where the concept of a preMarkan passion narrative arose if it did not come from these important source-critical studies on the Gospels. The next section traces the concept of Jesus tradition through the works of the history of religions school and argues that it was this concept of tradition that was later formalized by the form critics that led to the preMarkan passion narrative hyopthesis.

2. *Jesus Tradition in the History of Religion School*

In the mid-1880s, a number of students sat under the teaching of Albrecht Ritschl (1822–1889) at Göttingen, drawn to the university based on the force of Ritschl's theology and personality.[27] These students, including William Wrede, Albert Eichhorn, Wilhelm Bousset, Hermann Gunkel, Ernst Troeltsch, and Johannes Weiss, later sharply broke with their teacher to form the history of religions school.[28] Ritschl, who himself had a notable break with his teacher F. C. Baur, approached questions of theology from a historical perspective and believed that the essence of Christianity was found in Jesus, whose central teaching was the kingdom of God.[29] The Gospel of Mark provided Ritschl a

[27] Hermann Gunkel, "Gedächtnisrede an Wilhelm Bousset," *Evangelische Freiheit* 10 (1920): 14162, here 146; Ernst Troeltsch, "Die 'kleine Göttinger Fakultät' von 1890," *Die Christianliche Welt* 34 (1920): 281–83, here 282; Hans-Georg Drescher, *Ernst Troeltsch: His Life and Work*, trans. John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 19, 344.

[28] The German word "religionsgeschichtliche" is not easily translated into English. Scholarly literature has used "history of religion(s)," though the best translation may be "comparative religion." I follow the SBL Handbook of Style and use" history of religions school." Cf. Ernst Troeltsch, "The Dogmatics of the 'religionsgeschichtliche Schule,'" *AmJT* 17.1 (1913): 1–21, here 1, for a discussion of the problems of translating *religionsgeschichtliche*.

[29] Rolf Schäfer, *Albrecht Ritschl: Vorlesung "Theologische Ethik*," Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 99 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007); Johannes Zachuber, *Theology as Science in Nineteenth-Century Germany: From F. C. Baur to Ernst Troeltsch, Changing Paradigms in Historical and Systematic*

reliable source for reconstructing the historical Jesus whose preaching of the kingdom was neither a political nor eschatological entity, but a spiritual and ethical reality. [30] Ritschl's students reacted strongly against his historical reconstructions, especially his attempt to find a single ethical standard free from historical limitation to apply as a standard in nineteenth-century Germany.[31] Weiss, Wrede, and Bousset all demonstrated the eschatological nature of the kingdom of God and, against Ritschl's attempt to find a timeless ethic, situated Jesus' preaching of the kingdom within the first century.[32] The scholars that formed the history of religions school sought not only to understand the preaching of Jesus within his historical context, but desired to view the development of Christianity within the larger scope of religious history.[33] The methods and results of the

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Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 211–35; Philip Hefner, "Baur Versus Ritschl on Early Christianity," *CH* 31 (1962): 255–78.

[30] Albrecht Ritschl, "Über den gegenwärtigen Stand der Kritik der synoptischen Evangelien," in *Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Freiburg i. B. und Leipzig: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1893), 1–51; Clive Marsh, *Albrecht Ritschl and the Problem of the Historical Jesus* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992), 50–55.

[31] Hugo Gressmann, "Albert Eichhorn and the History of Religion School," in Albert Eichhorn, *The Lord's Supper in the New Testament*, trans. Jeffrey F. Cayzer, SBLHBS 1 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 3–61, here 59.

[32] Respectively, Johannes Weiss, *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes* 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1900); ET: *Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God*, trans. and ed. R. H. Hiers and D. L. Holland (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971); William Wrede, "Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes," in *Vortäge und Studien* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1907), 84–126; Wilhelm Bousset, *Jesu Predigt in ihrem Gegensatz zum Judentum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoech & Ruprecht, 1892).

[33] For an overview of the main ideas of the history of religions school, Gerd Lüdemann and Martin Schröder, eds., *Die religionsgeschichtliche Schule in Göttingen: Ebine Dokumentation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987); Cf., the online *Archiv "Religionsgeschichtliche Schule,"* http://www.archiv-rgs.de/; Gerd Lüdemann, "Die Religionsgeschichtliche Schule," in *Theologie in Göttingen: eine Vorlesungsreihe*, ed. Bernd Moeller (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 325–61; idem., "Die 'Religionsgeschichtliche Schule' und die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft," in *Die "religionsgeschichtliche Schule': Facetten eines theologischen Umbruchs*, ed. Gerd Lüdemann (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996), 9–22; Carsten Colpe, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Schule: Darstellung und Kritik ihres Bildes vom gnostischen Erlösermythus*, FRLANT 78 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961); F. W. Graf, "Der 'Systematiker' der 'Kleinen Göttinger Fakultat*:* Ernst Troeltschs Promotionsthesen und ihr Göttinger Kontext," in *Troeltsch-Studien I*, eds.F. W. Grat and Horst Renz (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1982), 235–90; Gerhard W. Ittel, "Die Hauptgedanken der 'religionsgechichtlichen Schule,'" *ZRGG* 10.1

history of religions school had a significant impact on the thought of the early form critics, especially their concept of Jesus tradition and the ways in which literary forms developed from the religious experiences of communities.

This section will trace the origins of form criticism out of the history of religions school with a focus on the conception of the pre-literary transmission of the Jesus tradition in the works of Eichhorn, Gunkel, Weiss, Wrede, Wellhausen, and Bousset. The building blocks of the form-critical conception of Jesus tradition were present in the works of these scholars who served as mentors and teachers to the early form critics. In these early works, however, this conception of Jesus tradition was not as fully conceptualized and articulated as it would become through the writings of Schmidt, Dibelius, and Bultmann. The ways in which scholars conceive of the transmission of the Jesus tradition leads, whether consciously or unconsciously, to conclusions about what we may or may not know and how we may come to know about the historical Jesus and early Christianity.[34] An examination of Jesus tradition in the history of religions school reveals that the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis was in its embryonic stage, suggested in the works of Weiss and Bousset, and waiting for the full realization of a conception of Jesus tradition to bring forth the explanatory power of such a hypothesis.

(1958): 61–78; Karlheinz Müller, "Die religionsgeschichtliche Methode: Erwägungen zu ihrem Verständnis und Praxis iher Vollzüge an neutestamentlichen Texten," *BZ* 29 (1985): 161–92; Kümmel, *History*, 245–85; Riches, *Century*, 14–30; Baird, *History*, 222–53.

[34] Chris Keith, "The Indebtedness of the Criteria Approach to Form Criticism and Recent Attempts to Rehabilitate the Search for an Authentic Jesus," in *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, ed. Chris Keith and Anthony Le Donne (New York: T & T Clark, 2012), 25–48, has demonstrated that the criteria of authenticity arose directly from and because of a form-critical understanding of Jesus tradition. Whereas Keith began with the work of Dieblius and Bultmann, I am tracing the origin of this conception of Jesus tradition in the works of the history of religions school, which was adopted and advanced by Schmidt, Dibelius, and Bultmann.

2.1 The History of Religions School

While the designation as a school (*Schule*) implies a unified agenda and goal, it is not possible to summarize the common exegetical principles of the history of religions school easily.[35] As a very general commonality, however, these scholars desired to understand Christianity within the religious environment in which it developed.[36] Gunkel concluded that the New Testament must be interpreted "in light of the influence of extraneous religions, and that this influence reached the men of the New Testament by way of Judaism."[37] The history of religions school considered Judaism a syncretistic religion, taking over concepts from Babylon, Egypt, and other ancient Eastern religions. Because of the variety of influences on Judaism, the New Testament was to be understood not only in relation to the Jewish Scriptures, but in relation to all contemporary religious literature.

According to the history of religions, God had revealed himself through history, which Mark Chapman described as "something primarily of the spirit and the history of religion was consequently the history of the spirit as it manifested itself in the great 'web

[35] Lüdemann, "Die 'Religionsgeschichtliche Schule' und die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft," 9. An example of the disagreements among representatives of the history of religions school is the views of Weiss and Bousset and the relationship between Jesus and the Judaism of the first century. On the one hand, in *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes,* Weiss presented Jesus' eschatology within the tradition of Judaism since both Jesus and Judaism shared an apocalyptic vision of the future. On the other hand, in *Jesu Predigt in ihrem Gegensatz zum Judentum*, Bousset responded to Weiss and denied any continuity between Jesus and Judaism, since in his view the Judaism of the first century had devolved from the religion of the prophets into a legalistic religion.

[36] Ittel, "Hauptgedanken," 62–65, observed that *Religionsgeschichte* meant the history of one's own religion, and in the case of these scholars, Christianity. E.g., Gunkel, "The 'Historical Movement' in the Study of Religion," *ExpTim* 38 (1926): 532–36, here 533, "When we spoke of the 'History of Religion,' we always meant in the first place the History of the Religion of the Bible."

[37] Hermann Gunkel, "The Religio-Historical Interpretation of the New Testament," trans. W. H. Carruth, *The Monist* 13.3 (1903), 398–455, here 398.

of history,' in the religious experiences and personalities of the past."[38] In this view, God revealed himself in different stages of religion and each subsequent stage reached a higher level than the previous stage, with Christianity as the purest expression of religion. This development of religion is a work of God, as described by Bousset:

> The whole history of the religious life of mankind stands to us as the great handiwork of God…The religion of the Old and New Testaments, however, represents, as we shall see, the purest form of religion, and the Gospel, to say the least, the highest and most perfect form which it has reached.[39]

In other words, the development began in primitive religions, advanced to national religions, reached a high level in the prophets, but with the religions of law (namely, Judaism), the upward trajectory stalled. But, according to Bousset, Jesus restored the upward trajectory and freed religion from nationalism; Paul then freed it from legalism.[40]

In order to understand the rise of Christianity, the history of religions school applied a radical historical approach to the texts of the NT and early Christianity in the manner of Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768), Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781), Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792–1860), and David Friedrich Strauss (1808–1874).[41] This radical approach entailed situating the religion of early Christianity within the context of the religions of the ancient world, especially detailing its syncretistic

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[38] Mark D. Chapman, "Religion, Ethics, and the History of Religions School," *SJT* 46 (1993): 43–78, here 48; Hermann Gunkel, "Das alte Testament im Lichte der modernen Forschung," in *Beiträge zur Weiterentwicklung der christlichen Religion* (München: Verlag, 1905), 40–76, here 55; William Wrede, "Das theologische Studium und Religionsgeschichte," in *Vorlage und Studien*, 64–83, here 66; Wilhelm Bousset, "Die Religionsgeschichte und das neue Testament," *TRu* 7.9 (1904): 353–65, here 364.

[39] Wilhelm Bousset, *What is Religion?*, trans. F. B. Low (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907), 9.

[40] Bousset, *What is Religion?*, 213–99.

[41] Gerd Lüdemann, "The Relationship of Biblical Studies to the History of Religions School, with Reference to the Scientific Study of Religion," *TJT* 24.2 (2008): 171–81, here 173–74.

nature. Particularly noteworthy for the history of religions school was the sociological aspect of religion as it developed within popular piety. This new methodology was applied to the entirety of early Christian literature, emphasizing the development of Christianity from its origins in Palestine to the Hellenistic Christ-cult and later to Pauline Christianity.

The model of development for religion in general outlined above (divine revelation and progressive stages of development and practice) was applied sporadically to the Jesus tradition by the members of the history of religions school. Although there was diversity of opinion among members of the history of religions school, they shared similar emphases as they described the development of the Jesus tradition prior to the written Gospels. These descriptions of the pre-literary Jesus tradition included the growth of individual units of tradition from situations within the life of the church, especially the cultus; the role of the church in shaping these oral units of tradition according to their understanding of Jesus as the Messiah; and the role of the author in shaping the outline of the life of Jesus theologically, not historically. In the following sections, I will examine significant notions of Jesus tradition through their major works on Jesus and the Gospel of Mark of the history of religions school in order to shed light upon the development of the form-critical method. While each scholar discussed below did not discuss each aspect of Jesus tradition, there was enough continuity and complementarity amongst their work to allow for a general picture of the history of religions school's conception of Jesus tradition.

2.1.1 Albert Eichhorn (1856–1926)

Chronic illness limited Eichhorn's scholarly output, but through his personal relationships, especially through letters to his close friends from Göttingen, Eichhorn was able to influence members of the history of religions school, specifically his close friends Wrede and Gunkel.[42] Although Eichhorn never produced a comprehensive work on early Christian literature, his study on the Lord's Supper tradition foreshadowed more developed conceptions of Jesus tradition from later publications of the history of religions school.

2.1.1.1 The Use of the Tradition in the Cultus

Eichhorn concluded that the Lord's Supper traditions in the NT (Matt 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; 1 Cor 11:23–25) were comprehensible only within a cultic sacramental setting and were shaped by the church's theological reflections on the meaning of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.[43] The concepts of cult and worship were neither clearly defined nor developed by Eichhorn. That the Lord's Supper tradition developed within the worship of the church was an assumption throughout the work. However, in the final pages Eichhorn claimed that the Christian observance of sacramental meals was only explicable on the basis of syncretistic ideas and practices.

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[42] Hans Rollmann, "Eichhorn, Karl Albert August Ludwig," in *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, ed. John Hayes (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 324–25; Wayne A. Meeks, "The History of Religions School," in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible: Volume 4, From 1750 to the Present*, ed. John Riches (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 127–38, here 128; Ernst Barnikol, "Eichhorn, Albert," in *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 4 (1959), 379, described Eichhorn's illness as "shaking palsy."

[43] According to Eichhorn, *The Lord's Supper*, 75, the influence of the church's faith on the tradition was not consistent. In his view, the miracle stories and the words of Jesus were the least altered parts of the tradition. The tradition of the death and resurrection of Jesus were significantly influenced by the faith of the church. The birth narratives were completely modified to align with the faith of the church.

The connection between the motifs of bread and wine, body and blood, and eating and drinking posed a religio-historical problem for Eichhorn. In his estimation, the early Christian idea that in consuming the bread and wine Christians partook in the body and blood of Christ was borrowed from "Near Eastern Gnosticism."[44] The Lord's Supper tradition in the New Testament was, according to Eichhorn, a syncretistic idea: "Forgiveness of sins at the Communion is Jewish; the Communion as partaking of eternal life is Near Eastern."[45] Similar syncretistic ideas played a key role in Eichhorn's interpretation of the Fourth Gospel:

> In John's Gospel we find that baptism brings about the new birth and that the Communion bestows eternal life. This goes with the practice in John's Gospel of giving a Christian slant to concepts that have had a long history of use in the gnostic religion.[46]

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[44] Eichhorn, *The Lord's Supper*, 93.

[45] Eichhorn, *The Lord's Supper*, 93.

[46] Eichhorn, *The Lord's Supper*, 93. This brief statement of Eichhorn on the influence of Gnosticism on the early Christians, and especially the Fourth Gospel, foreshadowed later *Religionsgeschichte* scholarship, although Eichhorn is often overlooked in discussions of the scholarly development of the idea of pre-Christian Gnosticism. This is likely because his comments were too brief and offered nothing substantial to the discussion on Gnosticism. Albert Schweitzer, *The Problem of the Lord's Supper according to the Scholarly Research of the Nineteenth Century and the Historical Accounts: Volume 1: The Lord's Supper in Relationship to the Life of Jesus and the History of the Early Church*, trans. A. J. Mattill, Jr. (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1982), 81–83, criticized Eichhorn for assuming that later research on Gnosticism would simply prove his theory. Eichhorn is not discussed in Edwin Yamauchi, *Pre-Christian Gnosticism: A Survey of the Proposed Evidences* (London: Tyndale Press, 1973). Early treatments of pre-Christian Gnosticism included Wilhelm Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1907) and Richard Reitzenstein, *Das iranische Erlöserungsmysterium* (Bonn: Marcus & Weber, 1921). Gnosticism featured prominently in Bultmann's writings, especially on John, Rudolf Bultmann, "Die Bedeutung der neuerschlossen mandäischen und manichäischen Quellen für das Verständnis des Johannesevangeliums," *ZNW* 24 (1925): 100–46; idem., *Theology of the New Testament*, 1:164–83; idem., *Primitive Christianity*, 161–72; idem., *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. George Beasley-Murray (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), 24–31. The pre-Christian Gnostic myth was thoroughly refuted by Carsten Colpe, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Schule: Darstellung und Kritik ihres Bildes vom gonstischen Erlösermythus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961). Cf., Larry Hurtado, "Fashions, Fallacies, and Future Prospects in New Testament Studies," *JSNT* 36.4 (2014): 299–324, here 303–07.

In this way, the history of religions method filled in the gaps Eichhorn perceived in the historical-critical method and accounts for the origin of this early Christian interpretation of Jesus' death through the influence of Judaism and Near Eastern Gnosticism.

2.1.1.2 Tradition Shaped by the Faith of the Church

Eichhorn rejected the historical-critical method, which he described as simply taking the reports found in the NT as historical accounts that can be corrected through the comparison of parallel traditions in order to discover the earliest tradition which will reveal "the true historical course of events."[47] Instead, he emphasized the development of Christianity as a religion and valued the unhistorical material over the historical because "the unhistorical material documents for us the progress of the religious process," while, conversely, the historical material had no value for the history of religion.[48] This meant, for Eichhorn, that the primary task of the scholar was the identification of layers in the tradition:

> It is very important that we recognize the earliest layer of the Jesus tradition that has come to us only in fragmentary form. Mostly it is overlaid by later levels, and it is only by proceeding in a critical fashion that we uncover the earliest layers. Valuing such a procedure is something we share with the historico-critical method. On the other hand, it is just as important, in fact in some respects more important, to recognize how the earlier traditions have been reshaped and to recognize the value of the results of the entire process.[49]

The unhistorical material found in later layers of the tradition reflected the religious needs of the early Christians and was, for Eichhorn, the means by which he could trace

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[47] Eichhorn, *The Lord's Supper*, 67. Later Eichhorn referred to the process of identifying the oldest layers of a tradition with the historical event as it actually happened as "a particularly foolish feature of historical criticism" (74).

[48] Eichhorn, *The Lord's Supper*, 74.

[49] Eichhorn, *The Lord's Supper*, 74.

the development of the tradition. This task, as defined by Eichhorn, was adopted, not only by Wrede and others in the history of religions school, but also by Dibelius, Bultmann, and their students as they mined the Jesus tradition for its earliest layer, where they found historical materials—a task Eichhorn would not have approved.[50]

The Lord's Supper tradition provided Eichhorn an understanding of how the early church understood Jesus' death, which shaped the tradition: "It was not enough to know what Christ's death meant for salvation. Jesus needed to have articulated this meaning too."[51] The words of Jesus at the institution of the Lord's Supper did not represent the actual historical occurrence, but later interpretation by early Christians after reflection on the death of Jesus. In Mark and Matthew, the words "This is my body" (Matt 26:26; Mark 14:22) presented a problem for Eichhorn because they refer to the institution of the sacrament and not the historical situation described.[52] Luke 22:19 and 1 Cor 11:24 included the words "which is given for you," which shifted the meaning and provided an allusion to the sacrificial death of Jesus.[53]

Eichhorn treated the reference to the cup within the institution of the Supper in a similar fashion. In both Mark 14:24 and Matt 26:28 Jesus says, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," with the Matthean version adding, "for the forgiveness of sins." The Western text of Luke 22:19b–20 was adopted by Eichhorn (though he made no mention of the textual questions surrounding the verses), which

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[50] Rollmann, "William Wrede, Albert Eichhorn," 81–82.

[51] Eichhorn, *The Lord's Supper*, 75.

[52] Eichhorn, *The Lord's Supper*, 76.

[53] Eichhorn, *The Lord's Supper*, 76.

meant that there was no reference to the cup in Luke.[54] In Paul, the emphasis shifted, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (1 Cor 11:25), which was significant for Eichhorn. The Pauline Jesus did not say the cup contained his blood, but that it was the cup of the new covenant which "comes into being by his blood shed on the cross."[55] Eichhorn considered this change in the tradition "much richer" because "all the predicates of the blood that were technical ones in the case of sacrifice are transferred across and now refer to the blood of Christ."[56] These differences in the tradition demonstrated to Eichhorn how the sacrificial understanding of Jesus' death developed within the church.

2.1.2 Hermann Gunkel (1862–1932)

In some respects, Gunkel's effect on the development of NT form criticism is surprising considering his significant methodological differences with Julius Wellhausen that arose after the publication of Gunkel's *Schöpfung und Chaos*.[57] While Gunkel accepted Wellhausen's conclusion that individual oral traditions laid behind the book of Genesis, he disagreed with Wellhausen's view that the origin of the material was

[54] Eichhorn, *The Lord's Supper*, 76. He simply stated, "Luke lacks mention of the cup," with no justification. For a discussion of the Western text of Luke 22:19b–20, Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (London: United Bible Society, 1994), 148–50; Bradly S. Billings, *Do This in Remembrance of Me: The Disputed Words in the Lukan Institution Narrative: An Historico-Exegetical, Theological and Sociological Analysis,* LNTS 314 (London: T & T Clark, 2006).

[55] Eichhorn, *The Lord's Supper*, 76.

[56] Eichhorn, *The Lord's Supper*, 76–77.

[57] Werner Klatt, *Hermann Gunkel: Zu seiner Theologie der Religionsgeschichte und zur Entstehung der formgeschichtlichen Methode*, FRLANT 100 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 70–74; Henning Paulsen, "Traditionsgeschichtliche Methode und religionsgeschichtliche Schule," *ZTK* 75.1 (1978): 23–33; Paul Michael Kurtz, "Waiting at Nemi: Wellhausen, Gunkel, and the World Behind their Work," *HTR* 109.4 (2016): 567–85.

irrelevant.[58] Gunkel critiqued Wellhausen for being "too subservient to the literary documents" and for failing to recognize that the ideas found in the documents may have originated at a much earlier date.[59] Instead, he not only emphasized written sources, but also oral tradition: "All the rich content of such oral tradition must be included in our total reckoning."[60] The conception of oral tradition, its pre-literary development, and relationship to the life of the community presented by Gunkel changed not only Jewish Scriptural studies, but Gospel studies as his method was adopted and applied by Dibelius and especially Bultmann to the Synoptic Gospels.

2.1.2.1 Individual Units of Tradition

The history of religions school characterized the oral cultures in ways that limited their ability to compose or pass along complete narratives prior to the production of literary works. It was assumed that the earliest Christian community was unliterary, and therefore unable to compose an extended narrative of the life of Jesus. Gunkel posed the question of which took priority in oral tradition—the Gospel, the discourse, or the individual saying? He answered, "Popular story of its very nature takes the form of the individual story."[61] Gunkel contrasted the types of culture that wrote history (*Geschichte*) with those that orally passed on legends (*Sagen*):

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[58] Hermann Gunkel, "Aus Wellhausen's neuesten apokalyptischen Forschungen: Einige principelle Eröterungen," *ZWT* 42 (1899): 581–611, esp. 607–09; idem., *The Stories of Genesis: A Translation of the Third Edition of the Introduction to Hermann Gunkel's Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, trans. John J. Scullion, ed. William R. Scott (Vallejo: BIBAL Press, 1994), 31–33.

[59] Gunkel, "Historical Movement," 533–34.

[60] Gunkel, "Historical Movement," 534.

[61] Gunkel, *The Stories of Genesis*, 31.

> History writing (*Geschichtsschreibung*) is not an art inborn in the human spirit. It had its origin at a definite stage of development in the course of human history. Uncultivated peoples do not write history. They do not have the capacity to reproduce their experiences objectively, and they have no interest in passing on to posterity an accurate account of the events of their time. Their experiences fade unnoticed and reality mingles with fantasy. They can express historical events only in poetic form, in songs and stories (*Sagen*).[62]

The literature in the Jewish Scriptures does, according to Gunkel, contain examples of history, such as Samuel or Chronicles. But the individual narratives in Genesis had their origin in preliterate societies and could only be transmitted in oral tradition.[63] Significantly for the development of NT form criticism, Gunkel posited that legends emphasized popular personalities, not the history of kings or royal families, and these traditions had a long history of oral transmission before they were written down in Genesis. [64] As the next chapter will show, Dibelius and Bultmann both espoused similar views about the members of the earliest Aramaic church and their inability to compose extended narratives. When Gunkel's method was applied to traditions about Jesus (a popular personality) and the tradition contained in the Gospels, the form critics sought its long oral history prior to the composition of the Gospels in individual units because of these assumptions inherited from Gunkel.

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[62] Gunkel, *The Stories of Genesis*, 1.

[63] Gunkel, *The Stories of Genesis*, 2–3. Gunkel viewed the shortest literary forms as most primitive because ancient peoples could only grasp one or two lines at a time. He also compared the abilities of ancient peoples to modern children. Hermann Gunkel, "Fundamental Problems of Hebrew Literary History," in *What Remains of the Old Testament and Other Essays*, trans. A. K. Dallas (New York: Macmillan, 1928), 57–68, here 62. Cf. Leonard J. Coppes, "An Introduction to the Hermeneutic of Hermann Gunkel," *SJT* 32 (1970): 148–78, here 160–62.

[64] Gunkel, *The Stories of Genesis*, 3; Gunkel compared the passing of such traditions to the German fairy tale traditions, such as Grimm, that were told by the families gathered together around the fireplace on winter evenings.

2.1.2.2 Literary Form and Sitz im Leben

The beginnings of Gunkel's methodological emphasis on literary forms and *Sitz im Leben* were present in *Schöpfung und Chaos*, although the significance of these emphases were later realized in his Genesis commentary and form-critical work on the Psalms.[65] In this early work, Gunkel introduced the question of literary form (*Gattung*) and sought a *Sitz im Leben* for the creation myth, which he found in the Babylonian feast of Marduk.[66] The significance of *Schöpfung und Chaos* in the development of the form-critical method is Gunkel's emphasis on the history of literatures, from their beginnings in oral tradition to their transition into written documents, which provided knowledge of the *Sitze* of literary forms.[67]

Gunkel began his investigation by identifying the literary type of each individual unit of tradition. In his Genesis commentary he distinguished between myth (*Mythus*), a story about the gods, and legend (*Sage*), a poetic story about the distant past which was handed down in popular oral tradition.[68] After removing individual stories from their literary context, Gunkel offered several questions in order for exegetes to decipher the *Sitz im Leben*: Who was speaking? Who was the audience? What was the mood? What

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[65] Klatt, *Hermann Gunkel*, 78–80; Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis: Übersetzt und erklärt*, 1st ed. HKAT (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901); idem., "Psalmen," in *RGG*^{2}, 1609–27; ET: *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*, trans. Thomas M. Horner (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967); Hermann Gunkel and Joachim Begrich, *Introduction to the Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel*, trans. James D. Nogalski (Macon: Mercer University, 1998).

[66] Hermann Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton: A Religio-Historical Study of Genesis 1 and Revelation 12*, trans. K. William Whitney Jr. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 80–84, 110–11.

[67] Cf., Hermann Gunkel, "Literaturgeschichte," *RGG*^{2}, 3: 1677–80.

[68] Gunkel, *The Stories of Genesis*, 2–3. In the first and second edition of *Genesis*, Gunkel emphasized the primacy of myth, but in the third emphasized the primacy of the legend. Cf., Hermann Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis*, trans. W. H. Carruth (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing, 1901), 14.

effect was sought?[69] Through this line of questioning Gunkel sought the *Sitz* of each unit of tradition in an attempt to access the religious life of the Israelites, which was the goal of Gunkel's scholarship. Erhard Gerstenberger described this aspect of Gunkel's method:

> Literature is not an end in itself, not even form- and genre classifications are such goals, but the life of the spirit within literature, intimately connected with real social and religious life of the people, is the treasure to be hunted for.[70]

Thus, the goal, in Gunkel's view, was not simply an understanding of the surface level features of a text, but an understanding of the social situation out of which the tradition arose in the decades or centuries before it was put into writing.

2.1.3 William Wrede (1859–1906)

During his time as a tutor in Göttingen, Wrede developed a friendship with Eichhorn, whose influence freed him "from the fetters of a Ritschlian ecclesiocentric exegesis and from the literary-critical approach to the New Testament."[71] In 1897 Wrede delivered a lecture on the method of NT theology, which Heikki Räisänen pronounced as "the declaration of the programme of the history-of-religions school" and Georg Strecker described as fundamental for understanding the rest of Wrede's work.[72] Before

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[69] Hermann Gunkel, "Die Grundprobleme der israelitischen Literaturgeschichte," in *Reden und Aufsätze*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913), 29–38, here 33.

[70] Erhard S. Gerstenberger, "Albert Eichhorn and Hermann Gunkel: The Emergence of a History of Religion School," in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation, Vol. III: From Modernism to Post-Modernism (The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries),* ed. Magne Sæbø (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 454–71, here 463. Cf. Klatt, Hermann Gunkel, 146; François Bovon, "Hermann Gunkel, Historian of Religion and Exegete of Literary Forms," in *Exegesis: Problems of Method and Exercises in Reading (Genesis 22 and Luke 15)*, trans. Donald G. Miller (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1978), 124–42, here 130.

[71] Rollmann, "William Wrede, Albert Eichhorn," 80.

[72] Respectively, William Wrede, *Über Aufgabe und Methode sogenannten neutestamentlichen Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1907); ET: "The Task and Methods of 'New Testament Theology,'" in *The Nature of New Testament Theology*, trans. and ed. Robert Morgan, SBT 2:25 (London:

examining Wrede's conception of Jesus tradition, it will be helpful to review his history of religions method as presented in this lecture, since it informed his investigations of the origins of the Gospels.

In response to the then recently published New Testament theologies of Bernhard Weiss (1827–1918) and Willibald Beyschlag (1823–1900), Wrede strongly critiqued what he labelled "the method of doctrinal concepts" (*Lehrbegriffe*).[73] This approach to the NT attempted to reconstruct the thoughts of the authors according to doctrine, which, Wrede admitted, assisted in an understanding of the individual authors.[74] In his mind, however, the benefits did not outweigh the "considerable violence" this method committed against the NT texts, since many books were too small for extraction of doctrinal concepts.[75] Additionally, this method assumed these texts contained doctrine in an attempt "to squeeze out as much conceptual capital as possible from every phrase and every casually chosen expression."[76] In place of the doctrinal concepts method, Wrede

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SCM Press, 1973), 68–116; Heikki Räisänen, *Beyond New Testament Theology: A Story and a Programme*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 2000), 121; Strecker, "William Wrede," 68. Cf., Ben C. Ollenburger, "Biblical Theology: Situating the Discipline," in *Understanding the Word: Essays in Honor of Bernhard W. Anderson*, eds., James T. Butler, Edgar W. Conrad, and Ben C. Ollenburger, JSOTSup 37 (Sheffield: University of Sheffield), 40; A. K. M. Adam, *Making Sense of New Testament Theology: "Modern" Problems and Prospects* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 63–64.

[73] Respectively, Berhhard Weiss, *Lehrbuch der biblischen Theologie des neuen Testaments,* 5th ed. (Berlin: W. Hertz, 1888); ET of 3rd ed.: *Biblical Theology of the New Testament,* 2 vols., trans. James E. Duguid (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1882–83); Willibald Beyschlag, *Neutestamentliche Theologie* (Halle: Strien, 1891–92); ET: *New Testament Theology, or, Historical Account of the Teaching of Jesus and of Primitive Christianity according to the New Testament*, trans. Neil Buchanan (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1895–96); Wrede, "Task and Methods," 73.

[74] Wrede, "Task and Methods," 74.

[75] Wrede, "Task and Methods," 74–75.

[76] Wrede, "Task and Methods," 77.

proposed that the task of New Testament theology was "to lay out the history of early Christian religion and theology."[77]

Although the opposing methods sound similar in their aims, Wrede characterized the method of doctrinal concepts as focused upon "the content of the *writings*," while history of religions focused upon "the *subject-matter*."[78] He further clarified the differences:

> What are we really looking for? In the last resort, we at least want to know *what was believed, thought, taught, hoped, required and striven for* in the earliest period of Christianity; not what certain writings say about faith, doctrine, hope, etc.[79]

The personalities of the individual authors mattered little because, as Robert Morgan summarized, for Wrede "the historian is concerned with what lies behind the sources, in this case the history of religion."[80] In his attempts to access what lay behind the Gospels, Wrede relied upon a particular view of the content and transmission of the pre-literary Jesus tradition which, in many ways, furthered the radical historical efforts of Eichhorn.[81]

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[77] Wrede, "Task and Methods," 84.

[78] Wrede, "Task and Methods," 84, italics original.

[79] Wrede, "Task and Methods," 84–85, italics original.

[80] Robert Morgan, "Introduction: The Nature of New Testament Theology," in *The Nature of New Testament Theology,* 12. Italics removed.

[81] Wrede, "Task and Methods," 182, acknowledged his indebtedness to Eichhorn in matters of historical method. Wrede noted the radical nature of his understanding of the messianic secret: "We cannot alter the Gospels; we must take them as they are. If my critique is seen as radical, I have nothing against that. I maintain that matters themselves are sometimes radical to the utmost degree, and that it can hardly be reproachable to call them as they are," *Messianic Secret*, 2.

2.1.3.1 Individual Units of Tradition

For Wrede, the oral Jesus tradition began "the moment after the death of Jesus, when the tradition about Jesus was still quite fresh."[82] The earliest transmission of the tradition was "free and various," and contained short narratives, sayings, and instructions; no attempt was made to recount the life of Jesus.[83] He considered the writing of the Gospel of Mark a pioneering moment in the development of the Jesus tradition, a moment that had both positive and negative implications. Positively, the oral Jesus tradition was now fixed in written form and could not be lost to history.[84] Negatively, the written medium marked an "impoverishment of the tradition," for only the Jesus tradition that was written could be remembered. The written Gospels became the storehouse for Jesus traditions and "the free recollections [lost] their significance."[85]

2.1.3.2 Tradition Shaped by the Faith of the Church

For Wrede, the Gospels could not be understood apart from "an eye for the transforming effect of tradition," which began in the oral period before the Gospels.[86] That the shaping of the individual traditions took place in the period of oral transmission became a fundamental starting point for his investigation of the messianic secret in Mark:

> The oldest written material which tells us of Jesus, and which came to have a dominant influence on what came later, has incorporated much more than we

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[82] William Wrede, *Die Entstechung der Schriften des Neuen Testaments,* Lebensfragen: Schriften und Leben 18 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1907); ET: *The Origin of the New Testament*, trans. James S. Hill, Harper's Library of Living Thought (London: Harper & Brothers, 1909), 66.

[83] Wrede, *Origin*, 66–67.

[84] Wrede, *Origin*, 68.

[85] Wrede, *Origin*, 69–70.

[86] Wrede, *Origin*, 70.

> could desire of the secondary tradition that had already accumulated, and much less of the good material.[87]

In other words, the tradition contained the theology of the early Christians which colored their depiction of Jesus according to their resurrection faith. Wrede's investigation into the secrecy motif in Mark not only aided in ending the nineteenth-century life of Jesus research, it paved the way for form criticism, and the questions he raised still guide NT research.[88]

Wrede's investigation into the pre-literary theological development of the Jesus tradition began by identifying five categories of Markan passages containing commands to keep Jesus' messianic identity secret: (1) "prohibitions addressed to demons" (1:25, 34; 3:12); (2) "prohibitions following (other) miracles" (1:43–45; 5:43; 7:36; 8:26); "prohibitions after Peter's confession" (8:30; 9:9); (3) "internal preservation of his incognito" (7:24; 9:30–31); and, (4) "a prohibition to speak that did not originate with Jesus (10:47–48).[89] Additionally, Wrede identified cryptic speech within Mark as part of the secrecy motif, which included Jesus' use of parables and the phrase "the mystery of the kingdom of God."[90]

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[87] Wrede, *Messianic Secret*, 2.

[88] Schweitzer, *Quest*, 330–97; Vincent Taylor, "Unsolved New Testament Problems: The Messianic Secret in Mark," *ExpTim* 59 (1947–48): 146–51; idem., "Important and Influential Foreign Books: W. Wrede's The Messianic Secret in the Gospels," *ExpTim* 65 (1953): 246–50; Norman Perrin, "The Wredestrasse Becomes the Hauptstrasse: Reflections of the Reprinting of the Dodd *Festschrift*: *A* Review Article," *JR* 46.2 (1966): 296–300; David E. Aune, "The Problem of the Messianic Secret," *NovT* 11 (1969): 1–31; William C. Robinson Jr., "The Quest for Wrede's Secret Messiah," *Int* 27 (1973): 10–30; James L. Blevins, *The Messianic Secret in Markan Research, 1901–1976* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1981); Christopher Tuckett, "Introduction: The Problem of the Messianic Secret," in *The Messianic Secret*, ed. Christopher Tuckett, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 1–28; Heiki Räisänen, *The 'Messianic Secret' in Mark*, trans. Christopher Tuckett (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990).

[89] Wrede, *Messianic Secret*, 34–37.

[90] Wrede, *Messianic Secret*, 53–79.

Wrede considered all of the secrecy passages in Mark to be historically implausible because it was unreasonable to expect silence after Jesus had performed miracles such as raising Jairus's daughter, healing lepers, or casting out demons.[91] He also observed that since these acts were performed by Jesus in public, the command to remain silent was pointless and was not ever followed in the Markan narrative.[92] Thus, Wrede found no historical motive to satisfactorily explain the presence of the messianic secret in Mark. Instead, he concluded that the secret belonged, not to history, but to theology: "a historical motive is really absolutely out of the question; or, to put it positively, that the idea of the messianic secret is a theological idea."[93] This theological idea was not created by Mark, but was, according to Wrede, already present in the pre-literary Jesus tradition and developed because the church needed to explain why they believed Jesus to be the Messiah when he had not made that claim himself.[94]

Therefore, Wrede concluded that the Gospel of Mark was of no use in constructing a life of Jesus because it belonged to "the history of dogma."[95] The Jesus tradition did not reflect the life of the historical Jesus, but the faith of the early church. This axiom provided a starting point for form criticism, which differed from Wrede in one important aspect. While the form critics thought it was possible to separate the

[91] Wrede, *Messianic Secret*, 50–51.

[92] Wrede, *Messianic Secret*, 17

[93] Wrede, *Messianic Secret*, 67.

[94] Wrede, *Messianic Secret*, 230.

[95] Wrede, *Messianic Secret*, 131.

historical from the theological in the Jesus tradition, Wrede held that this was an impossibility.[96]

2.1.4 Johannes Weiss (1863–1914)

Hiers and Holland rightly described Weiss as "one of the prophets of form criticism" and Schmithals observed that Weiss's work has not received the recognition it deserved.[97] While Weiss' most significant and lasting contribution to NT scholarship was the recognition of the eschatological aspect to Jesus' preaching of the kingdom of God against his father-in-law Ritschl's ethical conception, he also contributed important works on the Gospels and his notion of Jesus tradition was a precursor to the developed form-critical work of Bultmann and others.

While Weiss clearly situated his own work within the history of religions school, the influence of his father's conservatism and his congenial attitude toward Ritschl's work set Weiss apart from other members of the school.[98] These differences become clear

[96] Wrede, *Messianic Secret*, 129–31; Aune, "Problem," 4–5.

[97] Respectively, Richard H. Hiers and D. Larrimore Holland, "Introduction," in *Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God*, trans. and eds., Richard H. Hiers and David Larrimore Holland (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 4; Walter Schmithals, "Johannes Weiß als Wegbereiter der Formgeschichte," *ZTK* (1983):389–410, here 389–92, observed that it is surprising that Weiss received little credit in Bultmann's major works, even though Bultmann was Weiss's student in the winter semester of 1904/05 and the summer semester of 1906 and Bultmann was upset at Weiss's move to Heidelberg in 1908. Nevertheless, Bultmann, "Johannes Weiß in Gedächtnis," *ThBl* 18 (1939): 242–46, lamented that Weiss did not live long enough to see the developments made through form criticism. David Larrimore Holland, "History, Theology, and the Kingdom of God: A Contribution of Johannes Weiss to 20th Century Theology," *BR* 13 (1968): 54–66, here 54, stated that the neglect of the contribution of Weiss by English speaking scholars is "one of the curious phenomena of our century." Similarly, James D. G. Dunn, "They Set Us in New Paths: VI. New Testament: The Great Untranslated," *ExpTim* 100.6 (1988–89):203–07, here 204–06.

[98] Johannes Weiss, *Die Idee des Reiches Gottes in der Theologie* (Giessen: J. Ricker'sche, 1901), 113; idem., *Die Aufgaben der Neutestamentlichen Wissenschaft in der Gegenwart* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1908), 48. Cf., Hiers and Holland, "Introduction," 16–24. On the relationship

when Weiss' conception of Jesus tradition is compared to that of Wrede. In contrast to Wrede's skeptical attitude to the historical value of the Jesus tradition, Weiss had more confidence in the value of tradition in the Gospel of Mark and, like Wrede, sought to go behind Mark to the oldest available traditions, which he considered a reliable source of information about Jesus and not simply sources for the development of the Christian religion.[99]

2.1.4.1 Individual Units of Tradition

The composer of the Gospel of Mark was, for Weiss, simply a mediator (*Vermittler*) of tradition and not an author.[100] Significantly, Mark was the mediator of the oldest community tradition (*Gemeindeüberlieferung*), which came to him in both oral and written forms as they circulated in the earliest Christian communities as unconnected individual units ("unverbundenen Einzelstücken") with an anecdotal character. [101] In its earliest stage, Weiss characterized the Jesus tradition as illiterate folk tradition ("ungelehrte, volkstümliche Überlieferung") that was first passed mouth-to-mouth.[102] These assumptions about the pre-literary Jesus tradition were not thoroughly explored in Weiss' writings, but his influence on the earliest form critics is clear, as their conceptions

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between Ritschl and Weiss, Rolf Schäfer, "Das Reich Gottes bei Albrecht Ritschl und Johannes Weiss," *ZTK* 61 (1964): 68–88.

[99] Johannes Weiss, *Das älteste Evangelium: ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Markus-Evangeliums und der ältesten evangelischen Überlieferung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1903), vi.

[100] Weiss, *Das älteste Evangelium*, 2–3.

[101] Weiss, *Das älteste Evangelium*, 23, 119; idem., "Die drei älteren Evangelien," in *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments neu übersetzt und für die Gegenwart erklärt*, ed., Johannes Weiss (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1907), 8.

[102] Weiss, "Die drei älteren Evangelien," 40.

of Jesus tradition echo and expand these sentiments. The way these individual units were collected and placed into a narrative was the more significant contribution from Weiss.

2.1.4.2 Narrative Framework of the Tradition

The writing of the Gospel of Mark was, for Weiss, an attempt to put these unconnected traditions into a narrative framework (*Rahmen*).[103] Like Wrede, Weiss denied that the framework imposed on the Jesus tradition by the evangelist contained any chronological interest:

> The most necessary thing for a representation of the drama of Jesus' life is lacking, a chronological framework: in effect, everything takes place on a flat plane. All historical or psychological pragmatism is lacking; the whole thing is composed of completely separate fragments which are grouped partly according to practical didactic viewpoints, partly almost according to chance, so that they can be changed in order without serious damage.[104]

In place of the so-called chronological frame ("der sogenannte chronologische Rahmen") Weiss conceived the Markan outline in a didactic manner; the Galilee period taught the church of Jesus' life and the time in Jerusalem of his death; the Nazareth period revealed Israel's rejection of Jesus while Golgotha represented the persecution of the church.[105] Weiss described the work of the evangelist as spreading the doctrines of the church over the varied units of Jesus tradition like a net to form a coherent narrative.[106]

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[103] Weiss, "Die drei älteren Evangelien," 7–8.

[104] Johannes Weiss, *Earliest Christianity: A History of the Period A. D. 30–150*, 2 vols., trans. F. C. Grant (New York: Harper, 1959), 2: 700; Cf., idem., *Das älteste Evangelium*, 19–20, 89, 351; idem., "Literaturgeschichte," 2191; idem., *Jesus von Nazareth: Mythus oder Geschichte? Eine Auseinandersetzung mit Kalthoff, Drews, Jenson* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1910), 136–37.

[105] Weiss, *Jesus von Nazareth*, 137.

[106] Weiss, *Jesus von Nazareth*, 137

The didactic construction of Mark was, according to Weiss, because of its use in the missionary movement of the church: "It must be read as a piece of missionary literature."[107] It is important for Weiss to clarify the role the Gospel played as missionary literature because it determined how the Jesus tradition was handled and shaped into a narrative. The Gospel was not for the unconverted, for in Weiss' view it did not provide objective proofs for Jesus' Messiahship or contain explicit appeals to authority, such as those healed or eyewitnesses.[108] Rather, the Gospel of Mark was composed for those who already know the broad outline of the life of Jesus and were acquainted with the main characters, especially Peter, who played a central role in Mark.[109] Therefore, Weiss concluded that the second Gospel was used either as a collection of facts assembled for preaching or an introduction to Christian proselytes.[110] In these scenarios, the exact chronological details were less important than passing on the tradition the evangelist received. This did not mean, however, that Weiss found no historical data from which details of Jesus' life could be reconstructed.

2.1.4.3 Tradition Shaped by the Faith of the Church

Weiss concluded that the historical Jesus did not consider his ministry to be messianic but saw himself as the herald of the coming kingdom of God.[111] In his view

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[107] Weiss, *Earliest Christianity*, 2:688.

[108] Weiss, *Earliest Christianity*, 2:689. He understood the reference to the sons of Simon, Alexander and Rufus (Mark 15:21) to be an exception.

[109] Weiss, *Earliest Christianity*, 2: 689–90.

[110] Weiss, *Earliest Christianity*, 2: 690.

[111] Weiss, *Jesus' Proclamation*, 82.

Jesus himself awaited the fulfillment of the kingdom in the future, though the future victory over Satan was foreshadowed in his healings and exorcisms.[112] This clearly differed from the later messianic faith of the church, which constituted a major problem for Weiss. In order to explain how the church came to view Jesus as Messiah, Weiss attempted to trace the development from what he believed was the historical Jesus' own messianic consciousness through the Christological development of the Palestinian and Hellenistic communities. The Jesus tradition within the Gospels, and also in Pauline and other early Christian writings, attested to the early Christians' evolving understanding of Jesus' messianic status.

The question of Jesus' messiahship must have been present before the death of Jesus since, according to Weiss, the disciples quickly concluded that Jesus had been exalted to the right hand of God (Acts 2:33).[113] However, the disciples did not consider Jesus the Messiah during his lifetime, it was only at his exaltation that Jesus became the messiah (Acts 2:36; 13:33):

> It is thus perfectly clear that the Messianic faith of the primitive community was centered in the glorified Christ, and was related to the earthly Jesus only inasmuch as he was the one who had been destined for this honor.[114]

Therefore, Weiss considered the earliest stratum of the Jesus tradition to reflect the early Palestinian Christians' adoptionist Christology, in which Jesus was simply the instrument through which God completed his works, such as the lame man praising God after being healed (Mark 2:12), Jesus' command to the former demoniac to proclaim what "the

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[112] Weiss, *Jesus' Proclamation*, 101–03.

[113] Weiss, *Earliest Christianity*, 1:31.

[114] Weiss, *Earliest Christianity*, 1:33.

Lord" had done for him (5:19), or the crowds glorifying God, who had given Jesus the authority to heal (Matt 9:8).[115]

The next stage in the development of Christology identified by Weiss was the identification of Jesus as the Son of David. This title was also present in the most primitive layer of Jesus tradition as defined by Weiss, where only a few recognized Jesus' status (Mark 1:24; 5:7; 8:29; 9:1–2; 15:39) and belief in Jesus' divine sonship "spread backwards, so to speak, into his earthly life" and "the recollection of the historical Jesus was gradually more and more thoroughly penetrated by this idea."[116] The Matthean and Lukan genealogies were considered by Weiss "a surviving fragment of old Jewish Christian apologetics" that sought to prove that Jesus was indeed the Son of David.[117]

In these early layers of tradition as delineated by Weiss, the "historical, earthly traits" repeatedly broke through the tradition, but as time passed the tradition sought "to release the now-exalted Lord from all his earthly and human contacts and relations."[118] Weiss saw precursors to later Pauline and Hellenistic Christologies in the utilization of the title "Son of Man" in the tradition. While it remained an open question to Weiss how often the historical Jesus used the term as a self-designation, the Palestinian community's application of the title to Jesus as the Danielic and Enochic Son of Man was a watershed

[115] Weiss, *Earliest Christianity*, 1:118–22.

[116] Weiss, *Earliest Christianity*, 1:123.

[117] Weiss, *Earliest Christianity*, 1:124.

[118] Weiss, *Earliest Christianity*, 1:125.

moment in the history of Christianity.[119] The community now identified Jesus as superior to all other human beings, the one whose true origins were in the heavens and who has a heavenly nature. The title also suggested to Weiss that the Palestinian community believed in the preexistence of Jesus, who as the Son of Man was the one whom Enoch saw in his vision (1 Enoch 39).[120] The Palestinian church specifically connected the death and exaltation of Jesus to the exaltation of the Son of Man, or as Weiss clarifies "exaltation to be Son of Man."[121] In this way, belief in Jesus as the exalted Son of Man was "carried back into the earthly life of Jesus" and became the dominant view presented in the four Gospels.[122]

2.1.5 Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918)

Although Wellhausen was not a "member" of the history of religions school, Gressmann recalled that he considered its members his "ill-bred sons," and Troeltsch considered Wellhausen among the scholars "who have given up the last remnant of the idea of truth supernaturally revealed in the Bible, and who work exclusively with the universally valid instruments of psychology and history" and thus shared a common history of religions method.[123] In the first decade of the twentieth century, Wellhausen

[119] Weiss, *Earliest Christianity*, 1:129.

[120] Weiss, *Earliest Christianity*, 1:128.

[121] Weiss, *Earliest Christianity*, 1:127.

[122] Weiss, *Earliest Christianity*, 1:127.

[123] Respectively, Gressmann, "Albert Eichhorn," 34; Troeltsch, "Dogmatics," 4–5. Cf., Nils A. Dahl, "Wellhausen on the New Testament," in *Julius Wellhausen and His Prologomena to the History of Israel*, ed. Douglas A. Knight, *Semeia* 25 (1982): 89–110, here 89–90.

turned his attention to the Gospels and applied the same critical method as he had to the traditions of Israel, which resulted in commentaries on all four Gospels and an introduction to the Synoptic Gospels published within a six year period.[124] Within these works, Wellhausen's approach to the Jesus tradition furthered the prior work of Wrede and provided a link between Wrede and the form-critical agenda of Bultmann.[125] Allen Wikgren's description of form criticism as "an elaboration, modification and systematization of [Wellhausen's] methods and conclusions," while overstated, is in many ways correct. [126] The results of Wellhausen's Gospel research, and especially his emphasis on the church's shaping of the tradition, helped to set the scholarly agenda for much of the twentieth-century.

2.1.5.1 Individual Units of Tradition

Behind the written Gospels Wellhausen reconstructed the oral Jesus tradition, which consisted of scattered material (*zerstreuten Stoff*) that was shaped and expanded as individual units within popular tradition.[127] Wellhausen's comments on the tradition come in places where he compares the proximity of both Q and Mark, which he considered the oldest sources for the reconstruction of the historical Jesus, to the original

[124] Smend, "Wellhausen in Göttingen," 321; Baird, *History*, 2:152; Julius Wellhausen, *Das Evangelium Marci* (Berlin: Reimer, 1903); idem., *Das Evangelium Lucae* (Berlin: Reimer, 1904); idem., *Das Evangelium Matthaei* (Berlin: Reimer, 1904); idem., *Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelein*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Reimer, 1911); idem., *Das Evangelium Johannis* (Berlin:Reimer, 1908).

[125] Dunn, "Great Untranslated," 205; Cf. Dahl, "Wellhausen," 98.

[126] Allen Wikgren, "Wellhausen on the Synoptic Gospels: A Centenary Appraisal," *Journal of Bible and Religion* 12.3 (1944): 174–80, here 179.

[127] Wellhausen, *Einleitung*, 32.

Jesus tradition.[128] By comparing these two sources of early Christianity, Wellhausen determined that the Jesus tradition represented in Mark contained the most primitive Jesus tradition for two reasons.

First, the Markan sayings traditions are found only as points within individual narratives have been created to situate a saying of Jesus (apophthegms).[129] The longer discourses of Mark were considered amalgamations of unrelated sayings by Wellhausen, whereas he considered the Q discourses large blocks of didactic material that contained uniformity of content.[130] Second, the Markan material was written in popular language, while Q, was superior in both its literary form and language.[131] In his view this testified to the primitivity of the Markan material as it was transmitted orally in independent units, which became the starting point in his attempt to separate the Jesus tradition into layers in order to identify the church's influence.

2.1.5.2 Narrative Framework of the Tradition

Any connection between pericopes within the Gospel of Mark were viewed by Wellhausen as the work of the evangelist. Thus, Mark, was not a narrative of Jesus' life ("Geschichte Jesu") but a collection of loose traditions, narratives, and sayings ("lose Stücke, Erzählungen und Aussprüche") that the evangelist arranged into three periods.[132]

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[128] John Timmer, *Julius Wellhausen and the Synoptic Gospels: A Study in Tradition Growth* Academisch Proefschrift. University of Amsterdam (Rotterdam: Bonder-Offset, 1970), 42–48.

[129] Wellhausen, *Marci*, 17.

[130] Wellhausen, *Marci*, 34, 75–76; idem., *Einleitung*, 75.

[131] Wellhausen, *Marci*, 69; idem., *Einleitung,* 162.

[132] Wellhausen, *Marci*, 9.

These three periods in the life of Jesus were identified by Wellhausen as ministry in Capernaum (Mark 1:16–5:43), wandering in the territory of Philip and the region of the Decapolis (6:1–10:52), and the final days in and near Jerusalem (11:1–16:8). This scheme was a construction of the evangelist, whose chief contribution was the imposition of a chronological and topographical framework for the individual, disparate units of Jesus tradition.[133]

The creation of a narrative framework included redactional activities such as introductions (Mark 2:18), conclusions (11:11), transitions (3:6), transpositions (6:14b–16a), summaries (1:35–39), esoteric passages (8:31–31; 9:30–32; 10:32–34), addresses (7:1), commentaries (15:42), harmonization (8:13–21), and Old Testament quotations (1:2–3).[134] Wellhausen agreed with Wrede that the Gospel was neither a historical document nor a source of information on the historical Jesus, but belonged to the history of dogma, though he did discover scattered pieces of historical tradition.[135] Wellhausen's emphasis on the redactional activity of the evangelist, especially the creation of introductions and summaries as he provided a framework for the disparate Jesus tradition, foreshadowed the later work of Schmidt, who provided a thorough critique of the Markan framework.

[133] Wellhausen, *Einleitung*, 38.

[134] Wellhausen, *Einleitung*, 45. C.f. Timmer, *Julius Wellhausen,* 51–67.

[135] Wellhausen, *Einleitung*, 43, 103; Johannes Schreiber, "Wellhausen und Wrede: Eine methodische Differenz," *ZNW* 80 (1989): 24–41, here 24–25.

2.1.5.3 Tradition Shaped by the Faith of the Church

Since there was little historical information about Jesus available in the Gospels, Wellhausen viewed the Jesus tradition as evidence of the power of Jesus' personality on the church and their faith in Jesus as Messiah.[136] Although Jesus' crucifixion devastated his followers, he remained the focal point of their lives and, due in large part to the impression he made upon them while living, the disciples convinced themselves that he had risen from the dead and been exalted as heavenly Messiah.[137] Therefore, for Wellhausen the Jesus tradition reflected, not the life of the historical Jesus, but the faith and practice of the church.[138]

Wellhausen considered the mentions in the Gospels of fasting, the Last Supper, baptism, and even the list of the twelve disciples as windows into the cultic and ecclesial practices of the early church, not actual events from the life of Jesus. The discussion about fasting in Mark 2:18–22 did not actually occur between Jesus and John the Baptist, but between their disciples and provided a justification for Jesus' disciples to adopt the practice of fasting from John's disciples.[139] Similarly, Wellhausen did not consider the Last Supper (Mark 14:22–25) to be a Passover meal or the initiation of a practice that Jesus intended his followers to repeat.[140] Instead, in Wellhausen's reconstruction Jesus brought his disciples together in order to establish a bond between them so they would

[136] Wellhausen, *Einleitung*, 77, 104, 114, 168–70.

[137] Wellhausen, *Einleitung*, 149, 175.

[138] Wellhausen, *Einleitung*, 175.

[139] Wellhausen, *Marci*, 18–19.

[140] Wellhausen, *Marci,* 117–18.

remain together after his death.[141] In this way, according to Wellhausen, Jesus sought to form a community, not an ongoing practice of the supper. It was only later that the church interpreted it as a rite to be observed regularly and the Last Supper account in Mark provided justification for the practice, not a recounting of an historical event.[142]

Wellhausen also traced the development of Christology through the Jesus tradition where his views about the religious value of the tradition placed him on firm history of religions ground. Although he considered the Markan tradition to be earliest, Wellhausen did not consider the Markan tradition to have more religious value than Matthew or Luke. In fact, the later Gospel literature was of more significance because it was not impeded by historical memory and thus developed with the faith of the church and was more relevant to subsequent generations of Christians.[143]

2.1.6 Wilhelm Bousset (1865–1920)

Bousset was a prolific writer, producing both major works in biblical scholarship and completing popular level works in order to ensure religious education for the laity.[144] His important contributions to NT scholarship came in his works on late Judaism,

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[141] Wellhausen, *Marci*, 118.

[142] For a full discussion of Wellhausen's reconstruction of the Last Supper, Timmer, *Julius Wellhausen*, 86–92.

[143] Wellhausen, *Einleitung*, 168.

[144] Bousset's popular level books included, *Das Wesen Der Religion: Dargestellt an ihrer Geschichte*, 4th ed., Lebensfragen 28 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1920); ET: *What is Religion?,* trans., F. B. Low (London: T Fisher Unwin, 1907); idem., *Unser Gottesglaube*, Religionsgeschichtliche Volksbücher 5, Reihe, 6. Heft (J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1908); ET: *The Faith of a Modern Protestant*, trans. F. B. Low (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909); idem., *Jesus*, 4th ed. Religionsgeschichtlichen Volksbücher; 1 Reihe, 2/3. Heft (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1922); ET: *Jesus*, trans. Janet Penrose Trevelyan, ed. W. D. Morrison (London: Williams & Norgate, 1906).

Gnosticism, and his *Kyrios Christos.*[145] The call from Wrede for the NT and related literature to be understood based on the history of piety received an epoch-making answer in *Kyrios Christos*. Hurtado rightly declared it "the high-water mark" of the history of religions school because it set the agenda for the study of NT Christology for nearly a century.[146] This work is shaped by underlying assumptions about the nature of the form and transmission of the Jesus tradition that was later accepted and expanded by the form critics, particularly Bousset's characterization of Palestinian and Hellenistic Christianity and ways in which Christology was Hellenized as the Christian movement spread out of Palestine.

2.1.6.1 Individual Units of Tradition

Prior to tracing the development of belief in Jesus as the Messiah, Bousset briefly stated his view of the nature of the Jesus tradition. In a manner similar to other members of the history of religions school, Bousset described the pre-literary Jesus tradition as "individual fragments" (*einzelnen Mosaikstücken*).[147] In the second edition of *Kyrios Christos*, Bousset noted the importance of developing a new method of investigation into

[145] Respectively, Wilhelm Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums in späthellenistischen Zeitalter*, 3rd ed., ed. Hugo Gressmann, HNT 21 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1966); idem., *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*; idem., *Kyrios Christos: Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenaeus*, FRLANT 4; (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913); ET: *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus*, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970).

[146] Larry Hurtado, "New Testament Christology: A Critique of Bousset's Influence," *TS* 40.2 (1979): 306–17, here 306. Similarly, H. G. Graf, *History,*4:371. Cf., Larry Hurtado, "Wilhelm Bousset's *Kyrios Christos*: An Appreciative and Critical Assessment," *Early Christianity* 6 (2015): 17–29.

[147] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 69.

the oral tradition and in a footnote noted the initial attempt of Dibelius in 1919.[148] Consequently, Bousset, like Weiss, did not provide a thorough discussion of the transmission of the oral units of tradition, but it was an underlying assumption in his work.

2.1.6.2 Narrative Framework of the Tradition

The earliest Gospel was, in Bousset's view, composed out of individual units and written down to provide an outline for the life of Jesus.[149] Accordingly, Mark was simply a series of Jesus' teaching, miracle stories, and sayings which were only lightly threaded together to form a narrative.[150] Bousset sought to associate the connectedness of the Gospel narrative to the messianic faith of the early community. In early portions of Mark where there was no discernable connection between pericopes, there was less explicit instances of messianic faith's influence on the tradition.[151] In contrast to the early chapters of Mark, Bousset viewed the Markan narrative as more connected beginning with the triumphal entry (Mark 11:1–11), which provided a clearer picture of the church's emphasis on the messianic identity of Jesus.[152] Just as Bousset did not treat the transmission of individual units in depth, he did not elaborate on the creation of the

[148] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 69, n. 2. Prior to his death in 1920 Bousset had completed revisions for the first four chapters. Footnotes were added to subsequent chapters by Gustav Krüger and Rudolf Bultmann based on the hand-written notes of Bousset.

[149] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 69.

[150] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 70

[151] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 76–77.

[152] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 71.

Markan framework for the life of Jesus, except to connect it to the ways in which the faith of the church shaped the Jesus tradition.

2.1.6.3 Tradition Shaped by the Faith of the Church

Bousset assumed that from the beginning the earliest Palestinian community embedded its view that Jesus was the Messiah within the Jesus tradition: "For the gospel tradition is sketched from the first from the standpoint of a community of messianic faith and for the purpose of bearing witness to this messianic faith."[153] Bousset built upon the work of Wilhelm Heitmüller, who argued that Paul received a Hellenistic Christianity that emphasized the atonement through the crucifixion of Jesus and used the title κύριος in reference to Jesus, which meant Pauline Christianity did not come from a revelation from the historical Jesus, but from the exalted Lord in the Hellenistic church.[154] In Heitmüller's reconstruction, the chain of development was the historical Jesus, the primitive Aramaic community, Hellenistic Christianity, and, finally, Pauline Christianity.[155] Bousset adopted this developmental view of Christology and stressed the

[153] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 33.

[154] Wilhelm Heitmüller, "Zum Problem Paulus und Jesus," *ZNW* 13 (1912): 320–37, here 325–26, 334. Heitmüller was Bultmann's *Doktorvater* and the second edition of Bultmann's *History* was dedicated to his memory. Bultmann also wrote a tribute to Heitmüller in *Die Christliche Welt,* 40 (1926): 209–13. Eugene E. Lemcio, "The Unifying Kerygma of the New Testament," *JSNT* 33 (1998): 3–17, here 4, observed that a comparison of the table of contents of Bultmann's *New Testament Theology* with Heitmüller's article reveals the influence of Heitmüller in Bultmann's work, which was, in many ways, an exposition of Heitmüller's understanding of the kerygma.

[155] Heitmüller, "Zum Problem," 330.

stratification of the Jesus tradition into identifiable layers.[156] The oldest Jesus tradition did not represent the historical Jesus but the life and faith of the Palestinian church.[157] Christological titles played an especially important role in identifying the layers of tradition because, according to Bousset, the tradition did not need to use them in the simple narrative of the Gospels; the name of Jesus would have sufficed.[158] However, the presence of honorifics conveyed the Palestinian church's fundamental beliefs about Jesus' messianic status. Thus it was not surprising to Bousset that the title Χριστός was present at decisive points of the Markan narrative (Mark 8:29; 14:61; 15:32), for there was no doubt in his mind that the Palestinian Christians thought of Jesus as Messiah; these usages may even rest on solid historical tradition.[159] The title "Son of David" also appeared in the earliest layer of tradition (Mark 10:47), but did not play a significant role and Bousset described the primitive community as "at best indifferent and even distrustful" toward this title.[160] Instead, he emphasized the title Son of Man, which appeared only as a self-designation of Jesus within the Gospels and so dominated them that others fade into the background.[161]

Bousset argued that the title was not used by Jesus himself but was applied to him by the primitive community in order to connect him to the apocalyptic messianic figures

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[156] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 14, acknowledged the work of Heitmüller and the history of religions school in the development of these ideas.

[157] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 33.

[158] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 33.

[159] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 34.

[160] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 35.

[161] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 35.

of Daniel 7 and 1 Enoch.[162] According to Bousset, the title helped the community solve the mystery of the crucified Jesus: "The cross became the bridge which connects the lowliness of Jesus of Nazareth with the heavenly splendor of the Son of Man."[163] Bousset divided Jesus' self-designation as Son of Man into two categories; at times Jesus spoke as the Son of Man in the present (e.g., Mark 2:10, 28) while at other times retained a future eschatological character (e.g., the passion predictions, Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33).[164] Therefore, Bousset concluded, with Wrede and Wellhausen, that the Gospels did not represent history, but the messianic faith of the Palestinian church imposed onto the life of Jesus. Although the Jesus tradition retained historical information about Jesus, he emphasized how the Palestinian community fictionalized "the picture of Jesus with the glitter of the miraculous," "elaborated and retouched" by attributing fulfilled prophecy to his life, and emphasized the sacrificial nature of his death.[165] For Bousset, "this peculiar combination of the historical figure of Jesus and the proclamation of the community" created a picture of Jesus from their messianic faith that shaped the history of Christianity.[166]

[162] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 44–47.

[163] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 48.

[164] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 40–41.

[165] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 103, 113, 115.

[166] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 117.

2.1.7 Summary

The previous sections reveal that while there was no unified conception of Jesus tradition shared by the history of religions school, there certainly were enough commonalities to summarize and present a coherent history of religions understanding of Jesus tradition. First, the pre-literary Jesus tradition circulated orally as individual units apart from any larger narrative context. This aspect of Jesus tradition was largely an assumption of the history of religions school but will be further developed in the early works of the form critics, especially Schmidt's work that served as a bridge between the history of religions school and the rise of the form-critical method. Second, the second evangelist was simply a compiler whose main contribution was to put these disparate Jesus traditions into a chronological framework. This framework had little, if any, value in reconstructing the life of the historical Jesus but did reveal much about the life and theology of the earliest Christian communities. Third, and finally, the Jesus tradition was thoroughly shaped by the earliest Christians' faith in Jesus as Messiah. When laid out this way, it is easy to see the natural development from the history of religions method to the form-critical method and the ways in which Schmidt, Bultmann, and Dibelius systematized these observations and applied them thoroughly to the Gospels in order to trace the history and development of the earliest Jesus tradition.

3. The Exceptional Status of the Passion Narrative in the History of Religions School

Within the history of religions school, there were only two scholars who saw the problems their understanding of tradition presented when examining the Markan passion narrative. For Weiss and Bousset, the Markan passion narrative stood out because of its

narrative coherence among the individual units of tradition. Their observations and explanations for the centrality of the passion narrative prefigured the form-critical quest for the preMarkan passion narrative. Weiss saw clearly that his understanding of the Jesus tradition made the passion narrative unique, though he did not attempt a reconstruction, and therefore he should be seen as the inaugurator of the quest for the preMarkan passion narrative.

3.1 Weiss and the Coherence of the Passion Narrative

The passion narrative (*Leidensgeschichte*) was, according to Weiss, the only long, coherent section ("der einzige längere, in sich zusammenhängende Abschnitt") that was a literary whole ("ein literarisches Ganze").[167] Weiss stated that the passion narrative contained an indissoluble chronological context ("einen unlöslichen chronologischen Zusammenhang") and that the primary tradition used by the evangelist was likely written, which made the preMarkan passion narrative the first piece of written Jesus tradition.[168] Therefore, the passion narrative was unique in that it was an extended narrative written down prior to the Gospels, a time when Weiss considered the community unable to produce any sort of coherent narrative. Additionally, because Weiss considered illiteracy one of the defining characteristics of the Palestinian community, it is striking that he identified the preMarkan passion narrative as a written source for the Gospel of Mark. The small inconsistencies within the passion narrative provided Weiss with evidence that the evangelist supplemented an original narrative with secondary traditions through

[167] Weiss, *Das älteste Evangelium*, 65.

[168] Weiss, *Das älteste Evangelium*, 283.

which he brought the intentions of his Gospel to perfection.[169] Although the passion narrative was written early, Weiss did not find solely historical information within it, yet there were historical data embedded within Mark 14–16. Instead, Weiss saw the editorial hand of the evangelist, whose creative imagination was seen clearly as he preached the gospel of the cross, that the Son of God suffered for the forgiveness of sin.[170]

3.2 Bousset and the Passion Narrative as the Epitome of Palestinian Messianic Faith

As observed above, the coherence of the Markan passion narrative, which for Bousset ran from the triumphal entry through the resurrection account, was unique in the development of Jesus tradition. Although the rest of the tradition existed in independent units, "the individual component parts" of the passion narrative "never led such a separate existence."[171] Therefore, Bousset concluded that the passion narrative represented "the most ancient kernel of a coherent tradition of the 'life' of Jesus" and epitomized the early community's messianic faith:

> A look at the passion narrative shows us how it is wholly dominated by the messianic idea and everything in it is placed under the rubric of the proof that this crucified Jesus is nevertheless the Messiah, the king of the Jews. This certainty rings through the whole presentation of the tragedy with a triumphant sound and gives to it the character of great inner calm and of concentrated power. It is a witness of faith of the first rank which the primitive community here gives, and as such it has had an aftereffect with a force unequaled.[172]

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[169] Weiss, *Das älteste Evangelium*, 66–71, 283.

[170] Weiss, *Das älteste Evangelium*, 70, 106.

[171] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 70.

[172] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 71.

From this programmatic statement of the origin and intent of the passion narrative, Bousset endeavored to show how the early community rewrote the history of Jesus' final days on the basis of their messianic faith.

This messianic faith was read back into each scene of the Markan passion narrative and represented "the full force and daring of the faith in him who has been elevated to be Son of Man."[173] Jesus' entry to Jerusalem was in reality a popular disturbance that was presented as a messianic proclamation.[174] The presence of the title "Son of Man" (14:21; 41) revealed the dogmatic reworking of the early community.[175] Similarly, Jesus' reply in Mark 14:62 reflected the shifting focus in the early church to the conception of Jesus' messiahship from Jewish eschatological expectations to a Christian eschatology centered upon the return of Christ as judge.[176] In these ways Bousset sought to show the ways in which the Jesus tradition was rewritten by the messianic faith of the Palestinian community to create "a fiction which conceals within itself a kernel of historical truth."[177]

4. Conclusion: Launching the Quest for the PreMarkan Passion Narrative

The preceding survey of works from the history of religions school revealed commonalities in their approach to Jesus tradition. They all agreed that the pre-literary

[173] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 72.

[174] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 72.

[175] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 41.

[176] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 46–47, 73–74.

[177] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 72.

tradition was transmitted orally in independent units which were pulled together by the evangelist to construct the written Gospel. Consequently, the narrative framework of the Gospel of Mark did not represent reliable information about the chronology of the historical Jesus. Instead, the independent units of Jesus tradition were grouped thematically based on the theological interests of the evangelist. And, significantly, the Jesus tradition was shaped in the oral period in the Palestinian church in light of the messianic faith of the community and therefore the Gospels belonged, as Wrede stated, to the history of dogma. The significant difference among those of the history of religions school was whether the messianic faith of the church could be separated from the historical material embedded within the Jesus tradition.

The problems the passion narrative presented to this understanding of Jesus tradition were acknowledged by Weiss and Bousset. Their statements on the narrative coherence of the passion narrative in contrast to the rest of the tradition and its central role in faith of the early church foreshadows the emphases of the form critics. When Bousset referred to the Palestinian church's creation of the passion narrative having an "aftereffect with a force unequaled," he referred to the central role that the narrative of Jesus' death and resurrection played in the later Hellenistic church, Pauline Christianity, and beyond. In a similar vein, the observations of Weiss and Bousset concerning the passion narrative had an aftereffect that launched twentieth-century scholarship's quest for the preMarkan passion narrative as the form critics accepted and built upon their views and sought to understand the origin and development of the Jesus tradition and elevated the passion narrative to its exalted position among the preMarkan tradition.

2. The Birth of the PreMarkan Passion Narrative: The Form-Critical Conception of Jesus Tradition

While the history of religions method provided NT scholars tools with which to situate the rise of Christianity within the larger religious world of the first century, it did not, however, provide the means to understand and trace the development of the Jesus tradition from its oral beginnings to the written Gospels. In order to accomplish this task a new method of investigation arose from the history of religions—form criticism (*Formgeschichte*). The following sections will demonstrate how form criticism adopted the conception of Jesus tradition from the history of religions school and developed methods in order to understand the laws that governed the tradition prior to the composition of the Gospels. As this understanding of tradition was further refined, the preMarkan passion narrative was elevated to a preeminent position within the pre-literary Jesus tradition as the form critics sought to understand its stages of development in oral tradition, its use in the life of the early Palestinian church, and how it reflected the evolving Christological beliefs of the earliest Christian communities. This chapter demonstrates that the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis arose, not neither from source criticism nor from literary criticism, but from a form-critical conception of Jesus tradition. The form-critical method led the way in Synoptic and historical Jesus studies for nearly a century and, as later chapters show, all subsequent attempts to reconstruct the history and development of a preMarkan passion narrative relied upon a form-critical

notion of Jesus tradition. First, I will examine the writings of Schmidt, Dibelius, and Bultmann in order to sketch a form-critical picture of the pre-literary Jesus tradition, paying careful attention to the scholarly influences and the differences between each early form critic. The form-critical conception of Jesus tradition led each of the three early form critics to posit the uniqueness of the preMarkan passion narrative and sketch the contents and development of this early narrative. Finally, this chapter ends with the work of Georg Bertram, an early form critic who dissented from this consensus and argued that the evangelist constructed Mark 14–16 from individual units, the same way the previous thirteen chapters were fashioned. Bertram's work found few adherents and the consensus established by Schmidt, Dibelius, and Bultmann became the consensus among NT scholars. These early form-critical investigations into the pre-literary Jesus tradition plotted a course of investigation into the origins of the passion narrative that lasted nearly a century.

1. Jesus Tradition in Form Criticism

The form-critical method developed with the influence of the history of religions school in the works of its three leading representatives—Karl Ludwig Schmidt, Martin Dibelius, and Rudolf Bultmann. Additionally, Georg Bertram, whose work will be examined at the end of this chapter, published the first form-critical study devoted solely to the passion narrative.[1] As already observed, in their attempt to go behind the Gospels and trace the

[1] One additional scholar deserves mention in the application of form criticism to the Gospels—Martin Albertz (1883–1956 Martin Albertz, *Die synoptischen Streitgespräche: Ein beitrag zur Formengeschichte des Urchristentums* (Berlin: Trowitzsch & Sons, 1921); idem., "Zur Formengeschichte der Auferstehungsberichte," *ZNW* 21 (1922): 259–69. idem., *Die Botschaft des Neuen Testamentes,* 2 vols. (Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1947–1957); idem., "Kerygma und Theologie im Neuen Testament," *ZNW* 46 (1955): 267–68. For a summary of Albertz's form-critical contribution, Klauck,

development of the Jesus tradition in its oral stage these three scholars adopted fundamental assumptions about the nature of Jesus tradition from the history of religions school. I will trace these assumptions through the major works of the form critics, with particular emphasis on those completed in the late 1910's and early 1920's, noting how they formalized the history of religions approach and pushed the form-critical method to its extremes, particularly as they sought to make historical judgments about the reliability of the Jesus tradition.

1.1 Karl Ludwig Schmidt (1891–1956)

While serving in World War I, in which he suffered a serious head injury, Schmidt continued his work on his thesis on the Gospel of Mark while serving in field hospitals.[2] After the war, he returned to Berlin and submitted *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu* in 1917, a work which helped to set the agenda for the next century of Gospel research.[3] Schmidt's influential work occupied an intermediate position between the history of religions school and the rise of form criticism. In his early history and

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"Hundert Jahre Formgeschichte," 74–76. For a discussion of Albertz's work in contrast to Bultmann, Robert W. Yarbrough, *The Salvation Historical Fallacy? Reassessing the History of New Testament Theology*, History of Biblical Interpretation Series, 2 (Leiden: Deo, 2004), 299–316. Albertz posited a preMarkan source set in Galilee that contained Mark 2:1–3:6 that the evangelist took over in whole. Because Albertz did not sketch a form-critical program as Bultmann and Dibelius, was not as influential as Schmidt, and did not write on the preMarkan passion narrative, I have limited my discussion of his work. In a brief section in his NT theology, Albertz described the passion narrative in traditional form-critical terms: "Das Zeugnis von der Passion fordert eine im ganzen geschlosene, einheitliche mündliche Erzählung," *Die Botschaft des Neuen Testaments*: *Die Entstehung der Botschaft: Die Entstehung des Evangeliums* (Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1947), 128.

[2] Andreas Mühling, *Karl Ludwig Schmidt: "Und Wissenschaft ist Leben,"* Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 21; Baird, *History*, 2: 270.

[3] Karl Ludwig Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu: Literarkritische Untersuchungen zur ältesten Jesusüberlieferung* (Berlin: Trowitzsch & Sohn, 1919).; ET: *The Framework of the Story of Jesus*: *Literary-Critical Investigations of the Earliest Jesus Tradition*, trans. and ed. Byron R. McCane (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2021).

critique of form criticism, Erich Fascher placed Schmidt with the precursors to form criticism, and recently scholars observed that the conclusions of *Der Rahmen* provided the basis for form criticism and modern research into the Synoptic Gospels.[4] Schmidt acknowledged the influence of Weiss and Wellhausen on his work, although in his opinion both scholars overestimated the value of the Gospel of Mark for historical information about Jesus.[5]

1.1.1 Individual Units of Tradition

When Schmidt described the oldest Jesus tradition as "'pericope' tradition" ("*Perikopen'-Überlieferung*"), he stood firmly in the tradition of the history of religions school.[6] Through a detailed literary analysis Schmidt attempted to show that the Jesus traditions in Mark originally circulated as individual units, without any context, and the framework of the Gospel has no historical merit.[7] According to Schmidt, the oldest Jesus

[4] Fascher, *Formgeschichtliche Methode*, 46–49; W. G. Kümmel, *The New Testament*, 328; idem., *Introduction to the New Testament*, trans., Howard Clark Lee (London: Abdingdon, 1975), 50; James M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical* Jesus, SBT 25 (London: SCM Press, 1959), 35–36; Norman Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970), 15; John K. Riches, *Century*, 51; idem., "Karl Ludwig Schmidt's *The Place of the Gospels in the General History of Literature*," in *The Place of the Gospels in the General History of Literature*, trans. Byron R. McCane (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 2002), xi–xiv; William R. Telford, "The Interpretation of Mark: A History of Developments and Issues," in *The Interpretation of Mark*, 2nd ed. William R. Telford (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), 1–62, here 5; Edgar Krentz, "Karl Ludwig Schmidt," in *DMBI*, 893; Edgar V. McKinght, *What is Form Criticism?* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 14–15, observed that Schmidt's work stands with Dibelius and Bultmann at the beginning of form criticism, but Schmidt left the work of prying into the pre-literary tradition to Dibelius and Bultmann.

[5] Schmidt, *Der Rahmen*, 15–16; idem., *Framework*, 14. Cf., David R. Hall, *The Gospel Framework, Fiction or Fact?: A Critical Evaluation of* Der Rahmen der Geeschichte Jesu *by Karl Ludwig Schmi*dt (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998), 131–51.

[6] Schmidt, *Der Rahmen*, iii; idem., *Framework*, xxiv.

[7] Schmidt, *Der Rahmen*, iii, 16–17, 317; idem., *Framework*, 14–15, 294.

tradition was transmitted as individual scenes and sayings ("einzelner Szenen und einzelner Aussprüche") without chronological or topographical marking.[8]

In Schmidt's reconstruction, the source for these individual Jesus traditions came from a group of story-tellers (*Erzählerkreis*) who transmitted the traditions orally. When the early Christians were together, these story-tellers told of the words and deeds of Jesus, and when one finished, another would continue and begin to tell another story about Jesus.[9] With this view of the oral tradition, Schmidt concludes that in this informal exchange (*zwanglos Austausch*) the narrative Jesus tradition (*Jesuserzählung*) was casually ordered together.[10] Most of these stories began with καί, which remained in the oral tradition and was also put into the written tradition by the evangelist as he attempted to put them into a new context.[11]

Not only was the simple introductory καί retained in the written Gospel, some traditions retained a narrative introduction (*Erzählungseinleitungen*) that "travelled" with the individual tradition, regardless of the context or sequence of events.[12] Schmidt identified phrases such as "They went to Capernaum," (Mark 1:21) as introductions that travelled with a tradition and remained regardless of the context of the re-telling.[13] For example, Schmidt criticized both Weiss and Wellhausen for thinking that the boats in

[8] Schmidt, *Der Rahmen*, iii; idem, *Framework,* xxi.

[9] Schmidt, *Der Rahmen*, 19; idem, *Framework*, 17.

[10] Schmidt, *Der Rahmen*, 19; idem, *Framework*, 16–17.

[11] Schmidt, *Der Rahmen*, 19; idem, *Framework*, 16–17.

[12] Schmidt, *Der Rahmen*, vi; idem, *Framework*, xxii.

[13] Schmidt, *Der Rahmen,* 52; idem, *Framework*, 44.

Mark 4:1, 35 could be historical remembrances. Instead, these sorts of details were, according to Schmidt, remnants of the oral tradition that Mark has taken over blindly and attempted to fit within his framework.[14]

The influence of Schmidt's characterization of the pre-literary Jesus tradition as "'pericope' tradition" upon later scholarship should not be understated. Although they were writing concurrently, both Dibelius and Bultmann viewed Schmidt's work positively and his findings were adopted as an assumption that guided their own form-critical research. Schmidt's work was so foundational to Gospel research in the twentieth century that seventy-five years later Telford stated that though his results were later qualified, research had not overturned Schmidt's conclusions regarding the nature of the pre-literary Jesus tradition.[15]

1.1.2 Narrative Framework of the Tradition

The work of the evangelist was, according to Schmidt, simply the arrangement of the individual units of Jesus tradition alongside one another in a framework (*Rahmenwerk*) as he had received them. The primary way in which the evangelist structured these individual units was through use of summary statements (*Sammelberichte*), which, according to Schmidt, were created by the evangelist from pre-

[14] Schmidt, *Der Rahmen*, 137 idem, *Framework*, 125.

[15] Telford, "Interpretation of Mark," 5. Christopher Tuckett, "Form Criticism," in *Jesus in Memory: Traditions in Oral and Scribal Perspective*, eds. Werner Kelber and Samuel Byrskog (Waco: Baylor University, 2009), 28, stated that this basic claim is still widely accepted. There were significant critiques of Schmidt's hypothesis, notably, C. H. Dodd, "The Framework of the Gospel Narrative," in *New Testament Studies* (Manchester: Manchester University, 1954), 1–11; Ernst Lohmeyer, *Galiäa und Jerusalem,* FRLANT 34 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963); R. H. Lightfoot, *Locality and Doctrine in the Gospels* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938). See Chapter 3 for further discussion.

existing tradition in order to connect disparate units of Jesus tradition into a larger narrative structure.[16] These summary statements described the ministry of Jesus in broad and general terms and were used to transition from one unit to the next and helped to situate the incidents told in more detail into the broader ministry of Jesus. Therefore, Schmidt concluded that the topographical and chronological details in the Markan narrative had no relation to the life of the historical Jesus.[17] The only exceptions he considered were details that secured a unit to a particular location, such as the Syrophoenician woman in Mark 7:24–30, and the passion narrative, which I will discuss below.

2.1.1.3 Gattung and Sitz im Leben

Since the Gospels were the end result of a long period of oral transmission, Schmidt did not consider them literary works and consequently they did not belong to any genre within the history of literature.[18] In contrast to scholars who viewed the Gospels as biography, Schmidt classified the genre of the Gospels as folk biography, "popular collections of words and deeds, sayings and stories."[19] Ancient biographies, such as Xenophon's *Memorabilia* or the peripatetic and Alexandrian biographies, were considered *Hochliteratur*, the works of authorial personalities

[16] Schmidt, *Der Rahmen*, 19–20, 82, 105–06, 162–63; idem, *Framework*, 17–18, 73, 95–96, 149. Schmidt considered the following passages summary statements: Mark 1:14–15, 21–22, 39; 2:13; 3:7–12; 5:21; 6:6b, 12–13, 53–56; 10:1.

[17] Schmidt, *Der Rahmen*, 105, 160, 238; idem, *Framework*, 95–96, 146, 220.

[18] Schmidt, *Place*, 4–13, 27.

[19] Schmidt, *Place*, 37.

(*Schriftstellerpersönlichkeit*).[20] The Gospels, on the other hand, were *Kleinliteratur*, the written remnant of a community's transmission of oral tradition. Therefore, according to Schmidt, the Gospels are analogous to the Faust and Francis legends or the *Apophhtegmata Patrum*, which grew out of oral tradition used in cultic settings.[21]

The cultic origin of the Jesus tradition also provided Schmidt with its primary *Sitz im Leben*. Schmidt concluded, in agreement with Bultmann, that the Gospels were primarily cult-legends, written for both private and public worship in the Christ-cult.[22] Schmidt made no attempt to further define what he meant by the use of the tradition in the cultus of early Christianity or to elaborate on the exact correlation between literary form and *Sitz im Leben*. Above all else, Schmidt emphasized the connection between *Kleinliteratur* and the limited authorial activity of the evangelist as he wrote down the Jesus tradition.

1.2 Martin Dibelius (1883–1947)

In his autobiographical reflections, Dibelius noted the significant influence that Gunkel played in his form-critical analysis of early Christian literature.[23] While Gunkel intended his method to be genre criticism (*Gattungsgeschichte*) or literary criticism (*Literaturgeschichte*), Dibelius coined the term form criticism (*Formgeschichte*) to

[20] Schmidt, *Place*, 4.

[21] Schmidt, *Place*, 68–76.

[22] Schmidt, *Place*, 68–72; Bultmann, *History*, 370–71.

[23] Martin Dibelius, "Zeit und Arbeit," in *Die Religionswissenschaft der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen*, ed. Erich Strange (Leipzig: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1929), 4: 17–18.

designate the method as a history based on forms.[24] For Dibelius, the distinction was crucial for his form-critical method of investigating the Gospels. While literary criticism could be applied to proper literature, Dibelius classified the Jesus traditions as popular tradition (*Volksüberlieferung*) that originated in unliterary communities and were handed down by anonymous persons.[25] This classification led Dibelius to conceive a slightly different method, built on the methodological foundation of Gunkel and the history of religions school, that focused on the laws of oral transmission of forms within early Christianity.[26]

1.2.1 Individual Units of Tradition

Dibelius adopted Schmidt's conclusion that the Gospels were formed out of "small separate pieces" (*der kleinen Einheiten*) and set out to uncover the laws that these pericopes obeyed in their transmission.[27] For Dibelius, this was a presupposition of his method and necessary for him to complete "the most important work" of historical criticism—the separation between the work of the evangelists and the Jesus traditions

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[24] Buss, *Biblical Form Criticism*, 287; Samuel Byrskog, "A Century with the *Sitz im Leben*: From Form-Critical Setting to Gospel Community and Beyond," *ZNW* 98 (2007): 1–27, here 3.

[25] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 1–2; idem., *Formgeschichte*, 1: "Der Satz, daß alle Literaturgeschichte Formgeschichte ist, darf gewiß nicht ohne Unterschied auf jede Art von Schrifttumangewendet werden."

[26] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 7–8; Dibelius' first two works may be classified as works of *Religionsgeschichte*, Martin Dibelius, *Die Geisterwelt im Glauben des Paulus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1909); idem., "Die Isisweihe bei Apuleius und verwandte Initiations-Riten*,"* in *Botschaft und Geschichte: Gesammelte Aufsätze: 2. Zum Urchristentum und zur hellenistischen Religionsgeschichte*, ed. Günther Bornkamm with Heinz Kraft (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1956), 30–79; ET: "The Isis Initiation in Apuleius and Related Initiatory Rites," in *Conflict at Colossae: A Problem in the Interpretation of Early Christianity Illustrated by Select Modern Studies*, ed. and trans. Fred O. Francis and Wayne Meeks, Sources for Biblical Study 4 (Missoula: SBL, 1973), 61–121.

[27] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 4; idem., *Formgeschichte*, 4.

handed down to them.[28] Dibelius did not provide a thorough demonstration in the manner of Schmidt; rather, this presupposition to his form-critical investigation was revealed in the way in which he described the work of the evangelists as they placed the tradition into a larger narrative of the life of Jesus.

Dibelius shared Gunkel's view that the earliest Aramaic church was unable to write and create extended narratives about Jesus:

> The company of unlettered people which expected the end of the world any day had neither the capacity nor the inclination for the production of books, and we must not predicate a true literary activity in the Christian Church of the first two or three decades. The materials which have been handed down to us in the Gospels lived in these decades an unliterary life or had indeed as yet no life at all.[29]

This meant that the Jesus tradition had "unliterary beginnings" and, even if they were written down, were never meant to be "read verbatim."[30] Since the tradition arose from an unlettered and illiterate community, the Jesus tradition was transmitted orally; the work of writing and organizing the individual sayings and narratives was left to the Gospel writers.

1.2.2 Narrative Framework of the Tradition

The evangelist did not assert his own personality onto the framework of the Jesus tradition, for authorial intent belonged to literature proper; rather, the Gospels were, according to Dibelius, "unliterary writings" and the evangelists were "principally

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[28] Martin Dibelius, "The Structure and Literary Character of the Gospels," *HTR* 20.3 (1927): 151–70, here 153–54.

[29] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 9.

[30] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 39.

collectors, vehicles of tradition, editors" whose chief task was simply "handing down, grouping, and working over the material which has come to them."[31] Dibelius, like Schmidt, viewed some of the chronological or topographical details in the Gospels as remnants of the work of the oral transmitters of the Jesus tradition.[32] However, Dibelius concluded that the Gospels provided little reliable information about the chronology of Jesus' ministry and instead reflected the faith and practice of the early church.

1.2.3 Gattung and Sitz im Leben

The "constructive method" proposed by Dibelius suggested typical situations within early Christianity and then sought to connect these situations with the forms found in the Gospel.[33] These forms arose from the life of uneducated early Christians and were governed by the laws of popular oral transmission. Above all else, Dibelius situated the development of forms of the Gospel in the missionary efforts of the early Church: "Missionary purpose was the cause and preaching was the means of spreading abroad that which the disciples of Jesus possessed as recollections."[34] Dibelius outlined three types of preaching—missionary preaching (to non-Christians), preaching during worship (to Christians), and catechumen teaching (to new converts)—and each type of preaching adopted its own literary form.[35]

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[31] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 3–4; idem., "Jesus in Contemporary German Theology," *JR* 11.2 (1931), 179–211, here 182–83.

[32] Dibelius, *Jesus,* 17; idem., "Jesus in Contemporary German Theology," 183.

[33] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 10.

[34] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 13.

[35] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 14–15.

Dibelius adopted Gunkel's assumption that the earliest forms of a tradition demonstrated pure forms of a literary type and argued that it was possible to discover the primitive tradition based on the literary type.[36] He concluded that the historicity of traditions could be determined through literary analysis:

> If it may be regarded as proved that it was only in connection with preaching that traditions about the story of Jesus could have been preserved among those unliterary men waiting for the end of the world, we have at the same time obtained a criterion of historicity; the nearer a narrative stands to the sermon the less it is questionable, or likely to have been changed by romantic, legendary, or literary influences.[37]

Therefore, Dibelius thought the Paradigm was the oldest and historically reliable form because of its connection with early eyewitnesses who recounted these stories about the life of Jesus in their preaching who were able to "control and correct" the tradition, which guaranteed "a relative trustworthiness."[38]

Conversely, Dibelius considered forms which demonstrated "pleasure in the narrative itself" as less historically reliable because they were not connected to early preaching.[39] He labeled these forms Tales and described them as more worldly and literary than other forms, especially when compared to Paradigms. The Tales developed out of a group of storytellers and teachers in an effort to provide an example to Christian miracle-workers and demonstrate the preeminence of the Lord Jesus among all other

[36] Buss, *Biblical Form Criticism*, 288.

[37] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 61.

[38] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 61–62.

[39] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 70–71.

gods.[40] In contrast to his characterization of the Palestinian tradition as unliterary, Dibelius is effusive in his praise of the literary artistry of the miracle stories:

> There is found here exactly the descriptiveness which we missed in the Paradigms; that breadth, which a paradigmatic application makes impossible; that technique, which reveals a certain pleasure in the narrative itself; and that topical character, which brings these narratives nearer to the corresponding categories as they were to be found in the world outside Christianity.[41]

Although the version of these miracle stories found in Mark's Gospel have been edited, according to Dibelius their "stately nature cannot be completely robbed of characteristics even by working over."[42] The miracle stories did not arise from missionary preaching but developed from storytellers' desire to tell of Jesus' miracles with literary artistry similar to secular Hellenistic miracle-workers.[43]

Even with this conception of the development of the miracle tradition, Dibelius was careful to distinguish the literary ability of the Hellenistic church from what he considered high literature (*Hochliteratur*). These tales "stand nearer to [miracle literature proper]" than other forms of Jesus tradition, "yet there is a certain *relationship of kind between the Gospel Tales and the non-Christian miracle stories*, and thus a certain approximation to the literature of 'the world,' not, of course to fine literature, but to popular literature and indeed to the writing of the people."[44] Although at times the Jesus tradition displayed what he considered literary qualities, the distinction between high

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[40] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 95–96, 102–03.

[41] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 70.

[42] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 71.

[43] Dibelius, *Tradition*, 79–82.

[44] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 81, 93.

literature and low literature (*Kleinliteratur*) remained central to Dibelius' understanding of the tradition. In the later Hellenistic stage, which was characterized by the written tradition and influenced by Hellenistic literature, the Jesus tradition remained low literature.

1.3 Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976)

Throughout his studies Bultmann sat under many leading teachers of the history of religions school and in many ways Bultmann's early work was a continuation of the history of religions method received from his teachers. Thus, he was rightly called a member of the second generation of the history of religions school.[45] Both Dieter Lührmann and Christoph Herbst emphasized *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* as a work of history of religions, as it furthered emphases begun in the first generation of the history of religions school—the pre-literary history of individual pieces of Jesus tradition, their use in the life of the early church, and attempts to situate the tradition according to Palestinian or Hellenistic origin.[46]

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[45] In addition to his dissertation, cf., Rudolf Bultmann, "Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der Hellenismus," *Die Christliche Welt* 25 (1911): 589–93; idem., "Das religiöse Moment in der ethischen Unterweisung des Epiktet und das Neue Testament," *ZNW* 13 (1912): 97–110, 177–91. Otto Eissfeldt, "Religionsgeschichtliche Schule," *RGG*^{2} 4 (1930): 1898; Helmut Koester, "Early Christianity from the Perspective of the History of Religion: Rudolf Bultmann's Contribution," in *Bultmann: Retrospect and* Prospect, ed. Edward C. Hobbs (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 65–66; Dieter Lührmann, "Rudolf Bultmann and the History of Religion School," in *Text and Logos: The Humanistic Interpretation of the New* Testament, ed. Theodore W. Jennings Jr., SBL Homage Series (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 3–4; Gunnar Sinn, *Christologie und Existenz: Rudolf Bultmanns Interpretation des paulinischen Christuszeugniss,* TANZ 4 (Tübingen: Verlag, 1991), 118; Baird, History, 280–82; Christoph Herbst, "Religionsgeschichtliche Schule und 'Liberale Theologie,'" in *Bultmann Handbuch*, 51.

[46] Lührmann, "Rudolf Bultmann," 7–9; Herbst, "Religionsgeschichtliche Schule," 53.

1.3.1 Individual Units of Tradition

In a review of Schmidt's *Der Rahmen*, Bultmann acknowledged that its conclusions were not anything essentially new, but a working out of the ideas found in Wrede, Gunkel, Weiss, and, above all, Wellhausen.[47] Bultmann characterized Schmidt's conclusions regarding the circulation of the individual Jesus traditions in the pre-literary phase as "thorough-going and conclusive*."*[48] Like Dibelius, Bultmann sought to give an account of "the *individual units of the tradition*, and how the tradition passed from a fluid state to the fixed form in which it meets us in the synoptics."[49] The dissolution of the Gospels into individual units of tradition was, for both Dibelius and Bultmann, a necessary first step that allowed for an examination of their literary form, *Sitze im Leben*, and the identification of the primary and secondary layers of tradition.

1.3.2 Gattung and Sitz im Leben

In contrast to Dibelius, Bultmann began with an investigation of the forms in order to determine their *Sitze im Leben.* Bultmann noted the circular nature of his "analytic method": "The forms of the literary tradition must be used to establish the influences operating in the life of the community, and the life of the community must be used to render the forms themselves intelligible."[50] He defined the *Sitze im Leben*,

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[47] Rudolf Bultmann, *Theologie als Kritik: Ausgewählte Rezensionen und Forschungsberichte*, eds. Matthias Dreher and Klaus W. Müller (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 105. Bultmann also stated his indebtedness to Wellhausen in multiple writings. Cf., Bultmann, *History*, 2; idem., "New Approach," 340–41; idem., "Study of the Synoptic Gospels," 25; idem., *Theologie als Kritik*, 8–11.

[48] Bultmann, *History*, 3.

[49] Bultmann, *History,* 3, italics original.

[50] Bultmann, *History*, 5.

following Gunkel and Dibelius, as a typical situation within the life of the community, though, as Samuel Byrskog observed, Bultmann thought of more specific communal situations than Gunkel.[51] Alongside Dibelius' emphasis on missionary preaching for the development of forms, Bultmann included more practical situations within the early Christian community, such as apologetics, arguments, edification, discipline, worship, etc.[52] Although Bultmann introduced the concept of the *Sitz im Leben* in the opening pages, his analysis did not always clearly articulate which situation related to each form.[53]

Bultmann shared Dibelius' lack of concern for aesthetics and instead sought to recover the origins of the Jesus tradition within primitive Christianity. In Bultmann's conception of primitive Christianity, the Gospels were low literature (*Kleinliteratur*) and literary developments had not taken place, therefore there was no need for an aesthetic evaluation of the Gospels.[54] Instead, the connection between form and *Sitz im Leben* allowed Bultmann to trace the history of individual traditions:

> Thus by bearing in mind the relationship between the form and its *Sitz im Leben* it is possible to recognize the origin of individual passages, to distinguish Hellenistic material from Palestinian, and to see where there is a pure example of a form and where it has been modified by tradition, and to judge what is primary material and what is a secondary addition. Such an inquiry must go hand in hand with the study of the laws of popular story-telling tradition.[55]

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[51] Byrskog, "Century," 5.

[52] Bultmann, *History*, 4.

[53] Eric Eve, *Behind the Gospels: Understanding Oral Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 25.

[54] Bultmann, *History*, 4.

[55] Bultmann, "The Gospels (Form)," in *Twentieth Century Theology in the Making* Vol. 1: Themes of Biblical Theology, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, trans. R. A. Wilson (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 90.

This methodological move by Bultmann is noteworthy; the relationship between form and *Sitz* allowed judgments concerning authenticity and historical reliability.[56] Bultmann developed a criterion of reliability from his analysis of the contents of the tradition, which focused separating the material into either a Palestinian or Hellenistic layer, with the Palestinian layer containing the purest tradition.[57]

Bultmann's clearest statement of the connection between *Sitze im Leben* and form comes in the conclusion of his *History*.[58] He regarded identifying a singular *Sitz* as dominant in the creation of literary forms an impossibility.[59] The Apophthegms, which Dibelius labeled Paradigms, did not arise from preaching, but from apologetics in Palestinian church disputes with outsiders.[60] Bultmann considered the sayings in this form to go back to the early Palestinian tradition, but the narrative framework of the Apophthegms could have originated later in the Hellenistic church.[61] Miracle stories developed in the Hellenistic church as proofs of Jesus' messiahship, though some miracle stories may have originated in the Palestinian church.[62]

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[56] Bultmann, *History*, 5.

[57] Bultmann, *History*, 5, 368–69; idem., *Jesus and the Word*, 12–13.

[58] Bultmann, *History*, 368–74.

[59] Bultmann, *History*, 368.

[60] Bultmann, *History*, 39–42.

[61] Bultmann, *History,* 60.

[62] Bultmann, *History,* 240, 368.

1.3.2 Narrative Framework of the Tradition

Bultmann's characterization of the pre-literary Jesus tradition was essentially the same as Schmidt's—the original tradition consisted of almost entirely brief single units and nearly all the references to time and place are the work of the evangelist.[63] He detailed the ways in which the gospel author connected the individual units to construct the second Gospel to form a life of Jesus. The units were linked together with a simple καὶ or the intensified εὐθύς, with place connections stating that Jesus went out of one scene and into the following one, or with temporal sequences in order to construct a Gospel.[64] For Bultmann, all chronological markers within the Gospel of Mark are the work of the evangelist; however, the geographical statements are not necessarily the editorial work of the evangelist and may be a part of the oldest tradition.[65]

1.3.4 Palestinian and Hellenistic Layers of the Jesus Tradition

Bultmann claimed that Wellhausen had undertaken "the most important and far-reaching work in the field of synoptic research since Wrede" and that he "brought clearly to light a principle which must govern research": the Jesus traditions found in the Gospels reflected the post-Easter beliefs of the church and the identification of ecclesiastical concerns provided a criterion for discerning late traditions.[66] The distinctions between

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[63] Bultmann, "Study of the Synoptic Gospels," 25; idem., *History*, 338.

[64] Bultmann, *History,* 338–50.

[65] Bultmann, *History*, 338.

[66] Respectively, Bultmann, *History*, 2; idem., "The New Approach to the Synoptic Problem," *JR* 6.4 (1926): 336–62, here 341; Wellhausen, *Einleitung*, 57; Timmer, *Julius Wellhausen and the Synoptic Gospels*, 21, described Wellhausen's understanding of the development of the Jesus tradition as "churchification" and "christification."

Palestinian and Hellenistic Christianity set forth by Heitmüller and Bousset lie at the foundation of Bultmann's form criticism and were used to identify the influence of the church's faith on the development of the Jesus tradition.

Bultmann stated that the relationship between Palestinian and Hellenistic Christianity was "the one chief problem of primitive Christianity" and the distinction provided "a criterion which frequently enables us to determine whether this or that feature belongs to the older tradition or was composed later."[67] Consequently, Bultmann claimed that this distinction between Palestinian and Hellenistic Christianity was more important than the distinction between oral and written tradition.[68] Accordingly, the form-critical characterization of the Palestinian and Hellenistic churches provided a framework into which scholars could locate individual pieces of Jesus tradition based on both literary form and theology.

Bultmann, following Wellhausen and Bousset, associated the earliest tradition with Aramaic oral tradition: "In general, it is clear at once, from the literary form and the language of individual passages in the tradition, that their origin is the *oral* spoken word, and that the language of the earliest stratum of the tradition was Aramaic."[69] These Aramaic traditions were never written down because the earliest community expected the imminent return of Jesus. Instead, for Bultmann, Jesus tradition was only transmitted

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[67] Respectively, Bultmann, *History*, 5; idem., "The Study of the Synoptic Gospels," 18.

[68] Bultmann, *History*, 239, on the tradition history of the miracle stories: "In this regard it is further of importance to ask at what stage the Tradition was enriched by the addition of miracle stories, and to a less degree whether it took place in the oral or written stage. No doubt both have to be accepted, but here as elsewhere this distinction is in my view relatively unimportant for the gospel Tradition, since the fixing of the tradition in writing was in the first place a quite unliterary process. Much more important is the *distinction between the Palestinian and Hellenistic stages of the Tradition.*" (Italics original.)

[69] Bultmann, "The Gospels (Form)," 90, italics original.

orally within the Palestinian community, while Dibelius had left open the possibility of some traditions circulating in written form.[70]

The content of Palestinian tradition was likely short sayings of Jesus that could be easily remembered because of their use in oral tradition. Bultmann concluded that the sayings tradition originated in an Aramaic environment and a comparison with Hellenistic literature and the Pauline letters reveals "most clearly how un-Hellenistic, as seen as a whole, is the Synoptic tradition of the sayings of Jesus."[71] He found the oldest sayings material in the "brief conflict sayings which express in a parable-like form the attitude of Jesus to Jewish piety" (e.g. Mark 3:4; 7:15; Matt 23:16–19, 23–25), though not all sayings could be attributed to the historical Jesus and instead reflected the theology of the Palestinian community.[72]

The origin of some units of narrative tradition were also traced back to the Palestinian church. For example, according to Bultmann, the apophthegms of the miracle stories (e.g. Mark 3:1–5; 7:24–30; 8:5–13) revealed their Palestinian origins.[73] Similarly, the temptation story in Q (Matt 4:1–11//Luke 4:1–12) originated within the Palestinian church, but the designation of Jesus as Son of God (Matt 4:3, 5; Luke 4:3, 9) revealed later Hellenistic influence on the tradition.[74] The Palestinian layer of the narrative

[70] Dibelius, *Tradition*, 39.

[71] Bultmann, *History*, 166.

[72] Bultmann, *History,* 147, 368. He concluded that it was impossible to consider any single interest dominant. Apologetic, proof from prophecy, paranesis, and church discipline all contributed to the development of the Palestinian tradition.

[73] Bultmann, *History*, 239.

[74] Bultmann, *History*, 257.

tradition was identified through what Bultmann considered issues and concerns within the Palestinian church, following a similar procedure to the sayings tradition.

As the missionary efforts of the church spread throughout the Hellenistic world, the Jesus tradition transitioned from Aramaic oral tradition into Greek written tradition and borrowed literary themes and forms from Hellenistic literature. The textualization and narrativization of the Jesus tradition by the Hellenistic church was, according to Bultmann, the completion of the oral tradition.[75] However, for Bultmann, the "problem" of the Hellenistic church taking over Palestinian tradition did not lend itself to a simple solution:

> Moreover it is not possible to do without stories of Jesus indefinitely. For if the κύριος was essentially a cultic deity for the Hellenistic Church as well, then, in order to retain the peculiar character of Christian faith—the union of the cultic deity with the historical person of Jesus—a tradition about the story of Jesus was necessary; and the analogy of Hellenistic saviours about whom stories were retailed could not help but to further the demand for and consequently the taking over of the tradition.[76]

The form-critical approach to the Jesus tradition assumes that the Palestinian traditions were taken over by the Hellenistic church, narrativized, and later combined by the evangelists into the literary form of Gospel. Bultmann thought it possible to trace the development of the Jesus tradition through these stages in order both to discover historical material embedded within the earliest layers and to trace the development of the church's evolving messianic faith.

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[75] Bultmann, *History*, 321.

[76] Bultmann, *History*, 369.

2.1.4 Summary

The works of Schmidt, Dibelius, and Bultmann revealed a unifying form-critical picture of the Jesus tradition based upon the foundation of the history of religions school. In his brief introduction to form criticism, McKnight correctly stated that the pre-literary transmission of the Jesus tradition in individual units was *the* "fundamental assumption" of the form critics.[77] The research of the form critics, especially Schmidt, elevated the isolated nature of the individual units of tradition to an assumption that provided the basis, not just for form criticism, but for redaction criticism and historical Jesus studies throughout the twentieth century.[78] The removal of the individual units from the framework of the Gospels allowed the rest of the form-critical task to take place. The removal of the units of Jesus tradition from the larger narrative of the Gospels revealed how little value the form critics placed on the authorial activity of the evangelist. In their minds, the Gospel writers merely wrote down the tradition as they found it, creating a framework of summaries, introductions, and loose chronological and topographical connections between the disconnected units of tradition. The rise of redaction and narrative criticism questioned this assumption, while largely accepting form criticism's first assumption, and gave attention to the ways in which the evangelist purposely shaped the individual units of Jesus tradition into a larger coherent narrative.

Although there were early criticisms of form criticism's conception of the *Sitz im Leben*, Bultmann's and Dibelius' picture of the popular and oral nature of the Jesus

[77] McKnight, *What is Form Criticism?*, 18.

[78] Chris Keith, "Memory and Authenticity: Jesus Tradition and What Really Happened," *ZNW* 102 (2011): 155–77, here 160.

tradition shaped by the missionary focus of the early Christian communities guided NT scholarship for generations.[79] Bultmann's "analytic method" of form criticism won the day over Dibelius' "constructive method." However, both placed the primary *Sitze im Leben* of the Jesus tradition within in the missionary efforts of the Christian church, a proposal that was largely accepted. The *Sitze* identified by Bultmann and Dibelius were less sociological and more theological or ecclesial; the exact relationship between genre/form and *Sitze im Leben* was not always clear in their work.

The primary concern of form criticism, especially Bultmannian form criticism, was the separation of the tradition into Palestinian and Hellenistic layers in order to separate earlier traditions from the later interpretations of the church. Here the form critics followed one of the fundamental assumptions of the history of religions school: the earliest Christians interpreted the life of Jesus based on their messianic faith. The form critics, however, went a step further than the history of religions school and sought to distinguish between the early tradition and its later interpretations in search for historical information about Jesus.

2. The Exceptional Status of the PreMarkan Passion Narrative in Form Criticism

This model of the pre-literary transmission of the Jesus tradition created a problem for the form critics. If the pre-literary Jesus tradition circulated as individual units, how could they explain the narrative cohesion of Mark 14–16? In these chapters, events flow naturally from one to the next, there are indicators of time between events, and

[79] Byrskog, "Century," 6–8; Fascher, *Die formgeschichtliche Methode*, 213–14; B. S. Easton, *The Gospel before the Gospels* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1928), 31–51.

everything takes place in the same general area within a short time frame. So, in order to solve the problem that their own articulation of Jesus tradition created, the form critics posited that the passion narrative was the exception to their laws of oral tradition and from the earliest days of Christianity the passion narrative was transmitted as a coherent narrative. While Weiss and Bousset had previously identified the passion narrative as a problem for this understanding of Jesus tradition, the form critics hypothesized a preMarkan passion narrative, "the most significant piece of tradition for Christian faith," that played a unique role in the Jesus tradition and in the life of early Christianity.[80]

2.1 The Earliest Coherent Narrative of Primitive Christianity

All three form critics stressed that the preMarkan passion narrative was from the earliest period transmitted as a coherent narrative. Their statements concerning the chronological and topographical coherency of Mark 14–16 became a fundamental assumption of NT scholarship that was repeated by both English and German scholars throughout the last century.

2.1.1 Schmidt

The passion narrative was, for Schmidt, an exception to the rule of individual units of pre-literary Jesus tradition and his statement of the uniqueness of the passion narrative within individual units of tradition became an "assured result" of critical scholarship that has been repeated by scholars for nearly a century:

[80] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 287.

> It is the only section of the Gospels that offers information about places and times, indeed, about days and hours. Clearly we have here a continuous narrative.[81]

Schmidt's articulation of form criticism's most "assured result" was repeated by numerous NT scholars throughout the decades of the twentieth century:

> After the opening sentences one cannot help noticing that the story becomes more circumstantial and possesses a unity which the earlier chapters plainly lacked.[82]

> The last main division…is the most closely articulated section in the Gospel. By general consensus this circumstance is due to the fact that it was the first part of the Gospel tradition to be told as a continuous story, since, in order to solve the paradox of the cross, it was necessary to relate the events as a whole.[83]

> Now the Passion Narrative was, *ex hypothesi*, an orderly account and sequential statement of the final events in Jesus' life and ministry…Sayings and incidents in the Galilean ministry might be rearranged and reset in different contexts; but the Passion Narrative was too firmly established in what must have been the approximate historic order for any serious changes to be introduced by later evangelists.[84]

> Nevertheless, this narrative possesses a self-sufficiency which distinguishes it sharply from the preceding sections, and, indeed, it seems likely that the main outline of the narrative enjoyed an independent existence long before St. Mark undertook to write his gospel.[85]

> A connected account of the last part of the ministry came into being at a very early period, long before there was a comparable account of the earlier ministry; and whereas up to this point St. Mark has been largely a pioneer, constructing his

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[81] Schmidt, *Framework*, 281. Schmidt, "Literaturische Eigenart," 17, Sie ist der einzige Abschnitt der Evangelien, der ganau zeitliche und örtliche Dinge, ja Tag und Stunde angibt. Es ist ohne weiteres deutlich, daß hier von vornherein eine fortlaufende Erzählung in der Absicht lag.

[82] B. H. Branscomb, *The Gospel of Mark*, MNTC (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), 241.

[83] Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, and Indexes,* 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1982), 524.

[84] F. C. Grant, *The Gospels: Their Origin and Growth* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), 78.

[85] T. A. Burkill, "St. Mark's Philosophy of the Passion," *NovT 2* (1958): 245–71, here 246.

own narrative out of isolated stories, from this point onward he could rely on an already existing narrative.[86]

The passion story is the portion of the Synoptic tradition which first assumed a fixed form.[87]

Whereas the rest of the Gospel is made up almost entirely of small independent pieces rather loosely strung together, the account of the passion in chapters 14–15 is noticeably different in character and forms a continuous narrative with a coherent chronological sequence.[88]

Outside of the special case of the Passion Narrative, in which many individual events would make sense only as parts of an ordered whole, most stories and sayings from Jesus' public ministry probably circulated at first without any overarching chronological sequence, in fact without any precise anchoring in time or place.[89]

As a rule the Jesus tradition consisted of small, complete units, but in the passion story we have a coherent narrative made up of many units, either a short account of the arrest, trial, condemnation, and crucifixion like the one beginning in Mark 14:43, or a longer account beginning in Mark 14:1 with the decision of the Sanhedrin to arrest Jesus.[90]

There is little in this section that could have circulated in early Christian tradition as an independent saying or story. For the most part, the unit 14:1–16:8 functions only as a connected whole.[91]

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[86] D. E. Nineham, *Saint Mark*, Westminster Pelican Commentaries (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), 365.

[87] Hans Conzelmann, *Jesus*, ed. John Reumann, trans. J. Raymond Lord (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), 83.

[88] Hugh Anderson, *The Gospel of Mark*, NCB (London: Oliphants, 1976), 302.

[89] John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, vol. 1 The Roots of the Problem and the Person, ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 408.

[90] Gerd Theissen, *The New Testament: A Literary History*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 25; cf. idem., *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 166.

[91] M. Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: West Minster John Know, 2006), 378.

The following chapters contain additional scholarly statements on the uniqueness of the passion narrative that echo Schmidt's words. When Schmidt's influence is looked at from the perspective of the passion narrative, the observations from Telford and Tuckett on the ongoing validity and acceptance of Schmidt's work within the guild is confirmed. As subsequent chapters reveal, few scholars were willing to push back against this consensus.

2.1.1 Dibelius

For Dibelius, the passion narrative had a fixed chronological sequence from its earliest stage and the events it narrates all depend upon one another.[92] The reason for the extended narrative was because of its use in early sermons, which played a decisive role for Dibelius' reconstruction of the *Sitz im Leben* of the preMarkan passion narrative. In Dibelius' reconstruction, the passion narrative's "early composition as a connected narrative" differentiated it from the rest of the early tradition.[93] However, the passion narrative did contain traditions that at first circulated independently and were incorporated very early. For Dibelius, the tradition of the Last Supper was comprehensible outside of the connected events of the passion, as evidenced by 1 Cor 11:23–26, and contained an independent introduction (15:22).[94] The story of Peter's denial (15:66–72) also may have existed independently, but was woven into the passion

[92] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 22, 178–81; idem., *Jesus,* 29, 33; idem., "Jesus in Contemporary German Theology," 183; idem., "Das historische Problem der Leidensgeschichte," 193.

[93] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 179–80.

[94] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 180.

narrative very early.[95] The only tradition that was not a part of the earliest passion narrative was the anointing at Bethany (14:3–9), since it interrupted the flow of the original introduction (14:1–2, 10–11).[96]

2.1.3 Bultmann

Although Bultmann concluded that the passion narrative was molded into a coherent narrative very early, it was originally composed from individual pieces of Jesus tradition.[97] He wrote, "It cannot be maintained that the Passion story as we have it in the Synoptic gospels is an organic unity. Even here what is offered us is made up of separate pieces."[98] Unlike the rest of the Jesus tradition, the passion narrative was put into a coherent narrative at an early stage before the Gospels were written and the kerygma was the driving force behind the creation of a coherent account of Jesus' death. For Bultmann, the content of the kerygma is found in the passion predictions (Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:33–34) and in the speeches in Acts (2:22–36; 3:13–15; 13:27–31).[99] The use of the tradition of the Last Supper by Paul in 1 Cor 11:23–26 provided Bultmann with evidence that these passion traditions could be handed down and used in worship in isolation.[100] The author of Mark did not create the passion narrative but, according to Bultmann, made use

[95] Dibelius, *From Tradition,* 180, 183.

[96] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 178, 181; idem., *Message*, 145–46.

[97] Bultmann, *History*, 275.

[98] Bultmann, *History,* 275.

[99] Bultmann, *History*, 275.

[100] Bultmann, *History*, 275.

of a continuous narrative that was created very early and was transmitted as a whole in the pre-literary stage of the Jesus tradition.[101]

2.2 The *Gattung* and *Sitze im Leben* of the PreMarkan Passion Narrative

As with the rest of the Jesus tradition, the form critics emphasized its role in the missionary efforts of the Christian community, especially in preaching and apologetics. Neither Dibelius nor Bultmann discussed its literary form, but in the passion narrative Schmidt found what he considered the closest piece of Jesus tradition to literature proper. Because of its uniqueness as an early coherent narrative, the form critics highlighted the prominent role the preMarkan passion narrative played in the earliest church.

2.2.1 Schmidt, the PreMarkan Passion Narrative, and the Acts of the Christian Martyrs

The chronological and topographical details in the passion narrative were fixed very early and, for Schmidt, constituted the earliest document of what came to be known as the acts of the Christian martyrs.[102] The early Christian story-tellers fixed the passion narrative early, and subsequent story-tellers could not alter the narrative without damaging the views of the Christian community.[103] The silence of Jesus before Pilate is especially important for the historical value Schmidt placed upon the passion narrative. In his estimation, authors expanded later acts of the Christian martyrs and included long and

[101] Bultmann, *History*, 275.

[102] Schmidt, *Der Rahmen*, 305; idem., *The Place of the Gospels*, 29–31.

[103] Schmidt, *Der Rahmen*, 305; idem., "Literarische Eigenart," 19.

eloquent speeches by the martyr before their deaths.[104] The tendency detected by Schmidt in this tradition led him to develop a rule for determining historically authentic traditions: a report with few words was more historically valuable than one with many.[105] In contrast to the rest of the Jesus traditions, Schmidt considered the passion narrative as historically valuable tradition since it was constructed early, the tradition had few joints and seams, and remained stable within the Synoptic Gospels.[106]

2.2.2 Dibelius and the Primacy of the PreMarkan Passion Narrative in the Sermon

The sermon was the pivotal setting for all literary types within primitive Christianity according to Dibelius. The uniqueness of the preMarkan passion narrative as a connected narrative required further explanation—What *Sitz im Leben* required a connected narrative? Dibelius argued that the preMarkan passion narrative grew out of the necessity to explain how the crucifixion of Jesus could occur according to the will of God. He considered the death of Jesus so offensive that a record of his final days would have been considered "a document of shame and disgrace."[107] However, if Christian preachers could demonstrate that the events happened according to the will of God as

[104] Schmidt, *Der Rahmen*, 305; idem., "Literarische Eigenart," 19; idem., *The Place of the Gospels*, 29.

[105] Schmidt, "Literarische Eigenart," 19: "Man wird die Regel aufstellen können, daß ein Bericht mit wenigen Worten des Märtyrers historisch wertvolle."

[106] Schmidt, *Der Rahmen*, 306–09.

[107] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 184.

revealed in the Scriptures, then the death of Jesus was shown to be a part of God's salvation.[108]

Because Dibelius considered preaching the decisive setting within early Christianity for the development of forms, it is not surprising that he placed significant emphasis on the passion narrative. He claimed, "We can understand the interests of preachers as of believers was given in greater degree to the Passion than to any other event in the life of Jesus."[109] Although units within the passion narrative may have originated individually, its use in the sermon required the construction of a connected narrative in order to recount "the decisive soteriological event."[110] As with Paradigms, Dibelius saw eyewitnesses as the initiators of traditions within the passion narrative, especially the unnamed young man who fled Gethsemane (Mark 14:51) and Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus (Mark 15: 21), who were present at the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus and may have been known to the early church.[111]

Dibelius observed that multiple Jewish Scriptures were used in the re-telling of the passion—particularly Psalms 22, 31, 69 and Isaiah 53. According to Dibelius, these passages were read by early Christians as predictions of the death of Jesus and applied in sermons through the preMarkan passion narrative:

> Connected records must accord with these conceptions, and thus these motives which had been at home in the Old Testament came into the text of the Passion. They took place, without citing the Old Testament words, simply in the form of narrative…We may assume that even the earliest record told events from the Passion which only had significance because they were known to be announced

[108] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 184–85.

[109] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 179.

[110] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 179; idem., "Das historische Problem," 193–94.

[111] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 182–83; idem., "Das historische Problem," 196.

> by Scripture. Then everything shameful and dishonouring to Jesus…was legitimatized in the Passion story, for it happened according to God's will…The Passion had its home, not in teaching and uplifting the individual, but in carrying the message to the church, i.e. in the sermon. The point was to show the paradoxical event, without human sense, represented the beginning of the Last Day, and was thus a part of the fulfillment of salvation.[112]

Although the impetus for the narrative was found in the these Scriptures, Dibelius did not conclude that its elements were necessarily unhistorical.[113] Some events, such as the division of Jesus' garments among the soldiers, were likely historical and Dibelius cautioned that origins in the Jewish Scriptures could not always assist in making decisions about the historicity of an event or motif.[114] Dibelius was clear, however, that the details recounted in the passion narrative are present only because they aid in an understanding of the crucifixion of Jesus as a soteriological event. This allowed Dibelius to place the preMarkan passion narrative alongside the Paradigms as one of the earliest forms of the Jesus tradition, which meant the preMarkan passion narrative was considered historically reliable based upon literary considerations.

2.2.3 Bultmann, the PreMarkan Passion Narrative, and the Earliest Christian Kerygma

Because he viewed the earliest passion traditions as independent units, Bultmann identified several *Sitze* that led to the development of these traditions before their incorporation into the preMarkan passion narrative. The tradition of the Last Supper was developed from its use in the cult and Mark 14:22–25 represented a Hellenistic cult

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[112] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 184–85.

[113] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 188–96.

[114] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 188–89.

legend employed by Paul.[115] The Markan version of the Last Supper was inserted into an already existing passion narrative, though Bultmann did not specify at what point in time it was inserted.[116] The other individual units arose from proof from prophecy (Judas' betrayal; Mark 14:10–11), apologetic motivations (such as traditions acquitting the Romans; Mark 14:6–15), or theological agendas (e.g., the Messiahship of Jesus; Mark 15:2).[117]

In order to explain the uniqueness of the preMarkan passion narrative as the only extended narrative within the tradition Bultmann connected it to the earliest kerygma. For Bultmann, like Dibelius, the use of the passion narrative in early preaching was the *Sitz im Leben* that led to the coherent narrative. Bultmann proposed that an extended narrative that demonstrated the fulfillment of prophecies from the Jewish Scriptures would have been used not only in preaching to potential converts, but teaching new disciples.[118] In an attempt to solve the problem of this unique unit of Jesus tradition, they used the perceived problem of a crucified Messiah, which, in their view could only be answered only with a coherent narrative through the missionary preaching of the church.

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[115] Bultmann, *History*, 265. He accepted the views of Eichhorn, *The Lord's Supper*, and Wilhelm Heitmüller, "Abendmahl," RGG[1], 1:20–52. A similar view was presented by Georg Bertram, *Die Leidensgeschichte Jesu und der Christucult.* Cf. Gottfried Schille, "Das Leiden des Herrn: Die evangelische Passionstradition und ihr 'Sitz im Leben," *ZTK* 52 (1955): 161–205. Schille's work will be discussed in chapter 4.

[116] Bultmann, *History*, 265–66.

[117] Bultmann, *History*, 280–84.

[118] Bultmann, *History*, 282–83.

4. Conclusion: The Legacy of the preMarkan Passion Narrative

This chapter has shown that the form-critical conception of tradition developed from ideas already present in the works of the history of religions school— the circulation of individual units prior to the writing of the Gospels, the relation between literary form and *Sitz im Leben*, and the necessity of dividing traditions into layers based on theology and literary motifs. Bultmann, Dibelius, and Schmidt brought these ideas together in order to understand the development of the oral Jesus tradition from its origins in Palestine until the writing of the Gospels in Hellenistic Christianity. The preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis arose to answer what the form critics considered an anomaly in their conception of tradition—the passion narrative was an extended narrative with chronological and geographical coherency. The preeminence of early Christian missionary efforts allowed for a *Sitz im Leben* that in their view required such an extended narrative of the final days of Jesus' life.

It is significant that, although Bultmann's analytic method of form criticism became the standard over Dibelius' constructive method, it was Dibelius' conception of the preMarkan passion narrative that became most influential. While Bultmann hypothesized a preMarkan passion narrative that began as individual units of Jesus tradition that were brought together into a narrative very early, Dibelius' preMarkan passion narrative was a fixed narrative from its inception. This difference made Dibelius' hypothesis easier to conceive and use in reconstructions of early Jesus tradition. There was no need to account for stages in the development from oral to written Jesus tradition. Dibelius' proposal began with a written and connected passion narrative early in the development and transmission of Jesus tradition. Although some scholars would later

divide Dibelius' complete preMarkan passion narrative into two or three smaller written passion traditions, his emphasis on coherence of the preMarkan passion remained an emphasis of form-critical reconstructions. The coherence form-critical scholars found in Mark 14–16 was more easily explained by a source that had been a coherent narrative from its inception, which Dibelius provided.

In this way the quest for the preMarkan passion narrative arose from a form-critical conception of tradition and, as later chapters will demonstrate, all subsequent attempts begin with form-critical assumptions on the nature of Jesus tradition. The next chapters will reveal scholarly reliance upon this notion of tradition and the use of a form-critical framework as they search for the preMarkan passion narrative and developed hypotheses of its origins and transmission along these broad outlines sketched by Schmidt, Bultmann, and Dibelius. Although there was little agreement amongst scholars about which individual words or phrases belong to which layer of the form-critical framework, all attempts within the quest of the preMarkan passion narrative began with a form-critical conception of Jesus tradition and even as major criticisms chipped away at the form-critical foundation and new methods were developed to investigate the pre-literary stage of Jesus tradition, the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis remained form criticism's most "assured result."

3. The PreMarkan Passion Narrative in British Form Criticism[1]

"Outside Germany form critics are regarded as a small, somewhat strange sect with a lack of sound common sense."[2]

The methods and results of German Gospel criticism were not welcomed with open arms in British scholarship, as the Germans were viewed as too radical to be of any use in orthodox Christianity. In response to William Sanday (1843–1920), Henry Scott Holland (1847–1918) described the German scholars as "perilous witnesses" who "offer us no Christ whom we could dream of worshipping."[3] These comments by Holland are typical of the British rejection of German Gospel criticism based on its usefulness in upholding traditional christologies.[4] However, the methods and results of German scholarship had

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[1] Sections of this chapter draw upon and reproduce Brandon Massey, "Translating, Summarising and Hidden Attribution: R. H. Lightfoot's Problematic Use of German Scholarship, *NTS* 66.4 (2020): 601–29. I am grateful to Cambridge University Press for their permission to use in this chapter.

[2] Hans Conzelmann, "Zur Methode der Leben-Jesu-Forschung," *ZTK* 56.1 (1959): 2–13, here 7; ET: idem, "The Method of the Life-of-Jesus Research," in *The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ*, eds. Carl E. Braaten and Roy A. Harrisville (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964), 54–68, here 60.

[3] Henry Scott Holland, "Nature and Miracle," in *Creeds and Critics: Being Occasional Papers on the Theology of the Christian Creed*, ed. Christopher Cheshire (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1918), 129; The paper was in response to William Sanday, *Bishop Gore's Challenge to Criticism: A Reply to the Bishop of Oxford's Open Letter on the Basis of Anglican Fellowship* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1914). Sanday criticized Charles Gore (1853–1932), Holland's colleague at Oxford, for ignoring German scholarship. Cf., G. L. Prestige, *Life of Charles Gore: A Great Englishman* (London: Heinemann, 1935), 346–50.

[4] Robert Morgan, "*Non Angli sed Angeli*: Some Anglican Reactions to German Gospel Criticism," in *New Studies in Theology* 1, eds. S. W. Sykes and Derek Holmes (London: Duckworth, 1980), 1–30; idem., "Historical Criticism and Christology: England and Germany," in *England and Germany: Studies in Theological Diplomacy*, Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity/ *Studien zur Interkulturellen Geschichte des* Christentums, ed. S. W. Sykes (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1982), 80–112.

not always been rejected in England. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century, the results of German criticism made their way into British scholarship, especially Synoptic criticism. Markan priority, the two-document hypothesis, and the existence of Q became accepted with one significant difference from their German origins—in many cases they were adopted in efforts to establish the historicity and reliability of the Gospel tradition. This scholarly trend is perhaps best seen in the work of NT scholars at Oxford during early decades of the twentieth century. Beginning in 1894 a group of Oxford scholars met regularly for over a decade to work through the texts of the Synoptic Gospels, which resulted in a collection of essays with contributions by Sanday, B. H. Streeter (1874–1937), Sir John C. Hawkins (1837–1929), W. C. Allen (1867–1953), and N. P. Williams (1883–1943).[5] Within this volume, arguments were advanced for the priority of Mark, the impossibility of Luke's use of Matthew, and the contents of Q. However, the question of a preMarkan passion source had not yet been raised and did not enter scholarly discourse until the arrival of form criticism into British Gospel criticism.

Germany declared war on Russia on 1 August 1914, and while at the beginning of the War British theologians supported Germany, within days Britain was at war and a period of Germanophobia began.[6] One manifestation of this fear in Gospel scholarship

[5] William Sanday, ed. *Studies in the Synoptic Problem: By Members of the University of Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911).

[6] The signatures to "An Appeal to Scholars," *Manchester Guardian* (1 and 3 August 1914), included prominent NT scholars F. C Burkitt, F. J. Foakes-Jackson, Samuel Peake, and Kirsopp Lake. A later article, "German Theologians and the War," *The Guardian* (1 October 1914), was signed by H. B. Swete, Holland, Sanday, Burkitt, Peake, and J. H. Moulton. Cf., Charles E. Bailey, "The British Protestant Theologians in the First World War: Germanophobia Unleashed," *HTR* 77.2 (1984): 195–221; Mark D. Chapman, "Missionaries, Modernism, and German Theology: Anglican Reactions to the Outbreak of War in 1914," *JHMth/ZNThG* 22.2 (2015): 151–67; idem., "Anglo-German Theological Relations during the First World War," *JHMth/ZNThG* 7 (2000), 109–26. During World War II, the sentiment was reciprocated, Martin Dibelius, *Britisches Christentun und britische Weltmacht*, Das Britische Reich in der Weltpolitik 21 (Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt, 1940).

was a reluctance to accept the radical nature of the newest development from Germany, form criticism. This chapter traces the entrance of the form-critical method into British scholarship with emphasis on the preMarkan passion narrative hypotheses developed by its adherents. English-language histories of NT scholarship often tell the story of British NT scholars quelling the radical impulses of German scholars and ultimately using their methods to prove the reliability and historicity of the Gospels.[7] In British scholarship of the twentieth century, the use of form criticism developed along two trajectories which frame the use of the preMarkan passion narrative hypotheses. Form criticism was first adopted by Nonconformist scholars in order to show that the Germans were too radical and, contrary to Bultmann, the new method was compatible with traditional beliefs about the origins of the Gospels. The preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis provided these scholars a vehicle to discover what they considered the earliest atonement theology, which was then used for denominational theological purposes. In contrast, Anglican scholars accepted the results of form criticism regarding the anonymous origins and community transmission of the Jesus tradition. By the 1960s, form criticism was widely accepted among British scholars and the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis ascended its prominent position among the earliest Jesus tradition in Britain, as it had in Germany.

[7] E.g., Neill and Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament*, 34–35, who described Christians in England in a state of alarm over the work of F. C. Baur and the heroic arrival of J. B. Lightfoot, who fearlessly faced the critical questions of Tübingen and showed a better way.

1. Nonconformist Adaptation of Form Criticism

The earliest use of the form-critical method in Britain was from the Nonconformist scholars Vincent Taylor (Methodist) and C. H. Dodd (Congregationalist). Along with T. W. Manson (1893–1958), a Presbyterian scholar, Taylor and Dodd formed a triumvirate of scholars aimed at preserving the historical reliability of the Gospels while adopting newer methods of research. In their view, it was not necessary for the new methods to arrive at negative conclusions regarding the authorship and reliability of the Gospels. Instead, they promoted the new insights of form criticism as a tool that, when approached from their objective perspective, provided positive results not only for historiography, but for preaching and theology. In the following paragraphs, I will examine Taylor and Dodd's use of form criticism and their reconstructions of the preMarkan passion narrative; I leave Manson's work to the side because he did not hypothesize a preMarkan passion narrative.

1.1 Vincent Taylor (1887–1968)

The preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis entered English-language scholarship through the work of Vincent Taylor and his introduction of form criticism to British scholarship in his 1932 lectures at Leeds University.[8] As a Methodist circuit preacher, Taylor conceived of his scholarship as "never merely academic but always in the service of preaching."[9] The desire for his work to be used in the service of pastors is

[8] Vincent Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition: Eight Lectures*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1957).

[9] Raymond George, "Vincent Taylor," in Vincent Taylor, *New Testament Essays* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1972), 1. William Strawson, "Methodist Theology 1850–1950," in *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain, Vol. 3*, eds. Rupert E. Davies, A. Raymond George, and Gordon Rupp (London:

revealed by his emphasis on the historical reliability of the Jesus tradition in service to modern Christology:

> If in the hands of Professor Bultmann Form-Criticism has taken a skeptical direction, this is not the necessary trend of the method; on the contrary, when its limitations are recognized, Form-Criticism seems to me to furnish constructive suggestions which in many ways confirm the historical trustworthiness of the Gospel tradition.[10]

In this way, Taylor's acceptance and use of form criticism is more similar to that of Albertz, rather than the radical historical-critical method of Wrede and Bultmann. Furthermore, far from his insistence that "doctrinal presuppositions must be resolutely laid aside," Taylor's form criticism was wielded to confirm not only the historical reliability of the Gospels, but the inspiration (and preservation) of the Jesus tradition.[11] In the conclusion of his *Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, he stated that with form criticism:

> We see Jesus better, for we behold Him, not only in the final form which the tradition assumes in the Gospels, but also in the lives, thoughts, and desires of men throughout the formative period. We are also enabled to appreciate the Gospels better, for we see earlier forms and stages out of which they emerged, and are enabled to mark the influences which shaped their growth. How great are these works with such a history behind them! Far from losing the idea of Inspiration, we are led to see that the Spirit of God must have been at work upon a grander scale, not coercing men or using them as blind instruments, but elevating their minds to perceive, to transmit, and to interpret the best elements in the tradition. Literature has no books which can justly be compared with the Gospels, which indeed come to us from men, but in the last analysis are the gifts of God, seals of His grace and sacraments of His love.[12]

Epworth, 2017), 206, while complementing the thoroughness of Taylor's scholarship questioned whether his work had its intended effect: "Most of his writing would seem irrelevant to ordinary men, and one wonders what lasting impression it has made even on preachers, for whom is was supposedly intended."

[10] Taylor, *Formation*, vi. These impulses were already present in his earlier work on the virgin birth and proto-Luke.

[11] Taylor, *Historical Evidence*, iii.

[12] Taylor, *Formation*, 189.

As the following sections demonstrate, despite repeated assertions of his own objectivity, Taylor was far from objective and attempted to brandish form criticism as a tool to prove his own assumptions about the historical reliability of the Gospels and his own theological presuppositions.

1.1.1 Form-Critical Approach

Taylor accepted the tenets of form criticism, though, as noted above, he believed that a form-critical investigation confirmed the historical veracity of the Gospels. He especially criticized Bultmann for what Taylor believed to be an unnecessarily radical practice of form criticism. These conclusions were not reached through argumentation, but in rhetoric against Bultmann. Taylor described Bultmann's form criticism as "radical to the point of skepticism," "*Strauss Redivivus*," "kinder to the possibilities than to the probabilities," and "the tendency of his criticism is radical to the extreme."[13] Instead, Taylor's version of form criticism highlighted two factors that pointed to the reliability of the tradition—its eyewitness character and the presence of Semitisms.

1.1.1.1 The Eyewitness Character of the Tradition

Taylor famously quipped, "If the Form-Critics are right, the disciples must have been translated to heaven immediately after the resurrection."[14] The influence of

[13] Taylor, *Formation*, 14, 15; idem., *Mark*, 19. Taylor also uses the phrase "Barthian sympathies" as an *ad hominem* against Bultmann, *Formation,* 15. Cf., idem., "The Barthian School IV: Rudolf Bultmann," *ExpT* 43 (1932): 485–90, here 486: "In a school where paradox runs riot, one more need not surprise us, but even the most detached mind cannot fail to raise the question whether Bultmann's 'Barthianism' has any real connexion with his criticism, or whether it is but a kind of glow which vainly attempts to conceal the ravages of 'scepticism.'"

[14] Taylor, *Formation*, 41.

eyewitnesses to the ministry of Jesus on the development of the Jesus tradition stands in contrast to the anonymous transmitters assumed by Schmidt and Bultmann. The presence of vivid details was "of the greatest importance in assessing [Mark's] historical value."[15] Equally important to Taylor was the distribution of these vivid details throughout Mark, for if they were unevenly distributed then Taylor could show that Mark was not interested in creating detailed narratives; these details would have originated from an eyewitness source.[16] However, there is no need to attribute these details to eyewitnesses when they could as easily arise from a vivid storyteller.

The testimony of Papias for the authorship and origins presented no problems to Taylor; he did not doubt whether John Mark authored the second Gospel based on the reminiscences of Peter's teaching.[17] However, Taylor was careful not to attribute the entirety of the Markan tradition to Peter.[18] The Petrine sections of the Gospel varies from very detailed narratives to isolated sayings. Additionally, Peter was not the only source of Jesus tradition for Mark; he also made use of various church traditions. According to Taylor, this only strengthened the historical value of the Gospel because Mark confirmed and supplemented the Jesus tradition he received from Peter.[19] In Taylor's opinion form criticism ignored the eyewitness origins of the tradition to its own detriment, particularly when describing the *Sitze im Leben* of the Jesus tradition.

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[15] Taylor, *Mark*, 135.

[16] Taylor, *Mark*, 135–39, lists what he considered vivid details from Mark 1–6.

[17] Taylor, *Mark,* 26–31.

[18] Taylor, *Formation*, 41–42; idem., *Mark*, 131.

[19] Taylor, *Mark*, 131–34.

1.1.1.2 Markan Semitisms and Source Criticism

The Aramaic background of the Gospel of Mark was, for Taylor, undeniable and the only question that remained was whether Mark was a Greek translation of an Aramaic original or whether the Greek text is based on Aramaic tradition.[20] Taylor cautiously concluded, "There are grounds for suspecting the existence of Aramaic sources, which may, however, be oral; and we can speak of the evangelist's use of a tradition which ultimately is Aramaic; but to say more is speculation."[21] From this restrained conclusion, Taylor developed a criterion for determining the historical value of Jesus tradition—what came to be known of the criterion of Semitic influence.[22]

Based on this criterion, Taylor identified Semitisms as particularly important in the identification of historical tradition: "If 'Semitisms', or what appear to be such, appear in some narratives or types of narratives more than in others, the evidence may have an important bearing on the historical character and origins of Mark."[23] He elaborated on the importance of the connection between Semitisms and historical reliability:

> We cannot adopt without critical scrutiny the principle that the presence of an Aramaic element or atmosphere in Mark's Gospel guarantees, without more ado, the historical character of what is recorded, for the possibility of mistakes and misunderstandings exists even in the higher waters of the stream of Gospel

[20] Taylor, *Mark*, 55.

[21] Taylor, *Mark*, 56.

[22] Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "'Semitic Influence on Greek'" An Authenticating Criterion in Jesus Research," in *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, eds. Chris Keith and Anthony Le Donne (New York: T & T Clark, 2012), 73–94. Taylor's contribution is not mentioned by Stuckenbruck, though the main influences on his work, Wellhausen, Matthew Black, and C. F. Burney are discussed.

[23] Taylor, *Mark*, 56.

> tradition. But we can certainly conclude that a Gospel so deeply coloured by Semitic usages must, in the main, bear a high historical value.[24]

In an effort to provide a sense of objectivity to the search for Semitisms, Taylor focused on sentence structure, various parts of speech, and mistranslations in the Greek text of Mark.[25] Novel in Taylor's approach to Semitisms in the Gospel of Mark was the connection to source criticism, notably the identification of "Source B", the Semitic and Petrine source Taylor proposed for the preMarkan passion narrative.[26]

1.1.2 The PreMarkan Passion Narrative

The form-critical approach adopted by Taylor represents a conservative stream of German historical criticism combined with British (and Methodist) concerns for theology and affirming the historical veracity of the Gospel accounts. The union of form criticism and a conservative theological agenda is clearly seen in Taylor's attempt to trace the development of the preMarkan passion narrative in two sources, which he labelled "A" and "B".[27] Source A was a summary of the events Mark found in Rome, which he later supplemented with Source B, Petrine reminiscences that contained vivid descriptions of the Passion. In a striking defense of the objectivity of his hypothesis, Taylor stated,

> This hypothesis is the reverse of what a priori might be expected. A purely theoretical construction would suggest that the basic narrative contained Petrine reminiscences, and that, if it was expanded, the additions would be non-Semitic

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[24] Taylor, *Mark*, 65.

[25] Taylor, *Mark*, 57–65.

[26] Taylor, *Mark*, 658. Taylor also used Semitisms as a criterion in the identification of the sources for the apocalyptic discourse in Mark 13, *Mark*, 636–44.

[27] Taylor, *Mark*, 654, observed that the development of the preMarkan passion narrative was much more complex but the identification of these two stages provides a starting point from which a credible hypothesis about its origins and development can begin. Like much of Taylor's work, this reasonable statement was later abandoned and determinative results claimed.

> and less historical. The fact that the evidence compels a reversal of this not unnatural expectation is an encouragement to believe that the hypothesis stated above is objective.[28]

Rather than the objectivity Taylor attempted to project, an examination of his preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis reveals Taylor's historical and theological biases (if the two may be separated in Taylor's work). Instead, we find "a purely theoretical construction" in an attempt to prove the historicity of the account and to provide Methodist pastors with an atonement theory useful for preaching.

1.1.2.1 Source A

The first stage in the development of the preMarkan passion narrative was, for Taylor, a simple narrative utilized for the Christian church at Rome.[29] This reconstruction is reminiscent of the short account of the events posited by Bultmann, though Taylor doubted it was as brief as Bultmann suggested.[30] The narrative structure of this source is similar to the passion predictions (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33) and the creed in 1 Cor 15:3–5, which suggested to Taylor that there may have been an earlier and shorter narrative, though by the time Mark wrote the narrative had been expanded and its form fixed.[31]

This supposed primitive Roman source emphasized the guilt of the Jewish leadership, the shame of Judas' betrayal, and the reality of the death and burial of Jesus.[32]

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[28] Taylor, *Mark*, 658–59. This sort of statement is typical in Taylor's writings.

[29] Taylor, *Mark*, 658, 660–62. He identified the following verses at belonging to Source A: Mark 14:1–2, 1–11, 12–16, 17–21, 26–31, 43–46, 53, 55–64; 15:1, 3–5, 15, 21–24, 26, 29–30, 34–37, 39, 42–46.

[30] Taylor, *Mark*, 659; Bultmann, *History,* 275.

[31] Taylor, *Mark*, 662.

[32] Taylor, *Mark*, 662.

Based on the Corinthian creed (1 Cor 15:3–4), Taylor assumed that an early passion narrative would have also included an account of the resurrection, though he considered Mark 16:1–8 to be too "legendary in character" and a later addition to Source A.[33] Taylor also identified the trial before the priests (Mark 14:53, 55–64) as the most problematic passage in Source A. Jesus' trial before the priests could have originally followed Mark 15:1 and was moved to its location in the Gospel when Sources A and B were combined.[34] While some considered Mark 14:53b and 15:1a a doublet, Taylor thought it more likely that they recorded two separate incidents, one at night and one in the morning.[35] Thus, Source A was a "simple straightforward narrative" whose "primitive" character provided Taylor with the narrative structure into which Source B could be inserted.

1.1.2.2 Source B

In contrast to the unity of Source A, Source B was characterized by its "Semitic flavor" and was composed of short, vivid episodes that originated with Peter.[36] Taylor attempted to explain how the evangelist utilized Source B by presuming the narrative framework of Source A. The anointing at Bethany (Mark 14:3–9) is inserted into the beginning of the passion narrative because of the woman's preparation of Jesus' body for

[33] Taylor, *Mark*, 659.

[34] Taylor, *Mark*, 659. It should be noted that the idea of relocating pericopae to their "original" location is at its core a form-critical notion.

[35] Taylor, *Mark*, 564–65, 646, 659.

[36] Taylor, *Mark*, 658. He identified the following verses as belonging to Source B: Mark 14:3–9, 22–25, 32–42, 47–52, 54, 65, 66–72; 15: 2, 6–14, 16–20, 25, 27, 31, 33, 38, 40–41, 47.

burial (Mark 14:8).[37] The institution of the Supper (Mark 14:22–25), which Taylor considered of early Palestinian origin, made up for the perceived deficiencies of Mark 14:17–21.[38] The Gethsemane tradition (Mark 14:32–42) naturally fit into the narrative prior to the arrest. Similarly, the sword incident (Mark 14:47), the saying about teaching in the temple (Mark 14:48–50), and the young man who fled naked (Mark 14:51–52) served to enhance the story of the arrest.[39] Taylor similarly accounted for the insertions of Peter's denial (Mark 14:54, 66–72), the story of Barabbas (Mark 15:6–14), and the mocking of the soldiers (Mark 15:16–20) into Source A.[40]

The criterion of Semitic influence adopted by Taylor led him to place a high historical value on the traditions of Source B, as he identified Semitisms in every narrative unit. For instance, Taylor identified three Semitisms in the disciples' response to Jesus prediction of Betrayal (Mark 14:19). The use of the verb ἤρξαντο as an auxiliary verb by Mark demonstrated that both Jesus and Mark were familiar with Aramaic.[41] That the auxiliary verb with the infinitive λυπεῖσθαι was an Aramiac construction further established the Aramaic origins of Source B.[42] Finally, the phrase εἷς κατὰ εἷς originated from a confusion between the Aramaic phrase חַר חַר and the Greek καθεῖς (3 Macc.

[37] Taylor, *Mark*, 529, 663.

[38] Taylor, *Mark*, 542–43, 663. Here Taylor goes against Eichhorn, Heitmüller, Bertram, and Bultmann in assigning the tradition to Palestinian, rather than Hellenistic, origins. Taylor rightly dismissed the influence of Hellenistic mystery religions on the tradition.

[39] Taylor, *Mark*, 663.

[40] Taylor, *Mark*, 663.

[41] Taylor, *Mark*, 48, 540, 655. The verb occurred 26 times in Mark and only 6 in Matthew and 2 in Luke.

[42] Taylor, *Mark*, 63

5:34).[43] Taylor concluded that the presence of these three Semitisms was "too remarkable to be ignored" and therefore "we are entitled to conclude that Aramaic tradition is reflected in the rough Markan Greek."[44] Taylor proceeds similarly through the rest of Source B identifying possible Semitisms which support his hypothesis of an early Semitic source of the preMarkan passion narrative.[45] In this way, Taylor is able to support the historical narrative of Source A with early Petrine testimony from Source B in his reconstruction of the development of the preMarkan passion narrative. In this hypothetical source, Taylor attempted to show that form criticism was not necessarily negative and could be used positively to identify early Aramaic tradition that originated with Peter.

1.1.3 History, Theology, and the preMarkan Passion Narrative

As a British Methodist minister, Taylor's scholarship did not end with history but with theological reflection. Thus, his writings on the preMarkan passion narrative became a vehicle for expressing atonement theology. In 1934 Rudolf Otto argued that Jesus viewed himself as Isaiah's servant and the passion sayings reflected this self-consciousness.[46] Following Otto, Taylor concluded that Jesus "did not see His death as a catastrophe, but as an essential part of His Messianic achievement."[47] The ransom saying

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[43] Taylor, *Mark*, 541.

[44] Taylor, *Mark*, 541.

[45] Taylor, *Mark*, 655–57, for a list of possible Semitisms.

[46] Rudolf Otto, *Reiches Gottes und Menschensohn: Ein religionsgeschichtlicher Versuch* (München: Beck, 1934); ET: The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man, trans. F.V. Filson and B. L. Wolff (London: Lutterworth, 1938).

[47] Vincent Taylor, *Jesus and His Sacrifice* (London: Macmillan, 1937), 90.

of Mark 10:45 provided Taylor evidence that Jesus viewed his death as substitutionary.[48] At the Last Supper, from the words, "Take, this is my body," (Mark 14:22) Taylor surmised that Jesus viewed his death as one in which his disciples (and later generations of Christians) were invited to share.[49] Taylor sought to move from what Jesus thought of his death in Mark to a modern theory of the atonement.

From the Markan passion sayings Taylor derived nine implications, which he summarized:

> Jesus looked upon His suffering and death as the fulfillment of a divine purpose, in which His will was at one with that of the Father, and in virtue of which He accepted an active vocation connected with the Rule of God. He thought of His death as a victorious struggle with the powers of evil, and interpreted His suffering, in relation to men, as representative and vicarious in a sacrificial ministry which involved participation in the consequences of human sin. So far, however, was He from thinking of His Messianic work as automatic and self-acting in its results that He provided a rite whereby men should be able to share in the power of His surrendered life and make His offering their own. He also called upon men to reproduce an experience of cross-bearing in their lives.[50]

Taylor subsumed these principles under what he labelled "the sacrificial principle": fellowship is restored to God through a representative offering, which is not complete "apart from the worshipper on whose attitude and spirit its ethical value depends."[51] In a subsequent volume on the atonement, Taylor further laid out the implications of his historical research on the atonement.[52] He did not want to abandon the language of penal

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[48] Taylor, *Jesus and His Sacrifice*, 101–04.

[49] Taylor, *Jesus and His Sacrifice*, 125.

[50] Taylor, *Jesus and His Sacrifice*, 270–71.

[51] Taylor, *Jesus and His Sacrifice*, 298.

[52] Vincent Taylor, *Atonement in New Testament Teaching* (London: Epworth, 1940).

substitution, though he was hesitant about the language of substitution and preferred to speak of the atonement as "representative in character."[53]

1.2 C. H. Dodd (1884–1973)

In his scholarship, Dodd emphasized the historical nature of Christianity as revealed by God in history, a revelation which found its ultimate expression in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.[54] For Dodd, the death and resurrection of Jesus was "an event which is uniquely significant, and this event may give a unique character to the whole series to which it belongs."[55] However, the revelation of God in Jesus's life and death could be given in new ways and retain its connection with the early traditions about Jesus.[56] This view of the nature of history combined with the adoption of some tenets of form criticism led Dodd to search for the *kerygma*, which he believed was the central message of the NT and, because of the continuity he saw across the NT writings, confirmed both the unity and reliability of the traditions about Jesus.[57]

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[53] Taylor, *Atonement in New Testament Teaching*, 126–30.

[54] C. H. Dodd, *History and the Gospel* (London: Bradford and Dickens, 1938), 15–38; idem., *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1936), 79–96.

[55] Dodd, *History and the Gospel*, 29–30.

[56] C. H. Dodd, *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 9; Craig R. Koester, "Progress and Paradox: C. H. Dodd and Rudolf Bultmann on History, the Jesus Tradition, and the Fourth Gospel," in *Engaging with C. H. Dodd on the Gospel of John: Sixty Years of Tradition and Interpretation*, eds. Tom Thatcher and Catrin Williams (New York: Cambridge, 2013), 53.

[57] Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*; idem., *According to the Scriptures: The Substructure of New Testament Theology*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953).

Dodd was an early, but reluctant, adopter of the form-critical method, offering lectures on form criticism at Mansfield College in 1928.[58] In a 1932 article Dodd offered an early assessment of form criticism:

> The school of *Formgeschichte* has not, I think it must be admitted, as yet produced a work of really first-class quality (unless we except K. L. Schmidt's book, which is rather preparatory to *Formgeschichte*), nor have its achieved results so far been commensurate with the *éclat* with which it has been announced.[59]

Despite his early hesitations, Dodd adopted, with serious modifications, a form-critical methodology in his research on parables, the early preaching of the apostles, and the Gospel of John.[60] Dodd clearly recognized the search for a preMarkan passion narrative was a form-critical endeavor distinct from earlier source criticism:

> Source-criticism suggests that the Markan narrative has been reproduced by Matthew with some alteration and expansion in details; that in Luke it has been combined with a narrative from a different source; and that John, while he may be in some measure indebted to Mark, has in substance followed independent tradition. Form-criticism can go further, and having to regard the allusions to the story of the Cross in the epistles, and to the formulation of it in the apostolic preaching (kerygma) in Acts, will suggest that underlying our three primary accounts there is a common form or pattern of Passion-narrative.[61]

Within Dodd's reconstruction of earliest Christianity, the preMarkan passion narrative was connected to the *kerygma* as the "plain and objective" historical narrative that

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[58] F. W. Dillistone, *C. H. Dodd: Interpreter of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 100.

[59] C. H. Dodd, "Present Tendencies in the Criticism of the Gospels," *ExpT* 43.6 (1932): 246–51, here 248.

[60] Respectively, C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961); idem., *According to the Scriptures;* idem., *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963).

[61] C. H. Dodd, *History and the Gospel*, 80.

provided the basis for theological reflection of the early church.[62] In Dodd's writings, the preMarkan passion narrative emerges from a combination of form criticism, historical concerns, the centrality of the NT use of the Jewish Scriptures, and Dodd's congregational theology.

1.2.1 Form-Critical Approach

While scholars like Taylor accepted many of the presuppositions of the German form critics, Dodd rejected several of their fundamental assumptions. Curiously, Neill and Wright attempted to separate Dodd from form criticism entirely, saying that among British scholars he had done the most remarkable work on "the Gospel behind the Gospels" but was not a form critic.[63] However, this assessment failed to account for Dodd's use of form criticism in his works and Beth Stovell has more accurately described Dodd as "a pioneer of form criticism within Britain."[64] While rejecting both Schmidt's conclusion that the Markan outline was of little worth when reconstructing the life of the historical Jesus and Bultmann's attempt to identify authentic and inauthentic traditions, Dodd adapted the form-critical method in a recognizably British, and as I will demonstrate, Congregational, way in an attempt to demonstrate the historical nature of

[62] Dodd, *History and the Gospel*, 84.

[63] Neill and Wright, *Interpretation*, 272.

[64] Beth M. Stovell, "C. H. Dodd as New Testament Interpreter and Theologian," in *Pillars of History of Biblical Interpretation*, *Vol. 1: Prevailing Methods before 1980*, Biblical Studies Series 2, eds. Stanley E. Porter and Sean A. Adams (Eugene: Pickwick, 2016), 351. Cf., Baird, *History of New Testament Research*, 3:37–38; George B. Caird, "C. H. Dodd," in *A Handbook of Christian Theologians*, ed. Philip E. Hughes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 321–26; John A. T. Robinson, "Theologians of Our Time: C. H. Dodd," *ExpT* 75.4 (1963–64): 100–102, here 101. James D. G. Dunn, "C. H. Dodd and New Testament Studies," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 86.3 (2004): 55–75, here 60, discussed Dodd's disagreement with Schmidt but did not note that Dodd adopted a form-critical approach.

the Gospel accounts.[65] Like much of British Gospel criticism of this era, Robertson described Dodd's constructive form criticism as "preserving British Biblical scholarship from the negative extremes of Continental skepticism."[66]

1.2.1.1 Narrative Framework of the Tradition

It is not surprising that Dodd rejected Schmidt's conclusion that the earliest tradition circulated in independent units and instead argued that the Markan chronology provided a basis for the life of Jesus.[67] For Schmidt the *Sammelberichte* were used by the evangelist to connect the isolated units of Jesus tradition into a narrative framework. However, Dodd argued that these passages (Mark 1:14–15, 21–22, 39; 2:13; 3:7b–19; 4: 33–34; 6:7, 12–13, 30) provided a "continuous narrative" when placed alongside one another that provided "a perspicuous outline of the Galilean Ministry, forming a framework into which the separate pictures are set."[68] According to Dodd, the author of Mark was embarrassed that this outline was unable to incorporate all of the traditional material he received and some of the Jesus tradition was already topically arranged into complexes that did not neatly fit within this framework.[69] The problem of the

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[65] Dillistone, *C. H. Dodd*, 223; McKnight, *What is Form Criticism?*, 34–36; Stovell, "C. H. Dodd," 352–53. D. A. Carson, "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel: After Dodd, What?," in *Gospel Perspectives: Studies of History and Tradition in the Four Gospels*, Vol. II, eds. R. T. France and David Wenham, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), 83–145, argued that Dodd's form-critical method was incongruent with his arguments for the historicity of the Fourth Gospel. Cf. J. S. King, "Has D. A. Carson Been Fair to C. H. Dodd?," *JSNT* 17 (1983): 97–102; D. A. Carson, "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel: A Response to J. S. King," *JSNT* 23 (1985): 73–81.

[66] Robinson, "C. H. Dodd," 101.

[67] C. H. Dodd, "The Framework of the Gospel Narrative," in *New Testament Studies* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), 1–11.

[68] Dodd, "Framework," 8.

[69] Dodd, "Framework," 10.

chronological or topical arrangement of Mark was solved through a compromise where Mark incorporated units of tradition into the traditional framework and kept topical units together; in instances when isolated units did not fit neatly into either category, the evangelist simply did the best he could.[70]

This solution allowed Dodd to retain the historical reliability of the majority of the Markan outline for reconstructing the historical Jesus, while also conceding that not all units were in their correct historical order:

> Thus we need not be so scornful of the Marcan order as has recently become the fashion, though we shall not place in it the implicit confidence it once enjoyed…It is hazardous to argue from the precise sequence of the narrative in detail; yet there is good reason to believe that in broad lines the Marcan order does represent a genuine succession of events, within which movement and development can be traced.[71]

Significantly, this narrative framework was also present in what Dodd identified as the *kerygma*, or the "the announcement of certain historical events in a setting which displays the significance of these events," especially as indicated by the Jewish Scriptures.[72]Craig Koester observed that Dodd's distinction between the event and its significance was informed by his Congregational theology, which will I examine below.[73]

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[70] Dodd, "Framework," 11.

[71] Dodd, "Framework," 11.

[72] Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, 11.

[73] Koester, "Progress and Paradox," 51.

1.2.1.2 Literary Forms

Unlike Bultmann or Dibelius, who offered varying forms of narrative and speech, Dodd simply distinguished between narrative forms and discourse forms.[74] Dodd accepted the form-critical division of narratives into "concise" and "circumstantial" types. In a description reminiscent of Dibelius, Dodd characterized concise narratives as those which say nothing except what is essential to the incident.[75] This type of narrative, which included Pronouncement Stories and Miracle Stories, was characteristic of oral tradition, "in which an oft-repeated story is rubbed down and polished, like a water-worn pebble, until nothing but the essential remains, in its most arresting and memorable form."[76] According to Dodd, these types of stories represented the earliest tradition that was repeated because of their connection to the interests of the earliest Christians.[77]

In contrast circumstantial narratives, which Dodd equated with *Novellen* or Tales, provided vivid details in an effort to entertain the reader: "All such details are a part of the art and craft of the story-teller, who, himself excited by the story he tells, seeks to kindle the imagination of his auditors."[78] While Dodd accepted the German form critics' assessment of the early date of the concise narratives, he did not accept their late dating

[74] Dodd, Framework," 9–11. Stovell, "C. H. Dodd," 354, n. 64, described Dodd's identification of forms as independent units, larger complexes, and outline of Jesus' ministry. However, these reflect Dodd's understanding of Markan sources, not an attempt to describe literary forms.

[75] C. H. Dodd, "The Appearances of the Risen Christ: An Essay in Form-Criticism of the Gospels," in *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot*, ed. Dennis E. Nineham (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), 9; Reprinted in C. H. Dodd, *More New Testament Studies* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968), 102; Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 48.

[76] Dodd, "The Appearance of the Risen Christ," 103.

[77] Dodd, "The Appearances of the Risen Christ," 103.

[78] Dodd, "The Appearances of the Risen Christ," 102.

of the circumstantial narratives. Instead, Dodd simply dismissed the German form critics with a rhetorical question on the details of these narratives: "If they are said to include 'worldly' traits, were the Christians so insulated from the world, even in the earliest days, that they had no interest in a well-told tale?"[79] While the form could be an indication of an early tradition, for Dodd, it could not be used to suggest later developments within Christianity.

The most extensive treatment of a single literary form is Dodd's work on parables, which he categorized as a type of narrative form and argued that Bultmann's three-fold classification of parables (*Bildwörter, Gleichnisse, Parabel*) was untenable.[80] If the form of a unit was able to indicate its historical value, then according to Dodd the parables must be placed among the most authentic of the Jesus tradition.[81] Dodd based this conclusion on his literary judgments about the parables, although he doubted the possibility of the form-critical method to aid in historical judgments, an issue on which Bultmann and Dibelius disagreed.[82]

1.2.1.3 *Sitze im Leben*

In both his inaugural lecture at Cambridge and his thirty-year retrospective, Dodd identified the *Sitz im Leben* as the most significant and fruitful contribution of form

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[79] Dodd, "The Appearances of the Risen Christ," 103–04.

[80] Dodd, *Parables of the Kingdom*, 6–7. According to Dodd, using the number of verbs and their tense to classify parables misses the key principle of parable interpretation— "The typical parable…presents one single point of comparison."

[81] Dodd, *Parables of the Kingdom*, 1; idem., *History and the Gospel*, 88–89.

[82] Dodd, *Parables of the Kingdom*, 26, n. 1; idem., "Present Tendencies," 247.

criticism.[83] In Dodd's opinion, form criticism paid too much attention to the formal aspects of the tradition, but its emphasis on the *Sitz im Leben* of the Jesus tradition highlighted the fact that these traditions grew out of a vibrant and growing community. Like his German counterparts, Dodd adopted a two-fold scheme in which to place traditions—the setting in the life of Jesus or within the life of the church.[84] While Dodd emphasized the *Sitz im Leben* as the most important advancement of form criticism, the concept did not factor significantly into his own work. The emphasis on uncovering the *kerygma* underlying all of Dodd's work placed the *Sitze* of most traditions within the preaching and teaching of the early church.

1.2.1.4 Event and Interpretation in the Jesus Tradition

At the center of Dodd's thought is his particular view of history and the relationship between the event and its significance. In Dodd's reconstruction, the Jesus tradition is focused on the *kerygma*, or the event of Jesus in history—his ministry, crucifixion, resurrection, and emergence of a group of followers after the ascension.[85] The significance of this event is indicated by reference to prophecies from the Jewish Scriptures, which Dodd labelled testimonies, which details of Jesus' life and ministry fulfilled.[86] While Bultmann's form-critical method identified layers of tradition in an

[83] C. H. Dodd, *The Present Task in New Testament Studies: An Inaugural Lecture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), 21–22; idem., "Thirty Years of New Testament Study," *Rel* 47 (1978): 320–29, here 322.

[84] Dodd, *Parables of the Kingdom*, 85.

[85] Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, 11–12.

[86] Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, 28–60.

effort to find authentic tradition, it was impossible for Dodd to separate the *kerygma* from its later interpretation.

The outline of the *kerygma* was found in 1 Cor 15:3–4 and confirmed by the outline of the speeches in Acts (Acts 20:18–35; 22:1–21; 26:2–23): "a proclamation of the facts of the death and resurrection of Christ in an eschatological setting which gives significance to the facts."[87] According to Dodd, the Gospel of Mark was an expanded form of the *kerygma* that included both historical details and commentary.[88] In light of the developments of form criticism, Dodd countered:

> We are not to think of the record in the Gospels as the ultimate raw material, out of which the Preaching was constructed. The kerygma is primary, and it acted as a preservative of the tradition which conveyed the facts. The nearer we are in the Gospels to the stuff of the kerygma, the nearer we are to the fountain-head of the tradition. There never existed a tradition formed by a dry historical interest in the facts as facts. From the beginning the facts were preserved in memory and tradition as elements in the Gospel which the Church proclaimed.[89]

In contrast to Bultmann, Dodd did not believe NT scholars could separate history from interpretation, fact from legend, or an event from its interpretation; it is impossible to find facts about Jesus unaffected by their interpretation. Instead, he identified Jesus tradition close to the *kerygma* as the likeliest place to find historical facts about Jesus for "they represent the testimony of those who stood nearest to the facts, and whose life and

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[87] Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*, 13–19.

[88] Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*, 46–52. Dodd did not consider Matthew or Luke pure Gospels, because they combined *didaché* with *kerygma*, a departure from Mark's Gospel. This is evident is the space allocated to the passion narrative—according to Dodd one-seventh of Matthew and one-sixth of Luke. Dodd identified one-fifth of Mark devoted to the passion narrative, though he attempted to increase the figure by stating, "We must remember that when Mark was complete, its resurrection-narrative was certainly a good deal longer" (52), a contention he never demonstrated.

[89] Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*, 55–56.

outlook had been moulded by them."[90] The preMarkan passion narrative played a decisive role in Dodd's form-critical approach as the *kerygma* emphasized the death and resurrection of Jesus and a significant feature of passion narratives was their use of testimonies to underscore the significance of this event.

1.2.2 History and the PreMarkan Passion Narrative

Although Dodd is not typically associated with the quest for the preMarkan passion narrative, within his distinctive form-critical approach the preMarkan passion narrative has special significance because of its connection with the *kerygma*.[91] In contrast to the German form critics who emphasized the preMarkan passion narrative's unique status as the only early, coherent narrative, Dodd stressed the importance of the preMarkan passion narrative as the historical outline of the *kerygma*.[92] However, Dodd echoed statements of Bultmann, Schmidt and Dibelius on the narrative coherency of the passion narrative and similarly concluded it could only have existed as a single narrative and was not formed from isolated units of tradition.[93] The narrative structure in the passion narrative across the Synoptic Gospels suggested to Dodd a common source:

> In the Passion narrative, by contrast, the three Synoptic Gospels scarcely differ in the order of incidents. Attempts to show that the Passion narrative, like the account of the ministry, grew up out of separate units have not, in my judgment, succeeded. It may be that some two or three of the incidents which now appear in the course of that narrative were handed down separately, but for the most part each incident is intelligible only in its place within the continuous sequence,

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[90] Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*, 56.

[91] Soards, "The Question of a preMarcan Passion Narrative," 1493–1500, did not include Dodd in his list of 35 scholars.

[92] Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, 22; idem., *History and the Gospel*, 80.

[93] Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, 21, 28.

> depending on what has gone before and preparing for what comes after. The fact is that the attempt to explain the Passion narrative as an aggregation of originally independent units is fundamentally misguided.[94]

Furthermore, Dodd accepted that there was, in fact, a distinction between the narrative of the ministry and the passion narrative, a distinction that he considered inherent in the nature of written Gospels.[95]

After considering the Gospels, the *kerygma* in Acts, and Paul's epistles, Dodd concluded that the earliest passion narrative was composed of nine scenes: 1) the Last Supper; 2) the prediction of Peter's denial; 3) betrayal, arrest, and desertion of disciples at the Mount of Olives; 4) Jesus before the high priest and Peter's denial; 5) the trial before Pilate, condemnation of Jesus as King of the Jews, and the release of Barabbas; 6) the crucifixion; 7) the burial; 8) the empty tomb; and, 9) the appearances to the disciples.[96] All early re-tellings of the passion narrative were, according to Dodd, controlled "by a fixed, even stereotyped form of narrative" that was "so fixed in tradition that no serious departure from the common form could be contemplated."[97] Thus, the later evangelists not only did not depart from the fixed passion narrative, they also refrained from literary or theological additions. Dodd rejected Schmidt's classification of the passion narrative as the first in the genre of martyr acts due to the lack of elements he considered to be characteristic of martyr legends, such as speeches, miraculous interventions, and explicit

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[94] Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, 21.

[95] Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, 22; idem., *Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*, 47.

[96] Dodd, *History and the Gospel*, 80–81.

[97] Dodd, *History and the Gospel*, 82–84

details of suffering.[98] Instead, the preMarkan passion narrative was "primitive tradition," the historical outline that arose, not from preaching (contra Dibelius) or from theological reflection, but from the facts of the events in Jerusalem in the final days of Jesus's life.

1.2.3 Kerygma, Testimonies, and the PreMarkan Passion Narrative

The emphasis on the connection between the event and its interpretation in historical method arose from both Dodd's philosophical approach and his Congregational theology. His Platonist sympathies, recognized clearly in his realized eschatology, also guided his approach to history and eschatology.[99] The Congregational church taught that the core truths of Christianity were transmitted, not through creeds or statements of faith, but through the community of faithful believers.[100] Thus, for Dodd, the modern Congregational church passed along tradition in a manner similar to the first-century church—the core of the gospel (or *kerygma*) remained the same, though expressed in

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[98] Dodd, *History and the Gospel*, 83.

[99] W. D. Davies, "*In Memoriam* Charles Harold Dodd, 1884–1973," *NTS* 20.2 (1974): i–v, here iii; Baird, *History of New Testament Research*, 3:37; Rudolf Bultmann, "'The Bible Today' und die Eschatologie," in *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology*, eds. W. D. Davies and D. Daube (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 402–08, criticized Dodd for presenting a philosophy of history (*Geschichtsphilosophie*) rather than a theological understanding of history (*theologischen Geschichtsverständnis*). The difference between the two scholars understanding of history and eschatology is stark. While Dodd envisioned the transcendent entering into space-time history through Jesus, who revealed God's purposes in his death and resurrection. Bultmann interpreted the encounter with Jesus as an existential event (*Ereignis*) through which individuals experienced eternal life in the present without any future expectations.

[100] Robert William Dale, *A Manual of Congregational Principles*, 7th ed. (London: Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1892), 187–88: "The saints of every new age are taught of God; this noble faith is surrendered if the free action and thought of the church are restrained by the creed of a preceding generation. It is not be enforcing a theological test as the condition of communion that a church can protect itself from heresy. Its only protection is the presence of Christ and the illumination of the Holy Ghost." Timothy Larsen, "Congregationalists," in *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions. Vol. V: The Twentieth Century: Themes and Variations in a Global Context*, eds. Mark P. Hutchinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 42–45; Koester, "Progress and Paradox," 51.

different ways in each generation.[101] In Dodd's work, the influence of the Congregational church is seen clearly in his emphasis on the transmission of the preMarkan passion narrative (event) alongside its interpretation, which was found in the testimonies. In this way, the central event of Christianity, the death and resurrection of Jesus, remained stable and the testimonies provided an interpretive tool for later generations of Christians.

Among the most notable features of the Markan, and indeed, all passion narratives were the allusions to passages in the Jewish Scriptures. For Dodd, these references were not simply "literary embroidery," but in part determined the form of the passion narrative and were present from the beginning in oral tradition.[102] The identification of allusions, citations, or echoes to the Jewish Scriptures was *the* defining aspect of Dodd's form-critical method.[103] In the preMarkan passion narrative, Dodd tied his dual interests of historicity of Jesus traditions and the theological importance of the death of Jesus to the citations of the Jewish Scriptures.

2. Anglican Acceptance of Form Criticism

While Nonconformist NT scholars struggled against the perceived negative impulses of German form criticism, Anglican scholars more readily accepted both the method and its

[101] Koester, "Paradox and Progress," 51–52; Dale, *Manual*, 101–02, 189–90.

[102] Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, 35; idem., *According to the Scriptures*, 29–30.

[103] Stovell, "C. H. Dodd," 355, identified two of the three steps to Dodd's form-critical method as relating to the Jewish Scriptures. "Assess the quotation of the Old Testament in the New Testament" and "Based on this assessment, access the contribution of this Old Testament passage within the New Testament for theology in its original context in early Christianity and its implications for today. Güttgemanns, *Candid Questions*, 311–18, considered Dodd's form-critical method "imprecise" for several reasons, including Dodd's focus on the *kerygma*, which was not a form, but "a cipher for the theological importance of the content."

results. R. H. Lightfoot was the first scholar to accept the radical results of form criticism in British scholarship. It was not until the writings of Dennis E. Nineham, Lightfoot's pupil, that form criticism began to chip away at the foundation of British historical-critical scholarship of the Gospels laid by Taylor, Dodd, and Manson.

2.1 R. H. Lightfoot (1883–1953)

If Taylor and Dodd represented an attempt to subdue German form criticism within conservative British Christology, then the 1934 Bampton Lectures of R. H. Lightfoot, Dean Ireland's Professor of Exegesis at Oxford, were an attempt to embrace the radical nature of form criticism and incorporate its conclusions regarding the historicity of the Gospels into British Synoptic criticism.[104] Lightfoot observed these tendencies within British NT scholarship:

> There is a widespread tendency in this country to value the gospels almost solely for what is believed to be their biographical worth, and concern is expressed if in any respect the books seem to fail to pass this standard. … The arguments by which it is sought to establish the historical reliability of the gospels are of varying value, and some of them probably will not bear all the weight which it is sometimes sought to place upon them.[105]

With the new discipline of form criticism, Lightfoot found a tool that allowed him to differentiate between history and theology in the Gospels and he would be the one to introduce the results of form criticism into English scholarship.

Lightfoot's dissatisfaction with the results of source criticism began in the Oxford seminar on the Gospels, which included Streeter and A. E. J. Rawlinson (1884–1960). It

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[104] R. H. Lightfoot, *History and Interpretation in the Gospels*, (London: Harper and Brothers, 1934).

[105] R. H. Lightfoot, *The Gospel Message of St Mark* (London: Clarendon Press, 1950), 102–03.

was here that he observed that source criticism could not account for the features he observed in the Gospels, particularly the blending of history and theology.[106] These ideas present early in Lightfoot's career developed when, at the urging of C. H. Dodd, he spent 1931 in Germany learning from Bultmann and Dibelius.[107] During this trip Lightfoot was, to borrow a phrase from Walter Weaver, "infected" with form criticism and Lightfoot made it his mission to spread form criticism into British scholarship.[108]

James M. Robinson described Lightfoot's role as "a transmitter of German research" and Brian Powley later noted Lightfoot's importance as "the first British scholar not to insist on seeing the gospels as primarily *historical* documents."[109] Early reviewers of *History and Interpretation* observed that Lightfoot simply introduced German scholarship to English readers: "Dibelius on the principles of form-criticism; Wrede on the theological purpose of Mark; and Lietzmann on the Passion narratives."[110] In later works, Lightfoot was dependent upon Lohmeyer's *Galiläa und Jerusalem* for his work *Locality and Doctrine in the Gospels*.[111] Norman Perrin considered Lightfoot in

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[106] Dennis Nineham, "R. H. Lightfoot and the Significance of Biblical Criticism," *Theology* 88 (1985): 97–105, here 97; Court, *Generation,* 49.

[107] R. H. Lightfoot, "What Do We Know about Jesus?," *The Modern Churchman* 11 (1921): 223–28; Court, *Generation,* 50; Nineham, "Lightfoot," 99.

[108] Weaver, *The Historical Jesus in the Twentieth Century*, 143.

[109] Respectively, James M. Robinson, *The Problem of History in Mark*, SBT 21 (London: SCM Press, 1957), 11; Brian G. Powley, "The Place of R. H. Lightfoot in British New Testament Scholarship," *ExpT* 93.3 (1991): 72–74, here 73, emphasis original. It should be noted that Powley's comment is patently false. The English Deists held that the Gospels were not primarily historical documents earlier than Reimarus. Cf., Baird, *History*, 1:31–57.

[110] B. S. Easton, review of *History and Interpretation in the Gospels*, by R. H. Lightfoot, *AThR* 18.1 (1936): 29; Cf., Robert P. Casey, review of *History and Interpretation in the Gospels*, *JBL* 56.1 (1937): 61–63.

[111] Ernst Lohmeyer, *Galiläa und Jerusalem*, FRLANT 52 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1936); R. H. Lightfoot, *Locality and Doctrine in the Gospels* (London: Harper and Brothers, 1938).

some ways "the first redaction critic," but his view of Lightfoot's unique contribution was overstated and the assessment of Robinson and Powley were closer to representing accurately his contribution to form criticism, but did not go far enough in their observations.[112] Powley observed that "It would be easy to demonstrate that Lightfoot has borrowed ideas not only from Dibelius but also from Lohmeyer" and I have demonstrated Lightfoot's dependance of both Dibelius and Lohmeyer.[113] Despite this, Lightfoot's works helped to make German ideas acceptable in British Gospel studies and his students continued to utilize the form-critical method in their investigations into the Gospels and the preMarkan passion narrative.

[112] Norman Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 22.

[113] Powley, "The Place of R. H. Lightfoot," 72. Massey, "Summarizing." Cf. Christopher Tuckett, "In Defence of R. H. Lightfoot," *NTS* 67 (2021): 545–473, attempts to refute my argument and defend the traditional place on Lightfoot within the history of NT scholarship. Tuckett is correct that Lightfoot was beloved by his colleagues and students. Additionally, Tuckett points out that Lightfoot was "incredibly shy and also diffident about his own academic abilities and standing" (547). However, these details about Lightfoot should not distract from the evidence presented above, which Tuckett does not thoroughly engage, instead arguing that citation practices were different several generations ago and technology and accessibility have significantly developed. Thus, in Tuckett's view, it is likely that Lightfoot made an error with his hand-written notes because Lohmeyer's article was hard to find and he likely only had one chance to read and take notes. This may be true. However, the excuse of faulty note-taking processes fails to convince. I have found no other instances of translation of German scholars in the works of Dodd, Taylor, or Manson. The excuse of sloppy notetaking remains a common refrain from those caught misusing the work of others, e.g. the recent examples of Peter T. O'Brien and his use of the writings of F. F. Bruce, and Andreas Köstenberger and his use of the writings of D. A. Carson, who later blamed a research assistant for the errors. (https://www.eerdmans.com/Pages/Item/59043/Commentary-Statement.aspx Accessed 21 August 2021; https://zondervanacademic.com/blog/statement-from-zondervan-academic-on-dr-andreas-kostenbergers-john-commentary Accessed 18 August 2021).

2.1.1 The PreMarkan Passion Narrative

Lightfoot repeated previous form-critical statements on the uniqueness of the preMarkan passion narrative as the one exception to the rule of individual units of Jesus tradition.

> There are indications that a story of the passion existed, forming a connected whole, and particularly distinguished by notes of time and place, before it was embodied in the larger work of St. Mark. From the resolve of the Jewish authorities to do away with Jesus, at the beginning of the fourteenth chapter, until the departure of the frightened women from the tomb at 16:8, where the gospel, as we have it, ends, notes of time and place become more frequent, and the story for the most part moves steadily forward in a way which has no parallel in earlier chapters.[114]

In Lightfoot's reconstruction, the only story that existed outside of the early passion narrative was the anointing at Bethany (Mark 14:3–9), though some traditions, such as the Lord's Supper in Paul, could exist apart from the larger narrative.[115] Following the German form critics, Lightfoot argued that the evangelists were not interested in producing a biography of Jesus, but instead emphasized the use of the Gospel and especially the passion narrative in the preaching of the early church.[116]

The reconstruction of the preMarkan passion narrative followed Dibelius closely, just as Lightfoot followed Dibelius closely in his presentation of the form-critical method. Lightfoot was an important scholar who introduced these ideas into English scholarship and, in contrast to Taylor and Dodd, did not attempt to subdue their "radical" conclusions. He stands as the first British NT scholar who not only accepted the form-

[114] Lightfoot, *History*, 126–27; cf. idem., *Gospel Message*, 101.

[115] Lightfoot, *History*, 127.

[116] Lightfoot, *History*, 128.

critical method, but also accepted its results regarding the blending of history and interpretation in the Gospel tradition. Lightfoot was regarded as an excellent teacher and mentor and his influence on the discipline was carried out through the work of his students, particularly Dennis Nineham.

2.2 Dennis E. Nineham (1921–2016)

Several of Lightfoot's students became prominent NT scholars, including Austin Farrer (1904–1968) and John Fenton (1921–2008), but it was Dennis Nineham who continued the trajectory of research introduced to British scholarship by his teacher. John Drury described Nineham as someone who "combined radical criticism of the New Testament gospels with lifelong loyalty to the established church" and Robert Morgan claimed that "it is only since the publication of D. E. Nineham's Pelican Commentary on Mark that the methods and results of Wrede's research have become readily available to non-specialists in this country."[117] The perceived radical nature of Nineham's gospel criticism led to more traditional scholars labelling him a Bultmannian, a historical relativist, or a skeptic.[118] Nineham's work helped to undermine the consensus positions about the origins and historical reliability of the Gospels and spread these views outside scholarly conversations by introducing them to a popular audience.

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[117] Respectively, John Drury, "The Rev Dennis Nineham Obituary"; Morgan, "'Negative' Criticism of the Gospels?," 77.

[118] Don Cupitt, "A Sense of History," *Theology* 89.731 (1986): 362–66, here 362–63; Ronald H. Preston, "Need Dr Nineham Be So Negative?," *ExpT* 90.9 (1979): 275–80; O. C. Edwards, J. "Historical-Critical Methods' Failure of Nerve and a Prescription for a Tonic: A Review of Some Recent Literature," *Ex auditu* 1 (1985): 92–105, here 98–99; Graham Stanton, "Interpreting the New Testament Today," *Ex auditu* 1 (1985): 63–73, here 68–69; Raymond Abba, "Historical Skepticism in Recent Biblical Studies," *Colloquium* 17.2 (1985): 23–32, here 26–31.

2.2.1 Form-Critical Approach

As he began his career, Nineham was compelled "to further explore [Lightfoot's] doubts on the 'received position.'"[119] The "received position" referred to was the results of the Gospel scholarship of Taylor, Dodd, and Manson. Nineham's early essays were a direct criticism of Taylor and Dodd and an attempt to constructively build a picture of Gospel origins along a similar line as Lightfoot. The following paragraphs examine Nineham's form-critical method through the lens of his critique of Dodd on the Markan outline and Taylor on the question of eyewitness tradition, concluding with his preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis.

2.2.1.1 Narrative Framework of the Tradition

It will be remembered that in his 1932 article, Dodd argued that the evangelist had an outline of the career of Jesus along with pericopae, some isolated and others in groupings. It was thus the task of the evangelist to put them together as best he could, sometimes in chronological order and other times grouping by theme.[120] Nineham observed that the takeaway from Dodd's article are less far-reaching that previously recognized, particularly focusing on the ways in which the hypothesis of a brief historical outline was less useful than Dodd thought.[121] First, if such an outline existed it would have been very short and contained only a small portion of the things Jesus said and did

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[119] Dennis E. Nineham, "Introduction," in *Explorations in Theology* vol. 1 (London: SCM Press, 1977), 2.

[120] See above.

[121] Dennis E. Nineham, "The Order of Events in St. Mark's Gospel—An Examination of Dr. Dodd's Hypothesis," in *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot*, ed. Dennis E. Nineham (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), 223–24.

and made the evangelist's task of placing isolated pericopae in their proper place nearly impossible.[122] Second, Nineham noted that there are only a small number of pericopae that provide any internal evidence of where it should be located in this hypothetical outline.[123] Third, Dodd himself admitted that half of the account of the ministry of Jesus was arranged topically in the preMarkan tradition, undermining its use in the arguments for the historical accuracy of the outline of Jesus' life.[124] Nineham concluded that the arguments set forth by Dodd did not establish that a hypothetical historical outline existed in the tradition.

In place of Dodd's hypothesis, Nineham understood the transmission of the Jesus tradition and origins of the Gospels according to form criticism. Here Nineham introduces the question of genre to the conversation and, contrary to Dodd and Taylor, asked whether it was even the evangelist's intention to write a book that chronologically sketched the life of Jesus.[125] It was of utmost importance to Nineham that the Gospels not be confused for biography. Instead, the Gospel of Mark was a "connected historical narrative", a linking of stories and groups of stories with summary statements added by the evangelist.[126] The assumption that Mark was a biography led scholars to ask the wrong questions of the text:

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[122] Nineham, "Order of Events," 226.

[123] Nineham, "Order of Events," 226. Dodd used the idea of "suitability" to solve this problem but Nineham responded that suitability was a subjective criterion: "At best this will have been inspired guesswork on the evangelist's part, and, unless we take the work 'inspired' in that phrase very seriously, we may be tempted to feel that our guess is sometimes as good, or even better than, St. Mark's."

[124] Nineham, "Order of Events," 227–28.

[125] Nineham, "Order of Events," 238–39; idem., "The Gospels and the Life of Jesus," *Theology* 59 (1956): 97–103; idem., *Saint Mark*, PNTC (New York: Penguin Books, 1963), 35–38.

[126] Nineham, *Mark*, 36.

> When we remember that many of the stories reached St Mark without any indication of time or place at which they occurred, we shall learn not to place on Mark's order a weight it was never intended to bear, and our question about each incident will be: 'what is the significance of St Mark's having placed it here *in his Gospel?*' not: 'what is the significance of its having happened at this point *in Our Lord's original ministry?'*[127]

According to Nineham, Taylor and Dodd were asking questions the Gospels were not intended to answer. Although he did not use the terminology, Nineham was in some aspects an early practitioner of redaction criticism.

The history of the Jesus tradition prior to the writing of the Gospel of Mark was described by Nineham in plainly form-critical terms. Narratives and sayings about Jesus were passed in "essentially disconnected stories" in the preaching and teaching of early church.[128] In contrast to Dodd, Nineham sought to uncover the religious, rather than historical, reasons that the evangelist composed a Gospel. He highlighted four dominant theological aims of Mark: 1) prove that Jesus was indeed the Messiah and reconcile his messiahship with his death; 2) explain why Jesus kept his status as Messiah a secret; 3) provide comfort to a persecuted church which was suffering as Jesus had suffered; and, 4) portray Jesus as victorious against the powers of the day.[129] The Gospel of Mark, according to Nineham, thus provided scholars with the early church's understanding of Jesus rather than a biography tracing the details of his ministry and the development of his messianic self-consciousness.[130]

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[127] Nineham, *Mark*, 37, italics original. These sentences are a deliberate echo of Lightfoot's statements on the Gospels.

[128] Nineham, *Mark*, 21–27.

[129] Nineham, *Mark*, 30–34.

[130] Dennis E. Nineham, *The Use and Abuse of the Bible* (London: Macmillan, 1976), 168.

2.2.1.2 The Eyewitness Character of the Tradition

Through a series of articles in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, Nineham strongly opposed Taylor's claim that form criticism could support the hypothesis of eyewitness tradition.[131] Central to his argument against Taylor is that form criticism began *a posteriori* with the internal evidence of the written Gospels while more traditional scholars began with *a priori* assumptions about what must have happened.[132] Nineham did concede that Taylor's assumption that the early church was concerned with eyewitness testimony could be shown with internal evidence throughout the NT (Luke 1:1–4; John 15:27; 21:24; Acts 1:21–22; 4:20; 5:32; 10:39–41; 1 Cor 15:5–8; 1 Pet 5:1; 2 Pet 1:1–18; 1 John 1:1–3). However, Nineham dismissed these as late and therefore of no use to establishing eyewitness testimony. The Johannine references contradict the Synoptics.[133] Luke's prologue does disturb the form-critical paradigm, for Luke himself was dependent on tradition, and although it may have originated with eyewitnesses, it was shaped by community in its transmission.[134] Nineham concluded his trilogy of articles on eyewitness testimony by asking why some have been so concerned with the concept of eyewitness testimony, since it was no longer considered "the ultimate datum of the historian."[135]

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[131] Dennis E. Nineham, "Eyewitness Testimony and the Gospel Tradition, I," *JTS* 9 (1958): 13–25; idem., "Eyewitness Testimony and the Gospel Tradition, II," *JTS* 9 (1958): 243–52; idem., "Eyewitness Testimony and the Gospel Tradition, III," *JTS* 11 (1960): 253–64.

[132] Nineham, "Eyewitness Testimony, I," 13–14.

[133] Nineham, "Eyewitness Tradition, I," 19–20; idem., "Eyewitness Tradition, II," 254.

[134] Nineham, "Eyewitness Tradition, I," 18; Here Nineham is dependent upon H. J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts*, 1st ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1927).

[135] Nineham, "Eyewitness Testimony, III," 257–59. Nineham attempted to show how eyewitness testimony is often undermined through cross examination. For recent attempts to rehabilitate the significance of eyewitness testimony, Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as*

2.2.2 The PreMarkan Passion Narrative

The form-critical approach adopted by Nineham led him to posit a preMarkan passion narrative similar to the German form critics:

> Up to this point [Mark 14:1] St Mark has largely been a pioneer, constructing his own narrative out of isolated stories, from this point onward he could rely on an already existing narrative, though, as we shall see, this narrative has itself been built up from separate pericopae at an earlier stage, and St Mark felt no hesitation about adding further pericopae to it.[136]

The existence of a preMarkan passion narrative was, for Nineham, easily accepted based on the tenets of form criticism.

Nineham proposed an early preMarkan passion narrative into which the evangelist inserted individual stories or brief traditions along with his own introductions. The earliest phase of the preMarkan passion narrative began with the arrest of Jesus (Mark 14:43–52), and included Peter's denial (Mark 14:66–72), the trial before Pilate and release of Barabbas (Mark 15:1–15), the crucifixion (Mark 15:21–27, 34–37), and the burial (Mark 15:40–43, 46).[137] Nineham was unclear on where Gethsemane fits into the development of the preMarkan passion narrative, but his comments suggested it could be a part of the earliest version or added shortly thereafter.[138] The preparation for Passover (Mark 14:12–15), the Last Supper (Mark 14:17–25), and the prediction of Peter's denial

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Eyewitness Testimony, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017); Robert K. McIver, *Memory, Jesus, and the Synoptic Gospels* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2011).

[136] Nineham, *Mark*, 356; idem., "Order of Events," 231; Soards, "The Question of a PreMarcan Passion Narrative," 1498, observed that Nineham makes frequent allusion to "scholars" without specifying whose work he is referencing. This section of his commentary Nineham is indebted to Bultmann for the development of the preMarkan passion narrative and Dibelius for its *Sitz im Leben*.

[137] Nineham, *Mark*, 394–435.

[138] Nineham, *Mark*, 389–90.

Mark 14:26–31) could not have existed in isolation and, along with Mark 14:1–2, 10–11, were later additions to the preMarkan passion narrative.[139] According to Nineham, the evangelist inserted isolated traditions, including the anointing at Bethany (Mark 14:3–9), the trial before the Sanhedrin (Mark 14:55–64), and the mocking of Jesus by the soldiers (Mark 15:16–20).

There were, according to Nineham, several factors that accounted for the preMarkan passion narrative's status as a unique piece of Jesus tradition. Here he largely followed Dibelius. First, the early Christians needed to account for the paradox that the Messiah had been crucified by the Romans. A continuous narrative was necessary to accomplish this task.[140] Second, the preMarkan passion narrative served as an apologetic for why the suffering and death of Jesus, who was innocent, happened according to God's will. This took place through searching the Hebrew Scriptures and finding predictions of the Messiah's sufferings, which became a "historical source" for the early community and helped fill in details of the narrative.[141] Third, Nineham observed the attempt of Christians to shift blame for the death of Jesus from the Romans and onto the Jews; a tendency present not only in subsequent Gospels, but one already present in its earliest sources.[142] Thus, Nineham's preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis is in the main an amalgamation of Bultmann's source theory and Dibelius' account of its *Sitze im Leben.*

[139] Nineham, *Mark*, 370–88.

[140] Nineham, *Mark*, 366.

[141] Nineham, *Mark*, 367.

[142] Nineham, *Mark*, 367–68.

2.2.3 History, Modern Theology, and the PreMarkan Passion Narrative

While Nineham differed with Dodd and Taylor in nearly every detail when accounting for the development of the Gospels, he also had significant theological differences. For Nineham, the historical Jesus did not necessarily offer anything to modern theology:

> So far as the real Jesus can be discerned, he, like the New Testament witnessed to him, belongs essentially to the culture of his time and place; there is no real reason to think that the outlook of this historical Jesus will have been such as to be any more immediately acceptable today that that of, let us say, the historical Paul.[143]

In contrast to Dodd and Taylor (or previous generations of NT scholars such as Sanday, Lightfoot, Westcott, and Hort), who not only thought that the historicity of the Gospels was important but was also essential for theological reflection, Nineham's historical outlook, like Bultmann's, neither attempted nor required the link between history and theology.

The above quotation by Nineham emphasizes a central element in his historical thinking—the worldview and presuppositions of the first century were so different from the twentieth that theologians can no longer interpret Jesus in the same way as the early Christians.[144] Nineham dismissed both Bultmann's existentialist Jesus and Dodd's founder of Christianity as "woefully hybrid figures, precisely the products of reading an

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[143] Dennis E. Nineham, *New Testament Interpretation in an Historical Age* (London: Athlone Press, 1975), 14.

[144] Dennis E. Nineham, *The Use and Abuse of the Bible: A Study of the Bible in an Age of Rapid Cultural Change* (London: SPCK, 1976), 2–3; idem., "The Strangeness of the New Testament World, I," *Theology* 85.705 (1982): 171–77; idem., "The Strangeness of the New Testament World, II," *Theology* 85.706 (1982): 247–55.

ancient text through modern spectacles."[145] Instead, Nineham acknowledged the distance between the NT and the twentieth-century and the task of the NT scholar was to understand what Jesus meant to the earliest Christians; it need not mean the same today.

3. Conclusion: The Triumph of Form Criticism

The writings of Taylor, Dodd, Lightfoot, and Nineham reveal that the traditional periodization of "No Quest" within historical Jesus studies of this era is incorrect.[146] These scholars produced major monographs on the historical Jesus wherein the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis, the most "assured result" of form criticism, was at the center. The preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis did not enter English scholarly discourse until the arrival of form criticism from Germany and its earliest adopters were Nonconformist scholars who attempted to use the method to bolster claims for the historical reliability of the Gospels. In 1954 T. W. Manson quipped that the *Wredestrasse* was the road to nowhere.[147] It was only a decade later that Norman Perrin declared that the *Wredestrasse* had become the *Hauptstrasse*.[148] Led by the work of Lightfoot and Nineham, the scholarship that was once considered radical was now mainstream and the form-critical method, along with its radical results, began to be accepted.

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[145] Nineham, *New Testament Interpretation in an Historical Age*, 22.

[146] Fernando Bermejo-Rubio, "The Fiction of the 'Three Quests': An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Historiographical Paradigm," *JSHJ* 7.3 (2009): 211–53; Dale Allison, "Secularizing Jesus," in *Resurrecting Jesus: The Earliest Christian Tradition and Its Interpreters* (New York: T & T Clark, 2005), 1–26.

[147] T. W. Manson, "Present-day Research in the Life of Jesus," in *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology*, 216.

[148] Norman Perrin, "The *Wredestrasse* Becomes the *Hauptstrasse*: Reflections on the Reprinting of the Dodd *Festschrift*," *JR* 42.2 (1966): 296–300.

The preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis remained the most "assured result" of form criticism in British scholarship. Neither Taylor's nor Dodd's preMarkan passion narrative hypotheses achieved much acceptance outside of a small circle of scholars. The preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis of Nineham followed Bultmann and became somewhat of a consensus position among scholars. This view held strong until the rise of redaction criticism, which offered new ways to conceive the development of the preMarkan passion narrative. Like the development of form criticism, these innovations took place in German scholarship and were later exported into British scholarship.

4. The Golden Age of the Quest for the PreMarkan Passion Narrative

"There can be no going back to a pre-kerygmatic or pre-Form-criticism era."[1]

The decades following the Second World War were a "Golden Age" for historical Jesus studies as the new method of redaction criticism and the tools of the criteria of authenticity revitalized hope in the search for authentic Jesus tradition behind the Gospels. These developments in Gospel and historical Jesus studies built upon the foundation of form criticism but differed significantly in allowing for the possibility of identifying authentic Jesus tradition and isolating sources behind the Gospels. The three decades following the War may be viewed as a "Golden Age" for the quest for the preMarkan passion narrative, as the so-called New Quest for the historical Jesus and the formalization of the criteria of authenticity allowed scholars to place the passion of Jesus on firm historical ground and the development of the redaction-critical method provided a tool to further divide and isolate preMarkan traditions from later Markan redaction.[2]

This chapter begins with the post-Bultmannian quest for the historical Jesus. Their key writings were translated into English relatively quickly, especially when compared to previous generations of German scholarship, and the shifts in their approach may be seen in their historiography, particularly their return to positivism and their attempts to

[1] Hugh Anderson, *Jesus and Christian Origins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 183.

[2] Jay M. Harrington, *The Lukan Passion Narrative: The Markan Material in Luke 22,54–23,25, A Historical Survey: 1891–1997*, NTTS 30 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 117, described the period from 1894–1953 as the "Golden Age" of special Lukan passion source theories, but provided no reasons for this designation.

establish continuity between the historical Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ. Several post-Bultmannian scholars, including Günther Bornkamm and Hans Conzelmann, were among the earliest proponents of the new discipline of redaction criticism. These methodological developments led scholars to examine the ways the evangelist joined individual units of Jesus tradition together as both an editor and as a theologian. Redaction criticism retained the elevated position of the preMarkan passion narrative established by the form critics, but rigorously applied the new methodological tools in attempts to distinguish Markan redaction from the earliest layer(s) of this source. The final section of this chapter traces the scholarly response to the tasks of reconstructing a preMarkan passion narrative as laid out by Gerhard Schneider.[3] By the early 1970s the form-critical method and the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis were under assault on multiple fronts. Although Schneider believed the completion of his eight tasks would settle the question of whether there was a preMarkan passion narrative and establish a consensus regarding its contents, the studies completed after Schneider only highlighted the lack of scholarly consensus on nearly every issue.

1. The Post-Bultmannians and the Authenticity of the Passion Traditions

The beginnings of the so-called "New Quest" can be firmly set to Ernst Käsemann's lecture to the old Marburgers on 20 October 1953.[4] While affirming the validity of much

[3] Gerhard Schneider, "Das Problem einer vorkanonischen Passionserzählung," *BZ* 16 (1972): 222–44.; Repr., in *Jesusüberlieferung und Christologie: Neutestamentliche Aufsätze 1970–1990*, NovT Sup 67 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 213–35. Subsequent references to *Jesusüberlieferung und Christologie*.

[4] Ernst Käsemann, "Das Problem des historischen Jesus," *ZthK* 51 (1954): 125–53; ET: "The Problem of the Historical Jesus," in *Essays on New Testament Themes*, trans. W. J. Montague (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 15–47. I use "New Quest" only here. Below, I will refer to these scholars as "post-Bulamannians." For the problems with the three Quest taxonomy, Fernando Bermejo Rubio, "The

of Bultmann's form-critical program, Käsemann and other post-Bultmannians broke with their teacher in one significant aspect—the question of continuity between the exalted Lord of the kerygma with the message of Jesus of Nazareth.[5] This difference has been misunderstood in histories of the quest for this historical Jesus, as Van Harvey and Schubert Ogden observed.[6] While Bultmann famously stated that the historical Jesus was of no use for faith, for the post-Bultmannians theology necessitated that the kerygma be grounded in the life of Jesus; without this connection the kerygma could be reduced to "the symbolic presentation of certain timeless truths that would be just as true even if it turned out that Jesus was a mythical being."[7] A discussion of Bultmann's two types of historical knowledge and the post-Bultmannian response illuminates their differences beyond simply stating they disagreed on the continuity between the Jesus of history and the Christ of the kerygma.

Bultmann distinguished the objective knowledge of historical facts (*Historie)* from interpretation of these facts as a means to self-understanding (*Geschichte*). The knowledge that Jesus allows for the possibility of an authentic existence comes from the

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Fiction of the 'Three Quests': An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Historical Paradigm," *JSHJ* 7 (2009): 211–53.

[5] Käsemann, "The Problem of the Historical Jesus," 34; In response to Käsemann, Rudolf Bultmann, *Das Verhältnis der urchristlichen Christusbotschaft* zum historischen *Jesus,* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1962); ET: "The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical Jesus," in *The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ: Essays on the New Quest of the Historical* Jesus, ed. C. E. Braaten and R. A. Harrisville (New York: Abingdon, 1964), 15–42. Cf., Ernst Käsemann, "Blind Alleys in the 'Jesus of History' Controversy," in *New Testament Questions of Today*, trans. W. J. Montague (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 23–65

[6] Van A. Harvey and Schubert M. Ogden, "How New is the 'New Quest of the Historical Jesus'?", in *The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ*, 197–242.

[7] Van Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer: The Morality of Historical Knowledge and Christian Belief* (New York: Macmillan, 1996), 167.

kerygma, the church's proclamation of the risen and exalted Christ. In Bultmann's writings, the historical claims were subordinated to the theological, but interest in the historical was not eliminated. It is here that the post-Bultmannians found their strongest disagreement with their teacher. At the outset of his programmatic essay, Kasemann stated:

> We are all without exception concerned at present with the question of a proper understanding of history (*Geschichte*) and historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) which is bound to find concrete, necessary and, indeed, archetypal expression for the theologian in the problem of the historical Jesus and of his significance for faith.[8]

As he built upon the form-critical approach, Käsemann sought to prove the authenticity of traditions embedded within the kerygma through application of the criteria of dissimilarity to the sayings tradition found in the Gospels.[9] Käsemann attempted to rescue the historical Jesus from being "swallowed up" by the exalted Lord by demonstrating that the distinctive elements of his preaching were in continuity with the preaching of the early church.[10]

These questions were addressed again by Günther Bornkamm in his *Jesus of Nazareth*, which stands as representative of the work of the post-Bultmannians.[11] In

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[8] Käsemann, "The Problem of the Historical Jesus," 16.

[9] Käsemann, "The Problem of the Historical Jesus," 36–37; Chris Keith, "The Indebtedness of the Criteria Approach to Form Criticism and Recent Attempts to Rehabilitate the Search for an Authentic Jesus," in *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, ed. Chris Keith and Anthony Le Donne (London: T & T Clark, 2012), 25–48; idem., "The Narratives of the Gospels and the Historical Jesus: Current Debates, Prior Debates and the Goal of Historical Jesus Research," *JSNT* 38.4 (2016): 426–55, here 437–41; idem., "Die Evangelien als kerygmatische Erzählungen über den irdischen Jesus und die "Kriterien" in Jesusforschung," in *Jesus Handbuch*, ed. Jens Schröter, Christine Jacobi, and Lena Nogoseek (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 86–98.

[10] Käsemann, "The Problem of the Historical Jesus," 213.

[11] Günther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, trans. Irene and Fraser McLuskey with James M. Robinson (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).

contrast to Bultmann's *Jesus and the Word*, Bornkamm sought to provide a "historical presentation of Jesus and his message" set himself decidedly against Bultmann and emphasized the need to ground the kerygma in history.[12] In his discussion of history, Bornkamm sets the Gospel notion of history against a Rankean positivist notion of history:

> It is to be noted that the insistent question "what actually happened" in no wise brings us to the point. Such questions can actually lead us astray. So much at least is clear: were we to accept uncritically everything handed down to us as historical (in the usual sense), we would be subjecting the Gospels to an investigation alien to them, and forcing upon them an understanding of the history of Jesus quite unsuited to them. But on the other hand, this is also true: should we reduce the tradition critically to that which cannot be doubted on historical grounds, we should be left ultimately with a mere torso which bears no resemblance to the story set forth in the Gospels.[13]

The Jesus tradition, according to Bornkamm, lacked any historical (*historische*) interest and while "the Gospels are not interested in *Historie,* they are nevertheless 'brim full of history' (*Geschichte*)."[14] For all the similarities between Bultmann and Bornkamm's Jesus books*,* Bornkamm attempted to go beyond Bultmann's skepticism and maintained that in addition to knowledge of the message of Jesus, much could also be known of his person.

While the post-Bultmannians did not develop reconstructions of a preMarkan passion narrative, their works emphasized the authenticity of elements of the passion tradition and thus warrant consideration alongside developments in redaction criticism.

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[12] Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 14.

[13] Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 14–15. Jay Dobbin criticized Bornkamm for setting his position against historical Jesus research from the previous century and arguing against positions that Bultmann and others did not take. Jay K. Dobbin, "Günther Bornkamm and the New Quest for the Historical Jesus," (Rome: Pontificia Studorium Universitas a S. Thoma Aq in Urbe, 1970).

[14] Bornkamm, *Jesus*, 26.

While Käsemann, Bornkamm, and Hahn did not reconstruct a passion source, the existence of such a source was assumed in their works and this assumption will be examined within the broader context of their writings and attempts to identify authentic Jesus traditions. The preMarkan passion narrative was central for their claims to continuity between the Jesus of history and the Christ of the kerygma. The post-Bultmannian era overlapped with the rise of redaction criticism and several, including Bornkamm and Conzelmann, produced important early redactional-critical studies.[15]

1.1 History, Theology, and the Passion Narrative

The threads of post-Bultmannian thought outlined above—a return to positivism, continuity between the historical Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ, and the importance of theology—converged in their assessments of the passion tradition. Among the allowable critical minimum that could be established about the historical Jesus, Käsemann considered at least the most primitive elements, if not the entirety, of the passion narrative authentic as Jesus tradition.[16] In this case, there was no "drastic separation" between kerygma and history, as the "kerygma includes the recital of facts as mediated by the tradition."[17] Conzelmann stated that the core of the passion story was authentic

[15] Günther Bornkamm, "End-Expectation and Church in Matthew," in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, Günther Bornkamm, Gerhard Barth, and Heinz Joachim Held (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 15–51; idem., "The Stilling of the Storm in Matthew," in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, 52–57; Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke*, trans. Geoffrey Buswell (London: Faber & Faber, 1960).

[16] Käsemann, "Problem," 17.

[17] Käsemann, "Problem," 17.

tradition and established historical facts.[18] For Conzelmann, it was clear that Mark had taken over an early passion source, but did not pursue a reconstruction because the "essential contents" of the source were taken up by Mark *in toto*.[19]

The connection between history and theology in the post-Bultmannians was clear in the work of Bornkamm and Nils Dahl.[20] Dahl clearly stated his belief that events in the life of Jesus could be factually verified:

> There is a point in the life of Jesus which is unconditionally established. That is his death. A historically tenable description of the life of Jesus would only be possible in the form of a description of his death, its historical presuppositions, and the events preceding and following it.[21]

There is a theological reason behind Dahl's declaration: "The death of Jesus is at the center of the church's proclamation and is precisely the point at which the historical quest for the life of Jesus must start."[22] Theology and history are inseparably combined in Dahl's approach to historical Jesus research. Bornkamm likewise stressed the theological value of establishing the historical value of the passion:

> What the passion narratives show applies also to the Gospels as a whole: what applies to the past in the history of Jesus should always be investigated and

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[18] Conzelmann, *Jesus*, 16. Cf., idem., "History and Theology in the Passion Narratives of the Synoptic Gospels," *Int* 24 (1970): 178–97.

[19] Conzelmann, "History and Theology," 181–83.

[20] Nihls Alstrup Dahl, "The Problem of the Historical Jesus," in *The Crucified Messiah and Other Essays* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974), 48–89, was first presented in 1952 and originally published in 1953. For this reason, Thiessen and Merz, *The Quest for the Plausible Jesus*, 116 n. 413, stress that Dahl should be given more credit as a co-founder of the "New Quest."

[21] Dahl, "Problem," 74.

[22] Nils Alstrup Dahl, "The Crucified Messiah," in *The Crucified Messiah and Other Essays*, 10–36, here 13. Dahl goes on to ask, "How is it possible to believe in the death of Jesus as the ground of our salvation and at the same time to make the death of Jesus the object of historical-critical research?"

> understood in relation to its significance for the present time today and the coming of God's future.[23]

With these quotes the post-Bultmannians reveal the theological nature of the quest for the historical Jesus and, in particular, the quest for the preMarkan passion narrative. It was imperative for the post-Bultmannians to establish the passion narratives as authentic Jesus tradition

The historical approaches from the "Old Quest" combined with form-critical assumptions about the nature of the Jesus tradition allowed the post-Bultmannians to address the theological issues of their day through the quest for the historical Jesus. Following their predecessors in both the history of religions school and the form critics, the post-Bultmannians reserved a place of prominence for passion narrative. Many of the early redaction critics were also post-Bultmannians and with the authenticity of the passion traditions seemingly settled, redaction critics were able to continue building of the form-critical foundation and separate Markan redaction from earlier Jesus tradition in an effort to thoroughly reconstruct the development of every word and phrase in the preMarkan passion narrative.

1.2 Historical Positivism and Authenticating Criteria

Prior to World War I, German historiography was largely optimistic but Germany's defeat, along with the humiliating sanctions and reparations imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, exacerbated doubts about the possibility of objective knowledge of

[23] Bornkamm, *Jesus*, 16.

the past.[24] The emergence of the nineteenth century quest for the historical Jesus based upon historicism argued that through rigorous application of the historical-critical method scholars were able to discover the historical Jesus behind the texts of the Gospels. In the aftermath of World War II, there was a notable break within German historiographical traditions as historians grappled with the multifaceted devastation of war that included a loss of traditions, the breaking of historical consciousness, coming to grips with the Nazi era of 1933–1945, and accounting for the radical socio-economic transformations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries under industrial capitalism.[25] This larger conversation provides a context for the rift between Bultmann and his students that has been unexplored in previous scholarship.[26]

Bultmann's reflections on philosophy and the historical method marked a substantial change in NT scholarly approaches to historical method.[27] Heinrich Ott

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[24] Georg G. Iggers, *German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present*, rev. ed (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1983), 240; Karl Heussi, Die Krisis des Historismus (Tübingen: Mohr, 1932). Ernst Käsemann, *On Being a Disciple of the Crucified Nazarene: Unpublished Lectures and Sermons*, ed. Rudolf Landau, trans. Ray A. Harrisville (Grand Rapipds: Eerdmans, 2010), xvii, wrote about how the humiliation of Versailles and its influence in political and church affairs.

[25] Iggers, *The German Conception of History*, 12–13, 245–52.

[26] Anthony Le Donne, "The Rise of the Quest for an Authentic Jesus: An Introduction to the Crumbling Foundations of Jesus Research," in *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, eds. Chris Keith and Anthony Le Donne (New York: T & T Clark, 2012), 3–21, here 6–7, briefly sketched the development of the criteria against developments in German philosophy but later focused attention on the American context. However, the German context is more important for the development of these ideas in historical Jesus scholarship while the American context more important for their reception. Alexander J. M. Wedderburn, *Jesus and the Historians,* WUNT 269 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 81–89, concerned himself with the existentialist interpretation of history, discussed below, but not these broader questions; Van A. Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer: The Morality of Historical Knowledge and Christian Belief*, *with a New Introduction by the Author*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 164–68, rightly observed the "New Quest's" dissatisfaction with dialectical theology and Bultmann's perceived skepticism but did not set these debates within broader discussions of historiographical method after World War II.

[27] Rudolf Bultmann, "The Problem of Hermeneutics," in *New Testament and Mythology and Other Basic Writings*, trans. and ed. Schubert M. Ogden (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1984) 69–93; idem.,

praised Bultmann for rejecting and overcoming positivism in historical Jesus research and instead stressed Bultmann's "decisive contribution"— historical events are only historical when combined with their meaning and significance.[28] The Bultmannian combination of form criticism and existential interpretation proved to be influential to post-Bultmannians in Germany, Britain, and the United States. One significant methodological change, however, was a turn back to positivistic attempts to anchor the kerygmatic Christ to the historical Jesus. Before looking to the positivistic turn within the post-Bultmannians, it will be helpful to clarify what is meant by appeals to positivism. I understand positivism to be an historical method that attempted to scientifically establish facts, or following Ranke, establish the past "how it actually was."[29] Historical positivism posited that the "objective" historian could discover uninterpreted facts through the sifting of documents and literary works in a scientific manner. I wish to avoid using "positivism" as a pejorative. Instead, I focus on the historical tradition that began early in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with Locke and Hume, was implemented through the nineteenth century quest for the historical Jesus, and reemerged in the post-Bultmannian era.

"Is Exegesis without Presuppositions Possible?" in *New Testament and Mythology and Other Basic Writings,* 154–53.

[28] Heinrich Ott, "Rudolf Bultmann's Philosophy of History," in *The Theology of Rudolf Bultmann*, ed. Charles W. Kegley (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 51–64, here 56–57.

[29] On characterizations of Ranke's method, Georg G. Iggers, "The Image of Ranke in American and German Historical Thought," *History and Theory* 2.1 (1962): 17–40, here, 18, described the American reception of Ranke's historical method as "detach[ing] Ranke's critical analysis of documents, which they understood and which suited their need to give history scientific respectability, from his idealistic philosophy, which was alien to them." For German historians, on the other hand, Ranke became "a source of inspiration for neo-idealistic historians resisting the rationalistic and positivistic approach to history which they ascribed to Western European historians." In historical Jesus research, appeals to Rankean positivism typically refer to the American image of Ranke described by Iggers.

The post-Bultmannians were no strangers to accusations of positivistic methodology. Although Robinson clearly stated that the aim of a "New Quest" was to go beyond the approach of previous historical Jesus research, their reception reveals they were unable to escape the specter of positivism.[30] Ernst Fuchs, himself a post-Bultmannian, described Bornkamm's attempt to overcome the divide between faith and history "a relapse into positivism."[31] Alan Richardson likewise regarded Bornkamm's approach to history in the Gospels as a return to "old nineteenth-century positivistic conceptions of history."[32] Similarly, Dobbins concluded that Bornkamm's method could be labelled positivist, but resisted such a label due to its pejorative connotations.[33] Paul Anderson observed that Käsemann's presentation of the criteria of double dissimilarity was "in the spirit of scientific positivism."[34] Recent research into the origins of the criteria approach in the post-Bultmannian era by Anthony Le Donne and Chris Keith has further solidified historical positivism as the methodological foundation for the approach.[35]

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[30] Robinson, *New Quest*, 39, 66–72.

[31] Ernst Fuchs, "Glaube und Geschichte im Blick auf die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus: Eine Auseinandersetzung mit G. Bornkamms Buch über 'Jesus von Nazareth,'" *ZTK* 54.2 (1957): 117–56, here 153, my translation.

[32] Alan Richardson, *History Sacred and Profane* (Philadelphia: SCM Press, 1964), 190. Richardson also accused Bultmann of being a positivist, so his judgement on these matters is questionable.

[33] Dobbins, "Günther Bornkamm and the New Quest of the Historical Jesus," 53.

[34] Paul N. Anderson, "Foreword: John 17—The Original Intention of Jesus for the Church," in Ernst Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John in the Light of Chapter 17*, trans. Gerhard Krodel, The Johannine Monograph Series (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2017), xix.

[35] Le Donne, "The Rise of the Quest for the Authentic Jesus," 5; Chris Keith, "The Indebtedness of the Criteria Approach," 36–37.

The turn to positivism within the post-Bultmannians arose in a number of ways throughout their writings. The most explicit way the post-Bultmannians embrace positivism is their assumption that the historical-critical method can conclusively establish facts about the life of Jesus. However, the theological dimension of the turn toward positivism should not go unnoticed, for the question concerning the continuity between the historical Jesus and the kerygma is primarily theological, and only secondarily a question of historical method.

1.3 Summary

The combination of historical approaches from the "Old Quest" with form-critical assumptions about the nature of the Jesus tradition produced no distinct results. Following their predecessors in both the history of religions school and the form critics, the post-Bultmannians reserved a place of prominence for passion narrative. With the authenticity of the passion traditions settled, redaction critics were able to continue building of the form-critical foundation and separate Markan redaction from earlier Jesus tradition in an effort to thoroughly reconstruct the development of every word and phrase in the preMarkan passion narrative.

2. Early Redaction-Critical Studies

Although the beginnings of redaction-critical approaches to the Gospels were already present in the earliest form-critical scholarship, the form critics did surprisingly little with their early insights. In his commentary on Revelation, Bousset acknowledged that in their search for sources scholars often overlooked what the Apocalyptist made of them.

Attention to the ways in which the Apocalyptist used these sources to construct Revelation would, in Bousset's view, provide clearer insights into the text.[36] The emphasis on the framework of Mark was always central in any form-critical investigation into the Gospel, as it was assumed the material that made up the framework followed the same laws of transmission as other Jesus traditions.[37] It is not surprising then, as Klaus Koch observed, that Bultmann attached little value to the redaction of the Synoptic Gospels, evidenced by Bultmann's lack of any distinct appreciation of the Synoptics in his *New Testament Theology*.[38] If the Synoptic evangelists were simply compilers of Jesus tradition, and not writers in any significant sense, this approach makes sense.[39]

Some early practitioners of redaction criticism distanced their work from form criticism. In the opening pages of his influential work on redaction criticism, Willi Marxsen began by stating, "On the whole, the so-called redactor always fares poorly in form history."[40] He criticized form critics for stressing "anti-individualistic" and "sociological" aspects of their research, i.e. the anonymous nature of the Jesus tradition

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[36] Wilhelm Bousset, *Die Offenbarung Johannis*, KEK (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1896), 164: "Aber auch diese Arbeit muss gethan werden, und zwar schon deshalb, weil eine genauere Erforschung der Quellen und der Apk vorliegenden Tradition indirekt wider einen klareren Einblick gerade in das eigentümliche und charakteristische dieser selbst gießt."

[37] Schmidt, *Der Rahmen*, 17–18; Bultmann, *History*, 321–22.

[38] Koch, *The Growth of the Biblical Tradition*, 65.

[39] Bultmann did, however, give attention to the redactional work of the Gospel of John. Bultmann, *New Testament Theology*, 2:3–92.

[40] Willi Marxsen, *Der Evangelist Markus: Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Evangeliums* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956), 7; ET: *Mark the Evangelist: Studies on the Redaction History of the Gospel*, trans. James Boyce, Donald Juel, William Poehlmann, with Roy A. Harrisville (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), 15.

above the "author personality who pursues a definite goal with his work."[41] Thus, for Marxsen there was not a direct genealogical link between form criticism and redaction criticism:

> Redaction history is not merely the continuation of form history. It was simply taken up at a later date. It can in turn learn much from work previously done. Theoretically, it would have been possible for redaction-historical research to have begun immediately after literary criticism.[42]

It is not surprising that Marxsen found many aspects of form criticism a regression from the works of J. Weiss, Wellhausen, and Wrede which attributed a level of creativity to the author of the second Gospel. Marxsen did, however, stress the similarities between form-critical and redaction-critical emphases on the *Sitz im Leben*, though he critiqued form criticism's lack of attention to the critical third *Sitz im Leben*, that of the evangelist.[43]

While Marxsen viewed his redactional-critical method as independent from form criticism, other scholars acknowledged the emerging discipline's relation and dependence on form criticism while building upon its results.[44] E. J. Pryke stated, "One presupposition for the search for either linguistic or literary criteria must be the possibility of the division of the Gospel into form-critical pericopae."[45] For the most part, redaction criticism left the presuppositions of form criticism "curiously undisturbed" while the Gospel writers themselves were considered "capable of inflecting specific

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[41] Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist*, 16–18.

[42] Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist*, 21.

[43] Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist*, 23–24.

[44] Norman Perrin, W*hat is Redaction Criticism?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 2, 13–21.

[45] E. J. Pryke*, Redactional Style in the Marcan Gospel: A Study of Syntax and Vocabulary as Guides to Redaction in Mark*, SNTSMS 33 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 25–26.

stories in a purposeful way, selecting from the available store and editorializing in introductions and summaries in accordance with theological programs of their own."[46] Another presupposition and result of form criticism that was not only left undisturbed, but furthered and advanced, was the existence of a preMarkan passion narrative and attempts to reconstruct this hypothetical early narrative source abounded with the new tool of redaction criticism.

The earliest and most influential redaction-critical studies of the Gospels appeared in the late 1950s and solidified the form-critical conception of the preMarkan passion narrative. Although he attempted to separate his work from form criticism, Marxen's statement concerning the origin of the passion narrative and the composition of Mark's Gospel solidified form criticism's most "assured result" within Markan scholarship:

> The passion narrative admittedly represents the first stereotyped written unit in the tradition of Jesus (*den ersten schriftlich fixierten Teil der Überlieferung von Jesus*). The tradition then developed backward. This is true at least of the Gospel of Mark—naturally not every individual piece of tradition, but certainly of the complexes. Mark thus prefixes the passion narrative with the tradition of Jesus, and prefixes that tradition with the tradition of the Baptist.[47]

The identification of the preMarkan passion narrative as the first piece of written Jesus tradition, Marxsen further elevated the preeminent status bestowed upon it by the earlier form critics. Although Marxsen attempted to distance himself from many aspects of form criticism, here he helped ensure that the reconstruction of the preMarkan passion narrative remained one of the crucial tasks of critical biblical scholarship.

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[46] John C. Meagher, *Clumsy Construction in Mark's Gospel: A Critique of Form- and Redaktionsgeschichte*, Toronto Studies in Theology 3 (Toronto: Edwin Mellen Press, 1979), 24.

[47] Willi Marxsen, *Der Evangelist Markus,* 17; idem., Mark the Evangelist, 31. Here, Marxsen is indebted to Martin Kähler, *The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historical Biblical Christ,* trans. Carl R. Braaten (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964), 80, and his famous statement that the Gospels are "passion narratives with extended introductions."

The following sections will trace the developments in method and argumentation as the form-critical conclusion that there was a preMarkan passion narrative was the foundation for the attempts to reconstruct the pre-literary development of the passion narrative from its origins in the oral tradition until its textualization in the Gospel. This early phase of redaction-critical studies began in the early 1950s, with Karl Georg Kuhn's study on the Gethsemane pericope, and lasted until the late 1960s. This period included reconstructions of the preMarkan passion narrative by Gottfried Schille, Carl Daniel Peddinghaus, Eduard Schweizer, Etienne Tromcé, Joachim Jeremias, and Wilfred Knox. While other redactional-critical works did not reconstruct a preMarkan passion narrative, its existence was assumed. In the following sections, I am less interested in the specifics of each unique reconstruction, though they will be discussed, and will focus on the ways in which the redactional-critical method allowed scholars to further form-critical results. I will instead emphasize the ways in which they rejected and modified some aspects of form criticism and the role the preMarkan passion narrative played in reconstruction of early Christianity. As the previous chapter demonstrated, these questions played a significant role in determining what British scholars considered historically reliable material and which theological viewpoints were earliest (and for confessional scholars, normative) in the development of Christianity. These early redaction-critical studies are no different. The foundation of a form-critical conception of the Jesus tradition combined with the multiple techniques of establishing Markan redaction created a scholarly environment where preMarkan passion narrative hypotheses flourished.

2.1 Form-Critical Conception of Jesus Tradition and the PreMarkan Passion Narrative

The uniqueness of the preMarkan passion narrative among the disjointed individual units of the oral Jesus tradition was an assumption inherited from form criticism and adopted (almost) uncritically. Consider the following statements and their similarities to Schmidt's statement of the uniqueness of the preMarkan passion narrative in 1919:[48]

> Indeed, the passion narrative is the only piece of the Synoptic tradition where there exists an original narrative context.[49]
>
> The passion story formed a single long unit before there was any attempt to write a consecutive story of the life and teaching of Jesus in the form of a 'Gospel.'[50]
>
> Form-critical research into the Synoptic material has led to the firm result of the small units of tradition. The situation is different with the Gospel passion tradition.[51]
>
> The narrative coherence of the passion narrative is from the beginning; this is its peculiarity within the Synoptic tradition. It can be said with certainty that Mark did not create this fixed complex. The history of the passion narrative is further distinguished from other Synoptic material by a fixed location and by its growth backwards.[52]
>
> Now the Passion Narrative was, *ex hypothesi*, an orderly account and sequential statement of the final events in Jesus' life and ministry… Sayings and incidents in the Galilean ministry might be rearranged and reset in different contexts; but the Passion Narrative was too firmly established in what must have been the

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[48] See above for additional quotes repeating Schmidt's conclusions. The following quotes are from early redaction critics discussed in this section.

[49] Karl Georg Kuhn, "Jesus in Gethsemane," *EvTh* 12 (1952/53): 216–85, here 261, my translation.

[50] Wilfred L. Knox, *Sources of the Synoptic Gospels. Vol 1. St. Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 115.

[51] Gottfried Schille, "Das Leiden des Herrn," 161–62, my translation. Cf., idem., "Bemerkungen zur Formgeschichte des Evangeliums: Rahmen und Aufbau des Markus-Evangeliums," *NTS* 4.1 (1957): 1–24, here 5–6.

[52] Peddinghaus, "Die Entstehung der Leidensgeschichte," 81, my translation.

> approximate historic order for any serious changes to be introduced by later evangelists.[53]
>
> In contrast to the previous individual traditions, which were mostly handed down without place and time and were later compiled into units of meaning, the passion narrative, although it also consists of individual traditions, is nevertheless a sequence of events connected irreversibly by place and time. It received its form very early for this reason.[54]
>
> The structure of the Markan passion narrative in comparison with the remainder of the gospel, prove that *the passion narrative constitutes a coherent and very early block of the gospel tradition*.[55]
>
> From the beginning this account possesses a character completely different from what has been treated to this point.[56]

Within just a few decades this form-critical hypothesis had become an "assured result" in Markan scholarship and the entry point for hypothesizing the pre-literary development of the preMarkan passion narrative. The departure from previous form-critical conceptions of Jesus tradition, however, came in their attempts to overcome a perceived failure in the form-critical method: it had not yet offered a convincing account of the origins of this unique piece of Jesus tradition.

These attempts to reconceive the development of the preMarkan passion approached the question in a variety of ways but they all proceed with an acceptance of the form-critical conception of Jesus tradition and a form-critical view of the evangelist

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[53] F. C. Grant, *The Gospels: Their Origin and Growth* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), 78.

[54] Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 3rd ed. THK (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1965), 272, my translation.

[55] Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, trans. Norman Perrin (London: SCM Press, 1966), 90.

[56] Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News according to Mark*, trans. Donald H. Madvig (Atlanta: John Know Press, 1970), 284.

as a compiler of tradition. The statements from K. G. Kuhn, Gottfried Schille, and Eduard Schweizer suffice to demonstrate this reliance of form-critical concepts. Kuhn adopted the form-critical notion that the preMarkan passion narrative was the only Jesus tradition that contained a narrative context prior to the writing of Mark: Following Bultmann (and contra Dibelius), Kuhn argued that the Gethsemane pericope (Mark 14:32–42) circulated independently of the preMarkan passion narrative and was placed into its location in the Markan passion narrative by the evangelist between the Last Supper and the arrest of Jesus.[57] For Kuhn, the preMarkan passion narrative began with the arrest of Jesus (Mark 14:43–50) and the καὶ εὐθύς at 14:43 was the way in which the evangelist connected the Gethsemane pericope to the preMarkan passion narrative.[58] Schille began his essay by stating that form-critical research into the pre-literary stage of the Jesus tradition had established that the passion narrative was exceptional among the rest of the pre-literary tradition that existed only as individual units.[59] In contrast to the Jesus tradition that was transmitted without a larger narrative context, the Markan passion narrative was based on an earlier narrative and displayed narrative cohesion not present in other traditions.[60] Schweizer accepted the view that the Evangelist was simply a collector of individual traditions who placed them into a framework, which he compared to "the work of a child

[57] Kuhn, "Jesus in Gethsemane," 261–63. Kuhn identified genitive absolutes in the passion narrative as Markan redactions (Mark 14:3,18, 22, 66; 15:33; 16:1).

[58] Kuhn, "Jesus in Gethsemane," 261. Here, Kuhn differs from the majority of scholars who identified Gethsemane as the opening scene of the preMarkan passion narrative.

[59] Gottfried Schille, "Das Leiden des Herrn," 161–62: Cf. Idem., "Bemerkungen," 5–6.

[60] Schille, "Das Leiden des Herrn," 162.

who is arranging beads on a string.[61] The preMarkan passion narrative was the exception to these individual units of Jesus tradition in Schweizer's reconstruction. While these and other scholars accepted the general form-critical conception of Jesus tradition, their biggest departure from this received position from was their criticism of earlier attempts to account for the development of the passion tradition.

2.1.1 Form Criticism's Failure to Account for the Origin of a Coherent Narrative

The form-critical analysis of the individual units identified by prior form-critical work proved to be a satisfactory explanation for generations of subsequent scholarship. The uniqueness of the preMarkan passion narrative and its prominence in the preMarkan tradition was thus also accepted. However, for many scholars form-critical scholarship had not yet provided a convincing explanation of the Markan passion narrative. For example, Schille argued that previous form-critical research did not adequately account for the narrative unity of the passion narrative.[62] In his view, Bultmann's analysis was able to explain the unity and history of the individual pieces of the passion narrative, but not the overall unity of the passion narrative.[63] While Dibelius had demonstrated the unity of the passion tradition, Schille did not consider early Christian sermons and missionary efforts a strong enough need in the early Christian church to explain the origins of this narrative unity.[64] In his review of the form-critical method, which was

[61] Schweizer, *Mark*, 13.

[62] For a broader criticism of previous form-critical research, Gottfried Schille, "Der Mangel eines kritischen Geschichtsbildes in der neutestamentlichen Formgeschichte," *ThLz* 88.7 (1953): 491–502.

[63] Schille, "Das Leiden des Herrn," 162–63.

[64] Schille, "Das Leiden des Herrn," 164–65.

assumed throughout his work, Peddinghaus affirmed Schmidt's assertion that the earliest Jesus tradition consisted of individual scenes and sayings and that the form-critical method had successfully set forth the ways in which the small units of tradition had grown from specific *Sitze im Leben* of the earliest Christian communities.[65] It had failed, in Peddinghaus's view, to account for the development of larger units of tradition, namely the passion narrative. This meant that the tradition history of the passion narrative could not be discovered by comparison to the individual units of Jesus tradition.[66] Peddinghaus proposed a careful examination of the narrative, with attention to style and sentence structure, which led him to propose three distinct stages (*Stadien*) in the development of the preMarkan passion narrative that originated with early reflection on Psalm 22.

It is not immediately clear how these approaches were any different from previous form-critical investigations or solved problems within the form-critical view of tradition. Peddinghaus produced a novel preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis and Schille's work situated the *Sitz im Leben* firmly in the liturgical practices of the early church, both of which will be examined below. However, as much as scholarship attempted to develop the form-critical conception of Jesus tradition into newer methods, most works were simply a re-packaging of form criticism. The methodological advance that led to the explosion of preMarkan passion narrative reconstructions was redaction criticism. The method allowed scholars to identify and separate Markan redaction from earlier Jesus tradition in an attempt to isolate Mark's particular theology. In light of the Bultmannian

[65] Peddinghaus, "Die Entstehung der Leidensgeschichte," 80–81.

[66] Peddinghaus, "Die Entstehung der Leidensgeschichte," 82–84.

and post-Bultmannian quest for the historical Jesus, most redaction critics were either uninterested in using the Gospel of Mark to reconstruct the historical Jesus or considered this secondary to the task of reconstructing the theology of the Evangelist.

2.2 Criteria for Reconstructing the PreMarkan Passion Narrative

As redaction-critical studies on the Gospels multiplied, scholars attempted to establish methodological controls on the discipline to provide objective means of separating Markan redaction from early Jesus tradition. As late as 1968 Georg Strecker stated, "The methodological problem of redaction criticism has not yet been worked out in a clear presentation and remains a matter of urgent importance."[67] Johannes Schreiber developed four propositions which he claimed, when used precisely, would allow for the identification of Markan Christology: 1) The redactional verses are the starting point for Markan theology; 2) Where both Matthew and Luke change Mark's text, it was likely a theological statement of Mark they rejected; 3) The selection and arrangement of material reveals Markan redaction; and, 4) These principles lead to a self-contained and orderly judgment that makes sense in the particular historical situation of the Gospels.[68] Following Marxsen[69] and Ernest Best,[70] Robert Stein proposed that the Markan seams

[67] Georg Strecker, "The Passion- and Resurrection Predictions in Mark's Gospel," *Int* 22.4 (1968): 423, n. 5

[68] Johannes Schreiber, "Die Christologie des Markusevangelium: Beobachtungen zu Theologie und Komposition des zweiten Evangeliums," *ZTK* 58 (1961): 154–83, here 155.

[69] Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist*, 23.

[70] Ernest Best, *The Temptation and Passion: The Markan Soteriology*, SNTSMS 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 63.

allow scholars to see how Mark joined together the traditions available to him.[71] Since at least the publication of Schmidt's work, if not earlier, form-critical investigations assumed Jesus traditions circulated independently, and, according to Stein, the ways in which Mark joined them together reveal his theological aim and interests, for these insertions wre his attempt to explain the tradition to his readers.[72] Stein identified additional criteria for identifying Markan redaction, including Markan sandwiches and insertions.[73] As the following sections reveal, redactional-critical studies used these criteria to identify and reconstruct a multitude of readings of the history and development of the preMarkan passion narrative. However, this optimism never materialized in conclusive results. There was little to no agreement about anything amongst reconstructions based upon a form-critical conception of the pre-literary transmission of Jesus tradition.

2.2.1 Markan Theology

While the form-critical method traced the history of these individual units of tradition and revealed their *Sitz im Leben*, the new discipline of redaction criticism paid attention to transitional phrases, parenthetical asides, summary passages, and the way the isolated traditions were brought together to form a Gospel so that the theology of the

[71] Robert H. Stein, "The Proper Methodology for Ascertaining a Markan Redaction History," *NovT* 13.3 (1971): 183; idem., "The 'Redaktionsgeschichtlich' Investigation of a Markan Seam," *ZNW* 61.1 (1970): 70.

[72] Stein, "The Proper Methodology," 184.

[73] Stein, "The Proper Methodology," 186–98.

author may be discerned.[74] The Markan summary passages also provided Schweizer with Markan vocabulary from which his theology could be adduced.[75] Schweizer did not identify which passaged he considered Markan summaries, but emphasized κηρύσσειν, μετάνοια, εὐαγγέλιον, διδάσκειν, διδαχή, ἐκπλήσεσθαι, and θαυμβεῖσθαι as signaling that the proclamation of the Gospel was the beginning of Mark's kerygmatic theology and the sign of eschatological salvation.[76] For Schweitzer, these passages indicate Mark's theological claim that "God himself encountered men in Jesus' teaching," a claim clearly indebted to Bultmann, though Schweizer emphasized both the historical Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ.[77] Schweizer perhaps exceeded his post-Bultmannian colleagues in his attempts to connect the events depicted in the Gospels to the faith of the church:

> It is beyond all doubt that Mark wants to emphasize that God's revelation happened in the historical life and death of Jesus, that is, in a real man. Christianity would cease to be Christianity, if Jesus had not lived and died. In this sense, the historical Jesus is, in the highest possible degree, essential for the faith of the church.[78]

The Gospel of Mark thus reveals to the Christian follower, whether in the first century or twenty-first century, the meaning of the kerygma because, according to Schweizer,

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[74] Schweizer, *Mark*, 13–15.

[75] Eduard Schweizer, "Mark's Contribution to the Quest of the Historical Jesus," *NTS* 10.4 (1964): 421–32, here 422. Schweizer claimed that this was a new approach and, in some respects, he was correct though Dodd had previously used the Markan summaries to argue for the historical reliability of the outline and as a way of understanding Mark's aims.

[76] Schweizer, "Mark's Contribution," 422.

[77] Schweizer, "Mark's Contribution," 423.

[78] Schweizer, "Mark's Contribution," 431.

"[Jesus] can only be proclaimed and witnessed to by a believer like Mark."[79] It is the kerygma that expressed the meaning of faith, not the historical Jesus, but it is it the historical Jesus "who keeps out faith from becoming unfaith or distorted faith."[80] The preMarkan passion narrative plays a crucial function in Schweizer's reconstruction of early Christianity for both its historical and theological value.

2.2.2 Markan Seams and Insertions of Material into the PreMarkan Passion Narrative

The primary means of separating Markan redaction from earlier Jesus traditions was the identification of the seams, or framework, which the Evangelist used to join the isolated Jesus traditions into a coherent narrative. This development was, of course, nothing new; attention to the Markan framework in an effort to ascertain Markan themes or theology goes back to Schmidt and before him to Wellhausen and before him to Wrede and Weiss. While it is possible to ascertain Matthean or Lukan redactional tendencies based upon their use of Mark (assuming Markan priority), such a procedure is impossible for the Gospel of Mark because we possess no sources utilized by Mark in the composition of the Second Gospel.[81] The attempts to determine Markan redaction depend upon the form-critical practice of identifying preMarkan sources, as Stein stated clearly:

> We must be able to ascertain what the sources of Mark were like or else our ability to ascertain a Markan redaction history will be severely limited. … Nevertheless it is possible, although difficult, by means of a form-critical investigation to reconstruct to a certain extent the pre-Markan tradition. Having

[79] Schweizer, "Mark's Contribution," 423. Later, Schweizer stated: "The best historical reports, the best insights into the psychology of Jesus cannot replace or even support the service of the kerygma which calls us to faith and conveys faith to us" (431).

[80] Schweizer, "Mark's Contribution," 432.

[81] I leave to the side Matthean and Lukan redaction history based upon Q.

> done this, we can see how Mark joined, arranged, modified, selected, etc. the traditions available to him.[82]

The remainder of this chapter reveals just how difficult, or impossible, it is for scholars to identify these seams in the Markan narrative in order to perform the redactional-critical task and it should be questioned a Markan redaction history is even possible.

2.2.1 Liturgical Sitze im Leben

The liturgy and cultic practices of the early church were ideal *Sitze im* Leben for the origins of the passion narrative within a form-critical framework. Although it never received full acceptance due to some of his more radical positions, Bertram's early work on the passion narrative had considerable influence on the question of the passion's place in the early life of the church. Schille was more sympathetic to Bertram's connection of the passion narrative to cultic interests, but not his emphasis on the worship of the cult hero.[83] Instead, Schille placed the origin of the passion narrative in the cultic life of the early Christian community and the rites used to remember Jesus's death, the celebration of baptism and the Lord's Supper. This celebration of Easter in the earliest community (*Osterbegehung der ältesten Gemeinde*) took on three liturgical forms which then took on three literary forms. First, Schille identified a tradition that accounted for Jesus' last night that included the Last Supper (Mark 14:18–25), the prediction of Peter's denial (Mark 14:26–31), Gethsemane (Mark 14:32–42), the arrest of Jesus (Mark 14:43–53), and Peter's denial (Mark 14:66–72).[84] This Maundy Thursday account was defined by its

[82] Stein, "Proper Methodology," 182.

[83] Schille, "Das Leiden des Herrn," 165–67.

[84] Schille, "Das Leiden des Herrn," 199.

narrative unity (*die enge Verklammerung der einzelnen Abschnitte*), its focus on the Eucharist, and the lack of any reference to Jesus' death.[85] The second source consisted of the burial legends (*Grablegenden*) that developed from an early celebration of Easter morning, possibly at the very tomb where Jesus was buried (Mark 14:42–47; 16:1–6).[86] In contrast to the first to traditions, The Good Friday remembrance (*Karfreitagserinnerung*) was a loosely connected narrative that formed later that the traditions of the last night or the burial legends (Mark 15:2–41).[87] According to Schille, this tradition likely originated around the three hours of prayer (Mark 15:25, 33, 34; Did 8:3) and the rest of the narrative was later filled out around this practice.[88] The preparation for the Passover (Mark 14:12–16) and the trial before the high priest (Mark 14:55–63) were secondary additions.[89] Mark 14:1–2; 10–11 were added as introductions and Mark 14:17 and 15:1 as transition sentences.[90] Schille attributed the insertion and connection between Mark 14:28 and 16:7–8 to the final redaction of the Gospel.[91]

Schille's preMarkan passion hypothesis did not attain broad acceptance in subsequent redactional studies. However, Schille's view of the liturgical origins of the preMarkan passion narrative had parallels in English and French NT scholarship. Several

[85] Schille, "Das Leiden des Herrn," 199.

[86] Schille, "Das Leiden des Herrn," 183, 199.

[87] Schille, "Das Leiden des Herrn," 199.

[88] Schille, "Das Leiden des Herrn," 182, 193, 198–99.

[89] Schille, "Das Leiden des Herrn," 200–02.

[90] Schille, "Das Leiden des Herrn," 183–84.

[91] Schille, "Das Leiden des Herrn," 183.

years earlier, the Anglican scholar Philip Harrington posited that the Markan passion narrative a *megillah*, a shorter scroll used for public readings, that the earliest Christians used at their annual Easter celebration.[92] French NT scholar Etienne Tromcé situated his view of the preMarkan passion narrative between the views of Carrington and Schille. Tromcé praised Schille for successfully accounting for the chronology and topography of the preMarkan passion narrative through the liturgy and worship of the early church, something that previous form-critical works had done only superficially.[93] For Tromcé, the preMarkan passion narrative was a text read aloud at Jerusalem during the Passover (and possibly other pilgrimages) that memorialized the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus.[94] Walter Grundmann accepted Schille's thesis and located the passion tradition within the liturgy of baptism and the Lord's Supper.[95] Similarly, Ludger Schenke, whose preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis will be examined below, expanded Schille's thesis that the grave legends were cultic stories used for the celebration of Easter at the tomb.[96] Scholars continued to situate the preMarkan passion narrative within the cultic life of the early church continued into the twentieth century, with Ellen B. Aitken's

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[92] Philip Harrington, *The Primitive Christian Calendar, a Study in the Making of the Marcan Gospel, Vol. 1: Introduction and Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 204–06.

[93] Etienne Tromcé, *The Formation of the Gospel of Mark*, trans. Pamela Gaughan (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975), 60–62.

[94] Tromcé, Formation of the Gospel of Mark, 232–33.

[95] Grundmann, *Markus*, 274. Grundmann repeated the form-critical consensus regarding the preMarkan passion narrative, but did not offer his own reconstruction: "Im Unterschied zu den bisherigen Einzelüberlieferungen, die meist orts- und zeitlos überlieferet waren und zu Sinnabschnitten zusammengestellt wurden, ist die Passionsgeschichte, zwar auch aus Einzelüberlieferungen bestehend, doch eine durch Ort und Zeit unvertauschbar verbundene Abfolge von Geschehnissen. Sie hat sehr früh ihre feste Formung erhalten, und das hat seinen bedeutsamen Grund" (272).

[96] Ludger Schenke, *Auferstehungsverkündigung und leeres Grab. Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu Mk 16,1–8*, SBS 33 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1969).

attempt to build on this form-critical foundation while correcting Schille and Schenke's lack of attention to the ways in which the passion narrative was informed by Israel's cultic texts.[97]

2.3.2 The Psalms and Early Christian Worship

While Peddinghaus claimed the tradition was too fragmented for a certain reconstruction of each of the three stages of development, he was certain that the preMarkan passion narrative began with the arrest at Gethsemane and ended with the centurion's confession of Jesus as the Son of God.[98] The earliest layer was the original crucifixion report (*der ursprüngliche Kreuzigungsbericht*) which consisted of Mark 14:44–47, 50–53a; 15:1, 5b, 20b–22, 24, 27, 29f, 32c, 34a, 35–36a, 37, 39 (nearly identical to Bultmann's reconstruction).[99] This crucifixion report not only shared formal similarities to Psalm 22 (Mark 14:24//Ps 22:28; Mark 14:29f//Ps 22:7; Mark 14:34a//Ps 22:1) but also a narrative structure, as this reconstructed narrative proceeds from the mocking enemies (Mark 15:20) to the confession of a pagan (Mark 15:39) following the movement of the Psalm.[100] In the worship of the early Christians, this early narrative replaced Psalm 22 in the life of the early community, though Peddinghaus cautiously concluded: "This conclusion is of necessity hypothetical."[101]

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[97] Ellen Bradshaw Aitken, *Jesus' Death in Early Christian Memory: The Poetics of the Passion*, NTOA 53 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004).

[98] Peddinghaus, "Die Entstehung der Leidensgeschichte," 109–10, 141.

[99] Peddinghaus, "Die Entstehung der Leidensgeschichte," 141–42.

[100] Peddinghaus, "Die Entstehung der Leidensgeschichte," 146.

[101] Peddinghaus, "Die Entstehung der Leidensgeschichte," 149, my translation.

This original crucifixion report was supplemented and expanded in the second stage to include Mark 14: (27b, 30), 43–52, 53, 66–72; 15:1, 2–15, 20b–29, 31c–39.[102] Like the earlier layer, these additions were also used in worship settings in the Christian community. Peddinghaus paid particular attention to the addition of Pilate's questioning Jesus about the title "King of the Jews" (Mark 15:2–5) and its contrast to Peter's denial of Jesus before the servant of the high priest (Mark 14:54, 66–72).[103] The addition of these two narratives further the themes of Psalm 22 and include further examples of a pagan confessing the Messianic status of Jesus and one of his closest followers deserting him.

Finally, the third stage of the development of the preMarkan passion narrative was the inclusion of individual scenes into the narrative—an introduction (Mark 14:1–2, 10–11), the anointing at Bethany (Mark 14:3–9), the preparation and institution of the Lord's Supper (Mark 14:12–25), Gethsemane (Mark 14:32–42), Jesus's trial before the council (Mark 14:55–64).[104] Each of these scenes required their own *Sitz im Leben*. The preparation and observance of the Supper was formed in the liturgy of the church.[105] Gethsemane and the trial before the council arose from the church's paranesis.[106] This narrative was taken up by the author of the Gospel of Mark and the Markan passion narrative served as the exemplar for subsequent Gospels.

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[102] Peddinghaus, "Die Entstehung der Leidensgeschichte," 168. Here I follow Peddinghaus and include the new material along with the original crucifixion report.

[103] Peddinghaus, "Die Entstehung der Leidensgeschichte," 169.

[104] Peddinghaus, "Die Entstehung der Leidensgeschichte," 168.

[105] Peddinghaus, "Die Entstehung der Leidensgeschichte," 102.

[106] Peddinghaus, "Die Entstehung der Leidensgeschichte," 171, 184.

While Peddinghaus's reconstruction of the preMarkan passion narrative failed to gain enthusiastic followers, his emphasis on the importance of Psalm 22 for the development of the passion narrative foreshadowed further developments in Markan scholarship. In a 1979 article, Julius Oswald followed Peddinghaus in examining the role of Psalm 22 in the development of the preMarkan passion narrative.[107] Oswald concluded that since Psalm 22, not Isaiah 53, was the primary influence in the crucifixion report, Jesus was depicted in the earliest tradition as a suffering righteous man, not the suffering servant of Isaiah.[108] Other scholars have abandoned the search for a preMarkan passion narrative and focused on the influence of Psalm 22 on the final form of the Markan text.[109] Recently, the rise of social memory theory has led some to theorize that the suffering righteous one of Psalm 22 was the script to which the death of Jesus was keyed.[110]

3. The Problem of a PreMarkan Passion Narrative

In 1972 Gerhard Schneider observed that the form-critical consensus was under attack and the hypothesis that the evangelist created the first passion narrative from individual

[107] Julius Oswald, "Die Beziehungen zwischen Psalm 22 und dem vormarkinischen Passionsbericht," *ZKT* 101.1 (1979): 53–66.

[108] Cf. Morna Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant: The Influence of the Servant Concept of Deutero-Isaiah in the New Testament* (London: S. P. C. K., 1959).

[109] Stephen P. Ahearne-Kroll, "Challenging the Divine: LXX Psalm 21in the Passion Narrative of the Gospel of Mark," in *The Trial and Death of Jesus: Essays on the Passion Narrative in Mark*, eds. Geert Van Oyen and Tom Shepherd, CBET 41 (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 119–48.

[110] Chris Keith, "The Role of the Cross in the Composition of the Markan Crucifixion Narrative," *Stone-Campbell Journal* 9 (2006): 61–75.

units (*Einzelstücken*) of Jesus tradition was gaining traction among NT scholars.[111] While the reconstructions by Schreiber, Linnemann, and Schenke, which will be examined in the next chapter, posited preMarkan traditions and sources, none adopted the form-critical hypothesis of a large, coherent narrative that was unique amongst Jesus traditions. For Schneider, the lack of agreement amongst scholars about the existence, contents, and origins of the preMarkan passion narrative was a problem for NT scholarship.[112] In order to move the scholarly conversation on the preMarkan passion narrative forward, Schneider sketched eight tasks for future scholarship: 1) Develop a reliable method for understanding the chronology and topography of the passion, particularly whether Mark 14:43–16:8 presents similar attributes to Mark 14:1–42, which was attributed to the evangelist; 2) Abandon hypothetical *Sitze im Leben* and determine whether the preMarkan passion narrative was a historical report (*Geschichtsbericht*) or displayed the characteristics of the individual units (*Perikopencharakter*) of the remainder of the Jesus tradition; 3) Examine the relationship of Johannine passion to the Synoptic passion narratives; 4) Establish whether the Isaianic Suffering Servant influenced the theology of the passion narrative and, if it does, determine the relationship between the preMarkan passion narrative and the genre of martyrdom; 5) Ascertain whether Mark 14:43–16:8 circulated as independent units in the earliest tradition but was put into a short report (*Kurzbericht*) which Mark used when composing his Gospel; 6) Clarify whether Luke

[111] Gerhard Schneider, "Das Problem einer vorkanonischen Passionserzählung," *BZ* 16 (1972): 222–44, here 222; Repr., in *Jesusüberlieferung und* Christologie, 213–35. Subsequent references to *Jesusüberlieferung und Christologie*.

[112] Schneider was sympathetic to the conclusions of Schreiber, Linnemann, and Schenke though he remained open to the possibility of a larger preMarkan passion narrative. Cf., Gerhard Schneider, "Die Verhaftung Jesu: Traditionsgeschichte von Mk 14,43–52," *ZNW* 63.3 (1972): 188–209; idem., "Gab es seine vorsynoptische Szene 'Jesus vor dem Synedrium,'" *NovT* 12.1 (1970): 22–39.

used a non-Markan passion source; 7) Examine whether the formula in 1 Cor 15:3b–5 provided the structure of the passion narrative; and, 8) The thesis that the passion narrative originated with Mark had not yet been proven and needed to be reviewed through studies in vocabulary, style, and theology.[113] For Schreiber, completion of these eight tasks would provide a decisive answer to whether there was a preMarkan passion narrative.

Schneider's call was answered but, as the following section reveals, it did not produce the results he intended. In every year of the 1970s, scholars produced a major journal article or monograph on the question of the preMarkan passion narrative. Schneider himself argued that there was no preMarkan passion narrative.[114] Similarly, John Donahue argued that the passion narrative was a Markan creation composed from two independent preMarkan traditions.[115] Detlev Dormeyer identified three distinct layers of redaction within the preMarkan passion narrative.[116] Wolfgang Schenk identified two sources along with individual traditions (*Einzelstücke*) behind the Markan passion

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[113] Schneider, "Das Problem einer vorkanonische Passionserzählung," 242–44.

[114] Gerhard Schneider, "Gab es eine Vorsynoptische Szene,"; idem., "Die Verhaftung Jesu."

[115] John R. Donahue, *Are You the Christ? The Trial Narrative in the Gospel of Mark* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1973), 58–63.

[116] Detlev Dormeyer, *Die Passion Jesu als Verhaltensmodell: Literarische und theologische Analyse der Traditions- und Redaktionsgeschichte der Markuspassion*, NTAbh 11 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1974). Dormeyer labelled the oldest tradition "T" and argued it represented a new genre of Christian martry stories and consisted of Mark 11:15bf, 18a; 14:10, 11a, 3, 32a, 43b, 45, 50, 51f, 55; 15:1b, 3, 5, 6, 11, 7, 15, 20b, 21, 22a, 23, 24a, 26, 27, 31a, 32c, 34ab, 37, 38, 40, 42b, 43ac, 46a. The second layer, "Rs," revealed the hand of the secondary redactor who added dialogue and legendary elements to imitate prophetic biographies and consisted of Mark 14:4a, 5b, 6, 8, 12–16, 18–20, 23, 24a, 25, 27a, 29, 30, 32b, 35a, 36, 37a, 41b, 45, 47, 53a, 54, 66b, 67b, 68, 72c, 56, 61b, 62a, 63, 64, 65b; 15:2, 9, 10, 16ac, 17, 18, 19b, 20a, 31b, 32a; 16:1, 2b, 4a, 5, 6, 7, 8a.The final layer, "Rmk," added parenetic material to create a self-contained narrative and included Mark 14:1, 2, 4b, 5a, 7, 9, 11b, 17, 18c, 20b, 21, 22, 24b, 26, 27b, 28, 31, 33, 34, 35b, 37b, 38, 39, 40, 41zc, 42, 43ac, 44, 48, 49, 53b, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61a, 62ab, 65ac, 66a, 67a, 69, 70, 71, 72ab; 15:1a, 4, 8, 12, 13, 14, 16b, 19a, 20c, 22b, 24b, 25, 29, 30, 32b, 33, 34c, 35, 36, 39, 41, 42ac, 43b, 46b, 47; 16:2a, 3, 4b.

narrative.[117] William Lane concluded that the evangelist took over the preMarkan passion narrative intact and supplemented this narrative with parallel or supplementary traditions.[118] Ludger Schenke posited the preMarkan passion narrative as a self-contained narrative based on the motif of the Suffering Righteous One.[119] Hugh Anderson posited an extensive preMarkan passion narrative, following prior form-critical works.[120] Rudolf Pesch argued the original preMarkan passion narrative extended backwards beyond Mark 14:1 that was composed in the primitive Aramaic church in Jerusalem prior to 37 CE.[121] Walter Schmithals identified an early *Grundschrift* behind the Gospel that the evangelist supplemented or rearranged.[122] Joachim Gnilka doubted whether the preMarkan passion

[117] Wolfgang Schenk, *Der Passionsbericht nach Markus* (Leipzig: Gerd Mohn, 1974), 272–74. The earliest source was based upon the tradition of Peter and utilized the Jewish Scriptures to provide an apologetic for the innocence of Jesus and included Mark 11:1–7; 14:12–16, 17–21, 26–30, 32–42, 43–52, 53, 54, 55f, 61–64, 66–72; 15:1f, 16–20a, 20b–24, 27, 29; 16:1–8. The second layer was an apocalyptic tradition and represented the theolog of the opponents of Mark and included Mark 11:8–11, 12–14, 15f, 18; 14:2, 10f, 23b, 25, 26, 33, 35, 38, 41, 44, 46, 50, 53, 57f, 60f, 65; 15:1, 3, 5, 12–15, 16, 25f, 29f, 33f, 37–39. The individual traditions inserted into these early layers were Mark 14:3–9, 22–24, 15:7f, 11, 15, 43, 46f.

[118] William L. Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes*, 2nd ed.,NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 485.

[119] Ludger Schenke, *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte Markus: Tradition und Redaktion in Markus 14,1–42*, Forschung zur Bibel 4 (Würzburg: Echter, 1971); idem., *Der gekreuzigte Christus: Versuch einer literakritischen und traditionsgeschlichtlichen Bestimmung der vormarkinischen Passionsgeschichte*, Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 69 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1974). Schenke's preMarkan passion narrative contained Mark 14:(1a), 32a, 34, 35a, 36–38, (40c), 42, 43–47, 50, 53a, 55–56, 60–62a, 63–65; 15:1, 3–5, 2, (15b), 16–20, 22–27, 29a, 31b, 32, 34a, 36a, 37, 39, 42–47. The preMarkan redaction of the original narrative included Mark 14:57–59, 62b; 15:6–15a, 21, 29b, 30, 33, 38. Markan redaction included Mark 14:48ff., 51ff., 66–72; 16:1–8.

[120] Hugh Anderson, *The Gospel of Mark*, NCB (London: Oliphants, 1976), 302–03.

[121] Rudolf Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium*, HThKNT II 1/2 and 2/2 9Freiburg: Herder, 1976); idem., "The Gospel in Jerusalem: Mark 14:12–16 as the Oldest Tradition of the Early Church," in *The Gospel and the Gospels*, ed. Peter Stuhlmacher (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 106–48. Pesch's early passion narrative contained Mark 8:27–33; 9:2–13, 30–35; 10:1, 32–34, 46–52; 11:1–23, 27–33; 12:1–12, 13–17, 34c–37, 41–44; 13:1–2; 14:1–16:8.

[122] Walter Schmithals, *Das Evangelium nach Markus: Kapitel 9,2–16,20*, ÖTK (Würzburg: Gerd Mohn, 1979). Schmithals considered Mark 14:13–16, 22–25, 26–27, 29b–31, 32ab, 34b–36, 37, 38–40, 41,

narrative could be reconstructed reliably but nevertheless identified Mark 14:32–16:8 as the preMarkan passion narrative.[123] The differences between reconstructed preMarkan passion narratives became even wider, with disagreements about every aspect of the origins, contents, theology, and historical value of the passion narrative; the only agreement amongst scholars was that a form-critical conception of Jesus tradition was the methodological starting point of their investigations. Although Schneider's proposal offered a way forward, the number of conflicting studies on the preMarkan passion narrative resulted in Markan scholarship reaching a crisis point by the end of the decade.

The following sections trace the contours of the scholarly conversation broadly following the outline of the tasks as set forth by Schneider along three trajectories—the debate of whether in the earliest stages the passion narrative was transmitted as a historical report or as individual traditions, the role of the Jewish Scriptures in the development of the preMarkan passion narrative, and the relationship between the preMarkan passion narrative and other canonical texts. The results produced by these studies revealed there was little consensus among scholars about the origin and development of the preMarkan passion narrative, but a lack of consensus does not necessarily prove the inadequacy of a form-critical conception of Jesus tradition. The failure of the form-critical method is exposed through its inability to account for the data in the text of Mark and the unnecessary constraints it placed on the scholarly imagination.

43, 48–50, 53a, 54, 66b–72; 15:1, 3–11, 15, 22–24, 27, 29a, 31, 32b, 34–37, 40–41, 42, 43–47 as part of the *Grundschrift.*

[123] Joachim Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus,* EKK 1/2 and 2/2 (Zürich: Benziger, 1979), 349–50: "Ein sicheres Ergebnis der Forschung ist dies, daß eine absolut zuverlässige Rekonstruktion nich mehr geleistet warden kann."

3.1 *Historical Report or Individual Units of Tradition?*

Earlier chapters demonstrated that, from at least the time of the history of religions school in the late 1800s, form-critical investigations into the Gospel of Mark assumed that the passion narrative was unique because it demonstrated a character quite different than the previous thirteen chapters. This position had been assumed since the earliest form-critical publications of Schmidt, Dibelius, and Bultmann with little opposition. Despite a small number of objections, the existence of a preMarkan passion narrative, an early connected narrative unique from the remainder of Jesus traditions, came through intact.

In the 1970's several publications questioned form criticism's most "assured result" and instead suggested a tradition history in line with the rest of the Jesus traditions found in the Gospel of Mark. The flood of preMarkan passion narrative reconstructions began in 1970 with Eta Linnemann's *Studein zur Passionsgeschichte*.[124] Because Linnemann fully rejected the form-critical conception of a preMarkan passion narrative, her work will be examined in full in the next chapter alongside other challenges to the form-critical consensus. Her rejection of the preMarkan passion narrative while retaining a form-critical approached was a crisis moment in the quest for the preMarkan passion narrative. For Linnemann, the passion narrative represented a collection of independent reports (*Berichte*) and not a redacted narrative. Thus, the passion narrative should be treated in a manner similar to the previous thirteen chapters of Mark, losing the exalted status among the preliterary Jesus traditions.

[124] Eta Linnemann, *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte*, FRLANT 102 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970).

The previous attempts to quest for the preMarkan passion narrative came to no unanimity on the division on Markan verses into various layers or sources. For Donahue, "The continuous attempts to see the pre-Mkan traditions as leaving their linguistic imprint on the present text of Mk, which can then be parceled out into half and quarter verses, are problematic."[125] Donahue compared the attempts to reconstruct the preMarkan passion narrative to earlier attempts "to divide the Pentateuchal narrative into a multitude of J's, E's, and P's."[126] In place of the particularly German version of redaction criticism that attempted to discover preMarkan traditions and theology in Markan redaction, Donahue posited that a structuralist exegesis could move the conversation beyond the impasse on contested reconstructions of a hypothetical source. What Donahue means by structural exegesis is the application of literary criticism to the Gospels that pays attention to linguistic structures, narrative structure, and deep symbolic structures.[127] Under this scheme, there would be no need to search for preMarkan sources to highlight Markan theology; Markan theology is found in the text of the Gospel.[128]

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[125] John R. Donahue, "Introduction: From Passion Traditions to Passion Narrative," in *The Passion in Mark: Studies on Mark 14–16*, ed. Werner H. Kelber (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 1–20, here 15.

[126] Donahue, "From Passion Traditions," 15.

[127] Donahue, "From Passion Traditions," 18.

[128] It was debated whether traditional redactional criticism is compatible with structural exegesis. E.g., Dan O. Via, Jr., *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament: A Structuralist Approach to Hermeneutic* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 71–75, argued viewed redaction criticism as a historical discipline that prevented a study of the text itself. Donahue, "From Passion Traditions," 19, disagreed and sought to loosen redaction criticism "from the moorings of the distinction between tradition and redaction" in an effort to bring bridge the gap between structuralism and redaction criticism. Donahue has misunderstood the development of the discipline of redaction criticism out of form criticism. Redaction criticism's primary purpose is historical—to separate preMarkan traditions from Markan redaction in an attempt to trace the development of theology from the earliest community to the Markan redactor.

The history of Markan scholarship reveals that Donahue's proposal came approximately a decade too early. In the 1980s, the rise of literary criticism and other developments led to a decline in reconstructed preMarkan and a focus on narrative approaches to the Gospels.[129] Although redaction critics claimed to break with form criticism in fundamental ways, the one aspect of form criticism that was remained was its conception of Jesus tradition and emphasis on individual units of preliterary tradition.

In some works, the form-critical assumption that the preMarkan passion narrative was the only connected narrative and unique among the early Jesus traditions was simply repeated. Pesch stated:

> Almost all of the material from the preMarkan passion narrative has the character of a report, which is predominantly not conceived as an independent narrative unit but intended for the context of the narrative.[130]

Others, however, found Linnemann's approach untenable. Dormeyer questioned whether Linnemann's explanation of the structure of the Markan passion narrative as the natural course of action ("am Faden des natürlichen Handlungsablaufes") could be accounted for by the Markan redactor.[131] In Dormeyer's view, the interconnectedness of the Markan passion narrative could only be explained by the use of a source that held the events of Mark 14–16 together from its inception, not by the hand of its final redactor.[132] Although

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[129] Norman L. Petersen, *Literary Criticism for New Testament Critics* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); Stephen D. Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels: The Theoretical Challenge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); David M. Rhoads and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of the Gospel*, 1st ed (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982); Francis J. Moloney, "Narrative Criticism of the Gospels," *Pacifica* 4.2 (1991): 181–201.

[130] Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium*, 1:65, my translation.

[131] Linnemann, *Studein zur Passionsgeschichte*, 54.

[132] Dormeyer, *Die Passion Jesu*, 20–22.

he did not state it straightforwardly, Dormeyer, like many other scholars, was unwilling to consider an alternative paradigm to the development of the passion narrative that did not rely on an early source taken over by the evangelist. Despite Schneider's calling for a reexamination of this question, the overwhelming consensus was that the preMarkan passion narrative was a connected narrative from its inception.

3.2 The Jewish Scriptures and the Development of the PreMarkan Passion Narrative

The question of whether the preMarkan passion narrative was transmitted as a connected narrative or individual units produced little scholarly conversation. In contrast, the question of the relation of the Jewish Scriptures to the preMarkan passion narrative produced much form-critical fruit. In his early form-critical writings, Dibelius emphasized the role of the Jewish Scriptures in preaching in an apologetic effort to demonstrate that Jesus died according to the Scriptures.[133] The question of the role of the Jewish Scriptures in the formation of the Jesus traditions was raised anew and previous form-critical questions concerning the *Sitze im Leben* of these traditions were reexamined. The following sections examine attempts to connect the origin and development of the preMarkan passion narrative to the Jewish Scriptures through the motif of the Suffering Righteous One/Suffering Servant and the martyrdom accounts.[134]

[133] Martin Dibelius, "Die alttestamentlichen Motive in der Leidensgeschichte des Petrus- und des Johannes-Evangeliums," in *Botschaft und Geschichte:Gesammetle Aufsatze 1: Zur Evangelienforschung* (Tübingen Mohr Siebeck, 1953), 221–47.

[134] The martyrdom accounts begin in Jewish literature and in the early centuries CE were adapted and developed by Christian authors. The trajectory of literary motifs and the question of genre of both will be examined together.

Since Schmidt first connected the preMarkan passion narrative with Acts of the Christian Martyrs, scholars have attempted to identify its genre in an effort to bolster the hypothesis that the narrative source existed prior to the Gospel of Mark. If scholars could identify a known genre in ancient literature that shared features with their reconstructed narratives, it provided more evidence for the existence of a written preMarkan passion narrative. Following the form-critical dictum that the Gospel genre was *sui generis*, Schmidt proposed that the passion narrative did not look back toward any known literary genres but was the first of the acts of the Christian martyrs.[135] Form-critical examinations of the passion narrative had always acknowledged the role of the Jewish Scriptures in the formation of the passion narrative, so it was not surprising that Schmidt's forward-looking view did not carry the day. According to Dibelius, the use of these Scriptures served a two-fold function. They proved that Jesus died "according to the Scriptures" and the passion narrative was shaped to elucidate these scriptural allusions.[136] In English form-critical scholarship, Dodd hypothesized a collection of early *testamonia* based on Psalm 22 and Isa 53 that provided the substructure for not only the passion narrative, but for early Christian theology.[137] Similarly, Barnabas Lindars argued that reflection on Jewish Scriptures, including Isa 53, Psalm 22, 34, 41, 69, 109, and Zech 9, led to the development and formation of the passion narrative.[138] The works of Dodd and Lindars were interested in textual allusions and the development of NT theology rather than

[135] Schmidt, *Place of the Gospels*, 30; idem., "Die literarusche Eigenart," 18–20.

[136] Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 184–89; idem., "Die alttestamentlichen Motive," 221–47.

[137] Dodd, *According to the Scriptures,* 92–93. See Ch. 3 above.

[138] Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), 75–109.

generic identification, though they formed a corrective to some of the tendencies of earlier German form-critical work.

The beginnings of identifying a unique genre for the preMarkan passion narrative began in 1972 with Lothar Ruppert's writings on the motif of the Suffering Righteous One in the Psalms, Wisdom of Solomon, 4 Maccabees, and the Qumran writings.[139] Ruppert traced the development of the motif from its origins in Isa 53 through these writings. He observed that Dan 11:33–35; 1QH 2:20–30; 3:37–4:4; 15:14–17; Wis 2:12–20; 5:1–7 all represented alterations to this motif based on their specific historical circumstance. When he turned to the preMarkan passion narrative, Ruppert argued that Mark utilized this motif as he portrayed Jesus as the Suffering Righteous One. Ruppert was not concerned with generic identity, as he considered this different from the identification of literary motifs, though he did identify a literary source underlying Wis 2 and 5 similar to the preMarkan passion narrative.[140]

Ruppert's claim that the passion narrative was shaped by the motif of the Suffering Just One was accepted by Schenke while observing several limitations of Ruppert's work.[141] Schenke did not see the parallel between Wis 2:12–20; 5:1–7 and Mark 14:55–65 as detailed by Ruppert.[142] Additionally, Jesus is not given the title of the

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[139] Lothar Ruppert, *Der leidenende Gerechte: Eine motivgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Alten Testament und zwischentestamentlichen Judentum*, FB 5 (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1972). It is surprising that Ruppert did not discuss this motif in the books of Daniel, Esther, or the story of Joseph.

[140] Lothar Ruppert, *Jesus als der leidende Gerechte? Der Weg Jesu im Lichte eines alt- und zwischentestamentlichen Motivs*, SBS 59 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1972), 46, 58–60.

[141] Schenke, *Der gekreuzigte Chrustus,* 73–76.

[142] Schenke, *Der gekreuzigte Christus*, 75.

Righteous One in the Passion Narrative but instead is referred to as the Messiah.[143] These two caveats aside, Schenke proceeded to identify the genre of the passion narrative as *Passionsbericht*, not *Martyrium* or *Anamnese*.[144] According to Schenke, the purpose of this account was to report the events of the final days of Jesus as the Messiah, the Suffering Righteous One.

It is striking that neither Ruppert nor Schenke engaged Morna Hooker's *Jesus and the Servant*, a work published over a decade earlier and one that undermined their conception of a Suffering Servant motif in the passion narrative.[145] After a thorough examination of the passion narrative, Hooker concluded, "There is nothing to suggest that the authors had deliberately altered the details of events which they described in order to demonstrate that Jesus was to be identified with the Servant."[146] For Hooker, the Suffering Servant motif was understood collectively, as the corporate personality who returned with the exiles.[147] Despite Hooker's conclusions, an attempt to connect the Isa 53 and the Suffering Righteous One to a literary genre literary genre and the existence of a preMarkan passion narrative was later taken up by George Nickelsburg.[148]

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[143] Schenke, *Der gekreuzigte Christus*, 75.

[144] Schenke, *Der gekreuzigte Christus*, 138.

[145] Morna Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant;* idem., "Did Jesus use Isaiah 53?" in *The Servant of God in Practice*, eds. John W. Rogerson and John Vincent, Practice Interpretation 6 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 55–68. Both Ruppert and Schenke engaged English language scholarship. Ruppert discussed the work of Christopher R. North, *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949).

[146] Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant*, 101.

[147] Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant*, 25–52.

[148] George W. E. Nickelsburg, "The Genre and Function of the Markan Passion Narrative," *HTR* 73.1/2 (1980): 153–84; Reprinted in George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism and Early Christianity*, Expanded Ed., HTS 56 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 249–79. Subsequent references to *Resurrection.* See Chapter 5 below.

Behind these historical reconstructions lies a theological debate on theories of atonement and the meaning of the cross for contemporary Christianity. Jürgen Moltmann's *The Crucified God* was published in 1972 and argued against traditional theories of atonement, notably substitutionary theories of atonement. For Moltmann, that Jesus was abandoned by God on the cross revealed that God is capable of suffering with humanity, as he suffered the death of his son.[149] The theological nature of historical criticism may be seen in Jeremias's review of Hooker's *Jesus and the Servant*.[150] Jeremias criticized Hooker for only realizing the "full splendor" of Isa 53 in 1 Pet 2:21–25 and even here found her work lacking "since the doctrine of atonement is only mentioned as a kind of appendix to the theme of Christ's patience in suffering."[151] In his own work on the Isaianic Servant, Jeremias acknowledged that there were few explicit citations if Isa 53 in the NT but claimed that there were allusions throughout, namely in the use of the preposition ὑπέρ (1 Cor 15:3; Mark 14:24).[152] For Jeremias, this connection back to the Servant concept went all the way back to Jesus himself. This debate demonstrates the theological nature of historical criticism on Mark, as the preMarkan passion narrative was connected to a concept that Christians throughout the centuries have connected to the passion narrative that may or may not have been present in the text.

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[149] Jürgen Moltmann, *Der gekreuzigte Gott: Das Kreuz Christi als Grund und Kritik christlicher Theologie* (München: Christian Kaiser, 1972); ET: *The Crucified God: With a New Foreword by Miroslav Volf*, 40th. anniversary ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015).

[150] Joachim Jeremias, Review of *Jesus and the Servant: The Influence of the Servant Concept of Deutero-Isaiah in the New Testament*, by Morna D. Hooker, *JTS* 11.1 (1960): 140–44.

[151] Joachim Jeremias, Review of *Jesus and the Servant*, 143.

[152] Walter Zimmerli and Joachim Jeremias, *The Servant of God*, trans. Christoph Burchard, SBT 20 (London: SCM Press, 1965), 88–93. This work is an English translation of Zimmerli and Jeremias's articles in the *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament.*

The work of Ruppert and Schenke solidify the connection with Isa 53 and the corresponding modern view of atonement into the hypothetical preliterary form of the passion narrative.

Dormeyer took a slightly different approach to the motif of the Suffering Servant or Suffering Righteous One and its influence on the preMarkan passion narrative. Dormeyer looked to the martyr literature, both Jewish and Christian, for the genre of the earliest passion narrative. In Dormeyer's reconstruction the earliest layer of the preMarkan passion narrative, which he labeled "T", belonged to the Acts of the Martyrs that originated from imitation of the minutes of legal trials (*Protokoliteratur von Märtyrer Prozessen*).[153] This early layer included Jesus's trial as a criminal, his crucifixion between two criminals, the titulus over the cross, and a connection between the temple incident and Jesus's crucifixion. Dormeyer included an appendix that contained the texts from the *Alexandrian Acts* and the Greek text of Mark 14–16 with divided into the three layers he finds behind the text.[154] Dormeyer's attempt to identify the passion with the martyrlogical literature was not new; Schmidt had done so in his work of the Gospels within ancient literature.[155] Dormeyer, however, included both Jewish and Christian martyr literature and identified the death of Zechariah (2 Chr 24:20–22) as the earliest Jewish martydom

Dormeyer's identification of the passion narrative with the trial transcripts was not widely accepted so I will discuss it only briefly here in relation to the proposals of

[153]Dormeyer, *Die Passion Jesu*, 240–42.

[154] Dormeyer, *Die Passion Jesu*, 291–301.

[155] See chapter 2 above.

Ruppert and Schenke. The problem with Dormeyer's classification of this hypothetical early layer of the passion narrative as martyr literature is that the terms martyr (μάρτυς) and martyrdom (μαρτύριον) were not used in this sense prior to the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*.[156] The texts of the early Christian martyrs reveal significant differences in style, such as the lengthy speeches of the martyr before death, and dependence on the passion of Jesus, for example miracles at the death of the martyr.[157]

3.3 The Relationship between the Markan Passion Narrative and Other Canonical Texts

The form-critical conception of Jesus tradition from its oral stage to its textualization in the Gospels did not allow for most canonical texts to be dependent on one another.[158] Thus, the similarities between the Markan and Johannine passion narrative indicated a shared source, not the Fourth Gospel's reliance on Mark. Similarly, the parallel Last Supper tradition in 1 Cor 11:23–26 and the supposed pre-Pauline creed of 1 Cor 15:3–5 implied dependence on preMarkan passion traditions rather than the Gospel of Mark's reliance on Pauline traditions. The form-critical mind could not imagine otherwise. In the two sections below, I document the ways both the Johannine passion narrative and 1 Cor 11:23–26; 15:3–5 were used to bolster the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis and also observe how these ideas are being overturned in recent scholarship. As these fundamental assumptions of form criticism begin to be overturned,

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[156] Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 629.

[157] For a collection of martyr narratives, *Greek and Latin Narratives about the Ancient Martyrs*, Oxford Early Christian Texts, ed. Erić Rebillard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.).

[158] The obvious exception being Matthew and Luke's utilization of Mark.

the hypotheses that rely upon a form-critical conception of Jesus tradition, including the preMarkan passion narrative, must be abandoned.

3.3.1 The Markan and Johannine Passion Narratives

At the beginning of the twentieth century the majority of NT scholars affirmed John's reliance on the Synoptic Gospels.[159] However, with the rise of form criticism and the publication of Percival Gardener-Smith's 1938 *Saint John and the Synoptics*, the independence of John from the Synoptics was cemented for at least two generations of scholarship.[160] In his introductory textbook, Norman Perrin suggested that in the passion narrative John may have relied upon the Gospel of Mark rather than a preMarkan passion narrative. He wrote,

> For a long time the general opinion of scholars was that the passion narrative existed as a connected unit before the Gospel of Mark was written, and it was easy and natural to think that John had known and used a version of that pre-Markan passion narrative rather than the Gospel of Mark. But today the tendency is to ascribe more and more of the composition of the passion narrative to the evangelist Mark himself and to doubt the very existence of a pre-Markan and non-Markan passion narrative extensive enough to have been the basis for the Gospel of John.[161]

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[159] D. Moody Smith, *John Among the Gospels*, 2nd ed. (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 2001), 13–15; Harold W. Attridge, "John and Mark in the History of Research," in *John's Transformation of Mark*, eds. Eve-Marie Becker, Helen K. Bond, and Catrin H. Williams (Bloomsbury: T & T Clark, 2021), 9–22, here 17–18.

[160] In their form-critical books, both Bultmann and Dibelius focus on the Synoptic traditions mostly to the exclusion of John. Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. George R. Beasley-Murray (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), concluded John did not use the Synoptics as sources but may have known them. Percival Gardener-Smith, *Saint John and the Synoptic Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938).

[161] Norman Perrin, *The New Testament: An Introduction*, 1st ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jonavich, 1974), 228–29.

It is not clear where exactly this tendency is to ascribe the composition of the passion narrative to the evangelist and acknowledge John's dependence on Mark. For Perrin, the presence of any Markan redaction in John would prove that John used Mark as a source. After an evaluation of the trial scene in the context of Peter's denial, Perrin concluded that John knew and used Mark in the passion narrative.[162] Despite Perrin's conclusion, the majority of redaction critics responded to the reconsideration of John's relationship to the Markan passion narrative by doubling down on the form-critical hypothesis of a preMarkan passion narrative that explained the similarities between John and Mark.

The similarities between the narratives of two passion narratives are undeniable. The difficulty, however, the redaction critics was establishing a Markan redactional vocabulary and demonstrating that these redactional glosses were present on the Gospel of John. The narrative similarities are as follows:

The Plot to Kill Jesus	Mark 14:1–2, 10–11	John 11:45–57
Anointing of Jesus	Mark 14:3–8	John 12:1–8
Prediction of Betrayal	Mark 14:26–31	John 13:21–30
Prediction of Peter's Denial	Mark 14:26–31	John 13:36–38
Gethsemane	Mark 14:32–42	John 18:1
Arrest of Jesus	Mark 14:43–50	John 18:2–11
Jesus and the High Priest	Mark 14:53–65	John 18:12–14
Peter's Denial	Mark 14:66–72	John 18:15–18
Jesus before Pilate	Mark 15:1–5	John 18:28–38
Release of Barrabas	Mark 15:6–15	John 18:38–40
Soldiers Mock Jesus	Mark 15:16–19	John 19:1–7
The Crucifixion	Mark 15:21–32	John 19:17–30
Death of Jesus	Mark 15:33–41	John 19:31–37
The Burial of Jesus	Mark 15:42–47	John 19:38–42
Resurrection of Jesus	Mark 16:1–8	John 20:1–18

The Farewell Discourse (John 14–17) interrupts what is otherwise an almost identical plot structure between the Johannine and Markan passion narratives. Unlike Matthew and

[162] Perrin, *New Testament*, 337.

Luke, however, the Gospel of John did not reproduce the Markan traditions with significant verbatim agreement. These two facts led many scholars to conclude that John had access to preMarkan traditions alongside unique Johannine traditions but was independent of Mark.

Multiple hypotheses were proposed that maintained John's independence from Mark but allowed for Johannine knowledge of preMarkan traditions. In a thorough examination of John 18–19, Anton Dauer sought to determine whether the Johannine passion narrative demonstrated evidence of the Synoptics and concluded that John does not display any signs of being dependent on any of the Synoptics.[163] The similarities between John and Mark are explained by Dauer with an oral tradition that was influenced by the Gospel of Mark.[164] Similarly, Robert Fortna reconstructed a Johannine narrative source similar to the Markan passion narrative but not dependent on Mark.[165] For Ferdinand Hahn, the Johannine passion narrative was independent from the Markan passion, though it did display some similarities.[166] Attempts to use the Gospel of John to reconstruct the preMarkan passion narrative continued into the next decades and they will be discussed in the following chapter.

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[163] Anton Dauer, *Die Passionsgeschichte im Johannesevangelium: Eine traditionsgeschichtliche und theologische Untersuchung zu Joh 18,1–19,30*, SANT 30 (Münich: Kösel, 1972).

[164] Dauer, *Die Passionsgeschichte*, 335.

[165] Robert T. Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs: A Reconstruction of the Narrative Source Underlying the Fourth Gospel*, SNTSMS 11 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); idem., *The Fourth Gospel and Its Predecessor: From Narrative Source to Present Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988).

[166] Ferdinand Hahn, "Der Prozess Jesu nach dem Johannesevangelium: Eine Redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung; in Memorium Dr. Paul Winter," in *Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, Vorarbeiten*, ed. Joachim Gnilka (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1970), 2:23–96

The quest for the preMarkan passion narrative found thus itself in a dead end. The principle of Dauer, Fortna, and others that the presence of Markan redaction in John would indicate familiarity with Mark was, in theory, a logical stance. However, the problem that Markan redaction critics had was there was no agreement on how to ascertain a Markan redactional vocabulary. In order to identify the redactional vocabulary or Matthew or Luke, for instance, a redaction critic needed to only observe their changes to Mark to discover a redactional vocabulary. This was not the case for Mark. The reconstruction of hypothetical sources led to no consensus on a Markan redactional text or vocabulary. Lloyd Gaston could therefore not speak of a Markan redactional text but only of "passages commonly agreed to be redactional."[167] The insistence of direct literary parallels as evidence of familiarity or dependence between John and the Synoptics led to a quick exclusion of the possibility of John's use of Mark. Catrin Williams has recently demonstrated just how distinct Matthew and Luke's reproduction of the Markan text was in antiquity.[168] While the redactional-critical method and its form-critical conception of Jesus tradition could not imagine otherwise, new research is revealing new ways to think about the relationship between the Johannine and Markan passion narratives that do not require the existence of a preMarkan passion narrative to account for the similarities between the two accounts.[169]

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[167] Lloyd Gaston, *Horae Synopticae Electronicae: Word Statistics of the Synoptic Gospels*, SBLSBS 3 (Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature, 1973), 1. C.f. the discussion of Gaston in Frans Neirynck, "The Redactional Text of Mark," *ETL* 7 (1981): 144–62, here 144–49.

[168] Catrin H. Williams, "John's 'Rewriting' of Mark: Some Insights from Ancient Jewish Analogues," in *John's Transformation of Mark*, 51–66.

[169] See the recent volume *John's Transformation of Mark*, eds. Eve-Marie Becker, Helen K. Bond, and Catrin H. Williams (Bloomsbury, T & T Clark, 2021), discussed below.

3.3.2 The PreMarkan Passion Narrative and 1 Corinthians

At the end of the nineteenth century many NT scholars concluded that Mark was a Pauline Gospel.[170] Gustav Volkmar's influential work argued that the Gospel of Mark was an allegorical rewriting of Paul and many leading NT scholars adopted a similar understanding of the relation between the Second Gospel and the Pauline letters, including J. Weiss a forerunner of the form-critical method.[171] However, the rise of form criticism and the publication of Martin Werner's critical assessment of Volkmar's hypothesis led to unanimity among biblical scholars that Pauline theology did not influence the Gospel of Mark.[172] In a footnote Bultmann stated that Werner "rightly showed that Mark is not a product of Pauline theology."[173] While Werner's book was influential in putting a hold on the search for Paulinism in Mark, it was the rise of form criticism that prevented such a search. Skoven observed:

> It has been suggested that Werner's monograph put an end to the idea of Paulinism in Mark. I would argue that it was not so much Werner's refutation itself as the rise of form criticism that sidetracked the line of inquiry that Volkmar had initiated. As we know, form criticism concentrated on the individual pericopes and traced their history backwards in search for their *Sitz-im-Leben*, but took no interest in the Gospels as complete works. It is quite telling that the

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[170] For a history of research on the relation between Paul's epistles, Heike Omerzu, "Paul and Mark—Mark and Paul: A Critical Outline of the History of Research," in *Mark and Paul: Comparative Essays Part II: For and Against Pauline Influence on Mark*, ed. Eve-Marie Becker, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, and Mogens Mueller (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 51–62.

[171] Gustav Volkmar, *Die Religion Jesu und ihre erste Entwickelung nack dem gegenwärtigen Stande der Wissenschaft* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1857); idem., *Die Evangelien, oder Marcus und die Synopsis der kanonischen und ausserkanonischen Evangelien nach dem ältesten Text mit historisch-exegetischem Commentar* (Leipzig: Fues Verlag, 1870); Weiss, *Die älteste Evangelium,* 94–95; For Volkmar, Anne Vig Skoven, "Mark as Allegorical Rewriting of Paul: Gustav Volkmar's Understanding of the Gospel of Mark," in *Mark and Paul: Comparative Essays Part II,* 13–28.

[172] Martin Werner, *Der Einfluß paulinischer Theologie im Markusevangelium: Eine Studie zur neutestamentlichen Theologie* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1923).

[173] Bultmann, *History*, 347, n. 2.

> interest in the relationship between Paul and Mark arises again with redaction criticism.[174]

Skoven is right to see the rise of form criticism as more influential than Werner's refutation of Volkmar. However, her observation that the interest was revived with the rise of redaction criticism is off the mark. It is telling that the redaction critics she highlights are Joel Marcus and William Telford, two scholars who are better defined as literary critics than redaction critics.[175] The redaction critics writing on the Markan passion narrative in the 1970s held the views of Werner—that Mark was independent of Paul. In fact, two passages from 1 Corinthians provided evidence for many redaction critics that strengthened the argument for a preMarkan passion narrative. Their form-critical conception of Jesus tradition would not allow for a Mark who was familiar with Pauline literature and theology.

In 1 Cor 11:23–26 Paul recounts the institution of the Lord's Supper, as he received "from the Lord." The Pauline version contains many verbal similarities to the Markan version:

> Ἐγὼ γὰρ παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου, ὃ καὶ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ᾗ παρεδίδετο ἔλαβεν ἄρτον καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ εἶπεν· Τοῦτό μού ἐστιν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν. ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ ποτήριον μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι λέγων·Τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε, ὁσάκις ἐὰν πίνητε, εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν. ὁσάκις γὰρ ἐὰν ἐσθίητε τὸν ἄρτον τοῦτον καὶ τὸ ποτήριον πίνητε, τὸν θάνατον τοῦ κυρίου καταγγέλλετε ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ. (1 Cor 11:23–26)

> Καὶ ἐσθιόντων αὐτῶν λαβὼν ἄρτον εὐλογήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς καὶ εἶπεν Λάβετε, τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου. καὶ λαβὼν ποτήριον εὐχαριστήσας ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔπιον ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες. καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ ἐκχυννόμενον ὑπὲρ πολλῶν. ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐκέτι οὐ

[174] Skoven, "Mark as Allegorical Rewriting," 26.

[175] Joel Marcus, "Mark—Interpreter of Paul," *NTS* 46 (2000): 473–87; William R. Telford, *The Theology of the Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 164–69.

> μὴ πίω ἐκ τοῦ γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης ὅταν αὐτὸ πίνω καινὸν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ. (Mark 14:22–25)

The versions of the Supper in Matthew and Luke have additional similarities to the Pauline version found in 1 Cor 11:23–26.[176] Because form criticism precluded any sort of literary relationship between 1 Corinthians and Mark, many scholars pointed to the time reference in 1 Cor 11:23 as an indication that this tradition had been lifted from a narrative tradition and utilized by Paul.[177] According to Pesch, the introduction ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ᾗ παρεδίδετο presupposes a preMarkan passion narrative that must have existed from the earliest years of the Jerusalem community.[178] For Jeremias, the formula in 1 Cor 11:23 indicated that Paul was passing tradition that he received using the rabbinic technical terms παραλαμβάνειν and παραδιδόναι that "says nothing other than the chain of tradition goes back unbroken to Jesus himself."[179]

Similar form-critical reasoning was expressed regarding 1 Cor 15:3–5. Within a decade after the earliest form-critical publications, Wilhelm Bussman argued that when Paul used the phrase κατὰ τὰς γραφάς in 1 Cor 15:3–4 he was not referencing the Jewish Scriptures but to an early passion narrative.[180] Josef Ernst went further than Bussmann and argued that the confession of 1 Cor 15:3–5 laid out the narrative structure of death,

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[176] Notably Luke's inclusion of the prepositional phrase ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν at 22:19.

[177] Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary*, trans. James W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 196–201.

[178] Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium*, 2:21, 369.

[179] Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words,* 101.

[180] Wilhelm Bussmann, "Die Bedeutung von I Kor. 15, 3–4 für fie Entstehungszeit der Quellen," in *Synoptischen Studien, Driten Heft: Zu den Sonderquellen* (Halle: Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses G. m. b. H., 1931), 180–91.

grave, and resurrection of the earliest passion narrative.[181] Ernst reconstructed the earliest report of this preMarkan passion narrative as Mark 15:20b–41, 42–47; 16:1–8. This narrative filled in the early kerygmatic tradition utilized by Paul with factual references to Jesus' final moments.

This line of thinking about 1 Cor 13:22–25 and 15:3–5 continues today even within scholarship that has consciously moved away from a form-critical conception of Jesus tradition. I want to briefly examine the thought experiment posed by Dale Allison on what we can surmise about Jesus's death based on the Pauline letters.[182] Allison lists the parallels between Paul's letters and the Gospels of Mark and John, which include Jesus's prediction of his own death; the handing over of Jesus in the evening; Jesus's interpretation of his death for others; Jesus's willingness to go to his death; Jewish leaders implicated in Jesus's death; Roman authorities, including Pilate, ordered Jesus's execution; Jesus was crucified; Jesus was beaten to the point of being bloody; Jesus was crucified as king of the Jews; and, Jesus was buried.[183] These parallels led Allison to argue for the existence of a preMarkan passion narrative that was known by Paul.[184] Allison's thought experiment raises the question of whether the preMarkan passion narrative is a form-critical construct that could survive the death of form criticism.

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[181] Ernst, "Passionserzählung des Markus," 171–73.

[182] Dale Allison, *Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 392–421.

[183] Allison, *Constructing Jesus,* 404.

[184] Here Allison placed significant weight on the independence of John and the Synoptics, a view which he later changed. Dale Allison, "Reflections on Matthew, John, and Jesus," in *Jesus Research: The Gospel of John in Historical Inquiry*, eds. James H. Charlesworth and Jolyon G. R. Pruszinski (London: T & T Clark, 2019), 47–68.

Recent research on the relation between Mark and Paul is leading back toward the conclusion that Mark was familiar with the Pauline tradition.[185] In his work on Mark's use of 1 Corinthians, Thomas Nelligan developed new criteria for establishing literary dependence that account for the ancient evidence and move beyond previous searches for common vocabulary.[186] Nelligan concluded that the Mark 14:22–25 and 1 Cor 11:23–26 share a significant amount of vocabulary, the same plot and order of events, and the fact that no other extant text can account Mark 14:22–25 other than an appeal to an oral tradition to which we have no access, it is likely that Mark was dependent on Paul for this tradition.[187] Francis Watson's suggestion that the phrase "I received from the Lord" (1 Cor 11:2) indicated that the source of this tradition was not the Jerusalem church but originated from a revelation from the risen Lord to Paul deserves a second look based on recent research on divination in the ancient world.[188] When scholarship is freed of the form-critical fetters placed on the imagination, the relationship between Paul and the earliest Jesus tradition can move beyond appeals to a shared preMarkan passion narrative and re-examine the relationship between Paul and the emergence of Jesus traditions.

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[185] See the essays in *Paul and Mark: Comparative Essays Part 1: Two Authors at the Beginnings of Christianity* and *Paul and Mark: Comparative Essays Part 2: For and Against Pauline Influence on Mark*; Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Emergence of Christian Textuality: Early Christian Literary Culture in Context*, WUNT 393 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017).

[186] Thomas P. Nelligan, *The Quest for Mark's Sources: An Exploration of the Case for Mark's Use of First Corinthians* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2015), 26–31.

[187] Nelligan, *Quest for Mark's Sources*, 131–38.

[188] Francis Watson, "'I Received from the Lord…': Paul, Jesus, and the Last Supper," in *Jesus and Paul Reconnected: Fresh Pathways into an Old Debate*, ed. Todd D. Still (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 103–24; Jennifer Eyl, *Signs, Wonders, & Gifts: Divination in the Letters of Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

4. Conclusion: The Impossibility of Markan Redaction Criticism

The "Golden Age" of the quest for the preMarkan passion narrative ended with the question of reconstructing the history, text, and transmission of the preMarkan passion narrative with no definitive answers. The era that began with so much promise of identifying authentic Jesus traditions using the criteria of authenticity and the hope of ascertaining a Markan redactional history found itself at a dead end. Ulrich Luz observed that Markan research was at a dead end (*Sackgasse*) and noted growing skepticism with tradition-historical reconstructions of preMarkan Jesus tradition.[189] Dohanue critiqued redaction critics' tendency to identify Markan vocabulary or theology within a pericope that when subtracted revealed preMarkan tradition. In his view, "This produced at times seemingly absurd hypotheses in which a relatively short section, such as the passion narrative, was broken down into layers of tradition, consisting often of verses or half verses."[190] Perhaps the strongest critique of Markan redaction criticism came from C. Clifton Black, which is worth quoting in full:

> Select any redaction-critical study of Mark, or any critical exercise in the refinement of that method's application to the Second Gospel, and notice the pattern that emerges: in order to discern the earliest Evangelist's redactional (=authorial) activity, every investigator is compelled to engage in often highly speculative conjectures about the history of traditions *behind* the Evangelist, assumptions unamenable to empirical analysis yet invariably determinative of that researcher's exegetical or methodological results.[191]

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[189] Ulrich Luz, "Markusforschung in der Sackgasse?" *ThLz* 9 (1980): 641–56.

[190] John R. Donahue, "Redaction Criticism: Has the *Hauptstrasse* Become a *Sackgasse?"* in *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament,* JSNTSup 109, ed. Elizabeth Struthers Malbon and Edgar V. McKnight (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 27–57, here 40.

[191] C. Clifton Black, "The Quest of Mark the Redactor: Why Has It Been Pursued, and What Has It Taught Us?" *JSNT* 33:19–39, here 30.

Black's criticism of Markan redaction criticism perfectly describes the attempts to reconstruct the preMarkan passion narrative throughout this chapter. Over and over again scholars reconstructed their version of a preMarkan passion narrative and then applied this hypothetical construction to questions about the beliefs of the earliest Christians, the theology of Mark, the relationship between John and Mark or Mark and Paul, and even used their reconstructions to posit ancient genres.

Scholars have still not reckoned fully with the failures of Markan redaction criticism. Its reliance on a form-critical conception of Jesus tradition as individual units of tradition limits its usefulness because of the constraints this conception places on the Markan scholar's imagination. The redactional-critical model of authorship and its reliance on an inadequate distinction between tradition and redaction have proven untenable. Recent research has questioned whether the author of Mark was simply a transmitter of early Jesus traditions and instead postulated that the Evangelist was literate and composed his Gospel within the conventions of ancient biography. Additionally, the assumption that Mark would have handled Jesus traditions in a manner similar to the way in which Matthew and Luke used his Gospel does not reflect what we know about ancient literary relationships. As Catrin Williams has shown, Matthew and Luke are the outliers. Should we not expect Mark to reshape and retell Jesus traditions to suit his own theological and narrative purposes? Despite the failures of the "Golden Age" of the quest for the preMarkan passion narrative, the quest continued, though as the next chapter will show with much fewer hypothetical reconstructions. Form criticism's most "assured result" proved to outlast form criticism, as the hypothesis of a preMarkan passion narrative remained useful for NT scholars.

5. Challenges to the Form-Critical Consensus

"How many hypotheses about sources and interpolations have been advanced, only to disappear in the blink of an eye!"[1]

This chapter traces these challenges to the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis that arose from traditional form-critical studies and from the application of new methods in orality and redaction-critical studies to the study of the Markan passion narrative. Challenges to form criticism and its most assured result, the preMarkan passion narrative, arose from developments in the field of biblical scholarship. These developments in the areas of orality, literacy, tradition, textuality, and narrative studies questioned all form-critical assumptions about the nature of Jesus tradition. The application of these findings would lead scholars to question the need for a preMarkan passion narrative.

Although form criticism dominated the discipline of NT research since the 1920s, there were notable challenges to the form-critical hegemony. While acknowledging form criticism had achieved "fundamental victory" in historical Jesus research, Erhardt Gütgemanns argued that if form criticism is to continue as a methodologically sound tool, it must face modern linguistics and its challenges to form criticism's conception of the Gospel form, its connection between the Gospel form and Christology, and the method's sociological assumptions about the *Sitz im Leben* and the development of forms.[2] In

[1] Schmidt, *Place*, 78.

[2] Erhardt Gütgemanns, *Offene Fragen zur Formgeschcihte des Evangeliums: Eine methodlogische Skizze der Grundproblematik der Form- und Redaktionsgeschichte*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Kaiser Verlag, 1971);

Britain, Morna Hooker found value in form criticism's ability to shed light on literary issues in the Gospels, but questioned form criticism's ability to assess the historical value of the Jesus tradition.[3] American scholar E. P. Sanders meticulously assessed the form-critical "laws" of oral transmission and discovered that instead of becoming more specific and detailed, the Jesus tradition actually developed in the opposite direction.[4] In contrast to the form-critical view that the Jesus tradition was transmitted anonymously, the Swedish NT scholar Birger Gerhardsson proposed that Jesus and his earliest followers intentionally and accurately transmitted the Jesus tradition to ensure the reliability of the tradition.[5] As the cracks began to emerge in the foundation of the form-critical method, scholars also began to question its most "assured result", the preMarkan passion narrative. As the following sections show, the existence of a preMarkan passion narrative was questioned by those who accepted and utilized the form-critical method, such as Eta Linnemann, and those who rejected it, such as Werner Kelber. While there was no agreement on methods or specifics, the work of the scholars assessed below all challenged the form-critical conception of a preMarkan passion narrative.

ET: *Candid Questions Concerning Gospel Form Criticism: A Methodological Sketch of the Fundamental Problematics of Form and Redaction Criticism,* trans. William G. Doty, PTMS 26 (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1979), 15–25.

[3] Morna Hooker, "Christology and Methodology," *NTS* 17 (1970): 480–87; idem., "On Using the Wrong Tool," *Theology* 75 (1972): 570–81.

[4] E. P. Sanders, *The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition,* SNTSMS 9 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

[5] Birger Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Lund: Gleerup, 1961).

1. *Challenges from Within Form Criticism*

It is hard to understate the hegemony form criticism held within Gospel scholarship in the twentieth century. As previous chapters established, the existence of a preMarkan passion narrative was wide-spread and held by both English and German scholars and by both theologically conservative and theologically unaffiliated scholars. It is surprising that two form-critical scholars, Georg Bertram and Eta Linnemann, argued against form criticism's most assured result. This section traces their critique of this form-critical result and their attempts to understand the passion narrative in a manner similar to the rest of the Jesus tradition.

1.1 Georg Bertram (1896–1979)

The first wave of NT form-critical studies affirmed the existence of a preMarkan passion narrative that was an exception to the rule of Jesus tradition transmitted as individual units. However, there was one early challenger to this form-critical consensus—Georg Bertram. In his form-critical account of the development of the passion narrative, Bertram departed from the emerging consensus of Bultmann, Dibelius, and Schmidt and maintained that the passion narrative originated and was transmitted as the rest of the Jesus tradition, as individual units. Instead of postulating a hypothetical narrative source, Bertram focused attention to the *Sitze im Leben* of the units of tradition, with particular attention to the ways they were used in the Christ-cult. Bertram's work is the earliest attempt to push back against the emerging consensus that there was such an entity as a preMarkan passion narrative. Decades later, Schille attempted a similar

reconstruction of the passion tradition, though form criticism's most "assured result" would not be seriously challenged until the late 1960s.[6]

1.1.1 Form-Critical Approach

Although Bertram used the term form criticism (*Formgeschichte*) in the title of his work on the passion narrative, it is better described as a work of cult criticism or cult history (*Kultgeschichte*).[7] It contained no account of the ways the Jesus tradition circulated as individual units, separated from an over-arching framework and no discussion of the relationship between literary form and life setting. These matters were assumed and Bertram offered little methodological reflection on isolating individual units of the passion narrative for an analysis of the ways that the Jesus tradition developed from its origins in oral tradition to the writing of the Gospels. Fascher observed that this aspect of Bertram's method allowed it to be considered form-critical and provided the substructure (*Unterbau*) of everything else Bertram sought to accomplish.[8]

Instead, Bertram aimed to show that "the Jesus tradition was shaped by the needs of the believing community, which we call cultic."[9] For Bertram, cult was neither an organized liturgy nor an institution, but "an inner relationship of the believer to their cult hero."[10] This inner relationship to the cult-hero, which appears irrational and

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[6] Gottfried Schille, "Das Leiden des Herrn."

[7] Fascher, *Die formgeschichtliche Methode*, 171.

[8] Fascher, *Die formgeschichtliche Methode*, 173.

[9] Bertram, *Die Leidensgeschichte Jesu und der Christuskult:Eine formgeschichtliche Untersuchung*, FRLANT 32 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1922), 7, my translation.

[10] Bertram, *Leidensgeschichte*, 5, my translation.

incomprehensible, may be known, not from a historical-critical reading of the Gospels, but from a *kultgeschichtliche* reading focused on how the earliest Christians understood the events of Jesus' life.[11] Bertram did not clarify the relationship between cultic worship and the inner relationship with Christ, and this ambiguity allowed him to take the concept wherever he wanted, which will be clear below.

Bertram was not interested in reconstructing the final days of the historical Jesus. Instead, the aim of historical investigation of the Gospels was to recount the views of the earliest community:

> Jesus' sufferings, and his life in general, first became clear and understandable in the light of the morning of resurrection, from the experience of the risen, the living, the exalted. And so this consideration of Jesus' suffering is the only genuinely historical one.[12]

In contrast to Dibelius, or even Bultmann, Bertram held a radical view of the history of early Christianity.[13] The Jesus tradition did not contain a kernel of historical data that was hidden underneath layers of tradition but originated from early Christians' religious experiences. Thus, Bertram's reconstruction of the preMarkan passion tradition was not interested in a unified narrative that revealed historical details of the events surrounding Jesus' death but focused on how each unit of tradition functioned within the worship of the community.

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[11] Bertram, *Leidensgeschichte*, 8; idem., *Neue Testament und historische Methode*, Sammelung Gemeinverständlicher Vortäge 132 (Tübingen: L. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1928), 20.

[12] Bertram, *Leidensgeschichte*, 6, my translation.

[13] Taylor, *Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, 16, described Bertram in the same terms as Bultmann: "radical to the extreme." However, Bertram was more "radical" than Bultmann and found little of historical value in Mark 14–16.

3.2 The Passion Tradition and Christ Cult

While Bultmann, Dibelius, and Schmidt viewed the narrative structure of Mark 14–16 as evidence of an early and coherent narrative, Bertram concluded that the references to time were present to meet the cultic needs of the church. Rather than propose a *Sitz im Leben* such as preaching or apologetics, Bertram situated the tradition within the cultic life of the church. This extended quote reveals the differences between Bertram and Bultmann, Dibelius, and Schmidt:

> Thus, we do not want to burden our investigation with an absurd historical problem, but rather limit ourselves to the literary question of what extent the passion narrative is a cult narrative, i. e. to what extent its character may be explained by its origin within the worshipping community. It is not enough to prove individual cultic motifs or specific cult legends within the tradition, but it is imperative to demonstrate that the entire inner logic, the way of thinking in all these individual narratives, in contrast to any historical or tendentious or literary consideration, that the cult narrative is sacred history. For this reason alone, it is not important to differentiate between the individual functions of community life—missionary, dogmatic, apologetic, etc. They did not arise arbitrarily, but of necessity sprang from the soil of the Christ community, as of every other cultic community.[14]

The differences are significant and help to make sense of why Bertram has not been remembered in histories of form criticism—he did not have much in common methodologically with the other form critics. Bertram was not interested in distinguishing functions within the life of the community, contra Dibelius, who situated the passion narrative within early Christian missionary efforts. And he was not interested in pursuing historical questions or sifting authentic tradition from the Gospels. Instead, he was solely concerned to place the development of the passion narrative within the cult.

[14] Bertram, *Leidensgeschichte*, 8, my translation.

The ambiguous way in which Bertram defined the cult and situated the tradition within the cultic life of the early church is revealed through his analysis of individual traditions. Instead of demonstrating the relationship between the tradition and its cultic function, Bertram simply declared such a relationship existed. Several brief examples will suffice. Judas' motives for betraying Jesus (Mark 14:10–11) cannot be known historically and, while Bertram considered greed and avarice possibilities, ultimately the devil was responsible for Jesus' fate.[15] This tradition lacks a purely historical interest and therefore originated in cultish motives.[16] The events at Gethsemane (Mark 14:32–42) can, according to Bertram, only be understood from the spirit of the ancient cultic narrator (*dem Geist des antiken kultischen Erzählers*).[17] The Gethsemane tradition reveals, not the Jesus of history, but the Jesus of the cult who is here revealed as the Son of God. In a footnote in *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, Bultmann rightly observed that Bertram "has a too imprecise concept of cult, and fails to distinguish the different motifs adequately."[18] Similarly, Fascher critiqued Bertram for a lack of clarity about his concept of cult and the ways in which he subsumed the tradition within a single motif.[19] In the history of scholarship, Bertram's views on the development of the passion tradition as individual units and its cultic origins failed to persuade and the works of Bultmann,

[15] Bertram, *Leidensgeschichte*, 20.

[16] Bertram, *Leidensgeschichte*, 21: "Das rein historische Interesse fehlt, und alles, was überliefert ist, wird dem Bedürfnis des Kultes gemäß gefaltet."

[17] Bertram, *Leidensgeschichte*, 43.

[18] Bultmann, *History*, 280.

[19] Fascher, *Die formgeschichtliche Methode*, 179–80.

Dibelius, and Schmidt became the standard form-critical understanding of the preMarkan passion narrative.

1.2 Eta Linnemann (1926–2009)

In 1970 Linnemann completed her *Habilitationsschrift* with Bultmann and Fuchs at Marburg on the passion narrative in Mark and argued against the form-critical consensus that the Markan passion narrative was not unique, and was composed by Mark from individual units of tradition.[20] Instead, Linnemann set herself to discerning the tradition history of individual pericopae from the Markan passion narrative and understanding how the evangelist put them together to write the first passion narrative. Her willingness to go against the scholarly grain was taken to the extreme in 1978 when she abandoned her historical-critical research, converted to evangelicalism, and became a missionary to Indonesia.[21] Although after her conversion Linnemann suggested her study of the passion be thrown in the trash with the rest of her historical-critical work, the study remains one of the strongest critiques of the form-critical assumption of a coherent

[20] Eta Linnemann, *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte*.

[21] Eta Linnemann, *Wissenschaft oder Meinung? Anfagen und Alternativen* (Hänssler: Nümberg, 1986); ET: *Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology*, trans. Robert W. Yarbrough (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990); idem., *Bibel oder Bibelkritik? Was ist glaubwürdig*?, 2nd ed. (VTR: Nümberg, 2012); idem., *Original oder Fälsching: historish-kritische Theologie im Lichte der Bibel* (Bielefeld: Christliche Literatur-Verbreitung, 1999. Cf., Robert W. Yarbrough, "Eta Linnemann: Friend or Foe of Scholarship," TMSJ 8.2 (1997): 163–89.

narrative text known as the preMarkan passion narrative.[22] In many ways, Linnemann proved to be more thoroughly form-critical than the original form critics.[23]

1.1.1 Against the Form-Critical Consensus

Linnemann adopted a form-critical approach to Mark 14–16 and argued, against the consensus, that a reconstruction that credited the evangelist as the composer of the passion narrative out of individual units of tradition provided advances in the understanding of Markan redaction and theology.[24] In defiance of the form-critical consensus that a unified, coherent, and connected narrative existed from an early stage, Linnemann declared, "[The passion narrative] is composed from beginning to end of individual traditions."[25] In a section titled, "Was there a preMarkan passion narrative?" Linnemann subjected previous preMarkan passion narrative hypotheses to sustained critique. Bultmann's theory of an old passion report was assumed, not proven.[26] Dibelius's and Schmidt's arguments for the preMarkan passion narrative were taken apart one piece at a time, with Linnemann declaring that narrative unity does not imply a

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[22] Linnemann, *Historical Criticism of the Bible*, 20, "I regard everything that I taught and wrote before I entrusted my life to Jesus as refuse. I wish to use this opportunity to mention that I have pitched my two books *Gleichnisse Jesu* … and *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte*, along with my contributions to journals, anthologies and *Festschriften*. Whatever of these writings I had in my possession I threw into the trash with my own hands in 1978. I ask you sincerely to do the same thing with any of them you may have on your own bookshelf."

[23] John Donahue, "Introduction: From Passion Traditions to Passion Narrative," in *The Passion in Mark: Studies on Mark 14–16*, ed. Werner H. Kelber (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 1–20, here 10, observed that Linnemann was the first to reject the hypothesis of a preMarkan passion narrative on the basis of a form-critical analysis. Donahue did not mention Bertram's 1921 form-critical study.

[24] Linnemann, *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte*, 9–10.

[25] Linnemann, *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte*, 54, my translation.

[26] Linnemann, *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte*, 56.

preMarkan source (an argument that Kelber later advanced), that Dibelius did not prove why the sermon necessitated such a text, and that Schmidt's statements on the unique identifications of time and place in the passion narrative were not, in fact, unique in the Gospel.[27] Similarly, Linnemann dismissed Jeremias's argument that the similarities between the Markan and Johannine passion narratives imply an old narrative tradition was found wanting, as there are other alternative explanations available.[28] The liturgical *Sitz im Leben* proposed by Schille and Trocmé was found to be wholly inadequate and implausible.[29] Finally, Taylor's argument from the identification of Semitisms and good Greek were not adequate criteria to establish sources.[30] Linnemann concluded,

> The assumption of coherence in the preMarkan passion narrative was ultimately not imposed through the results of textual observation but was the presupposition through which the texts were approached.[31]

Linnemann attempted to approach the Markan text without the assumption of a preMarkan passion narrative and apply the same rigorous form-critical analysis to the individual units of the Markan passion narrative as form-critical scholars applied to Mark 1–13.

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[27] Linnemann, *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte*, 56–60. For Kelber, see below.

[28] Linnemann, *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte*, 61–62.

[29] Linnemann, *Studien zur Passionageschichte*, 65, 67–68.

[30] Linnemann, *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte*, 66.

[31] Linnemann, *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte*, 173, my translation.

1.1.2 The Independent PreMarkan Passion Traditions

After weighing the arguments of previous scholarship and finding them inadequate, Linnemann sought to demonstrate that "the passion narrative was a work of Mark and was formed by him from individual traditions."[32] Although there was no early, coherent passion narrative, Linnemann did identify preMarkan traditions behind the individual units of the passion narrative. Linnemann attempted to demonstrate her thesis that the evangelist was responsible for the composition of the Markan passion narrative through studies on the tradition history of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32–42), the arrest of Jesus (Mark 14:43–53), Peter's denial (Mark 14:54, 66–72), the trial before the Sanhedrin (Mark 14:55–64), and the crucifixion report (Mark 15:21–39).

The primary criterion Linnemann used to distinguish between preMarkan tradition and Markan redaction was style and theological analysis. Simplicity, in both narrative and theology, pointed to preMarkan compositions, while complexity signified later development and Markan redaction. For each of the individual units of tradition listed above, Linnemann used these criteria to sketch their preMarkan development and the evangelist's incorporation of them into the Gospel.[33] Thus, Linnemann rejected Kähler's dictum that Mark was a passion narrative with an extended introduction and maintained that it must be read within the entirety of the Gospel:

> The whole Gospel is Mark's design. He did not merely extend the passion narrative backwards by adding other material. The Gospel, along with its passion

[32] Linnemann, *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte*, 68, my translation. Later, p. 173, my translation: "We conclude that Mark composed the passion narrative from individual pericopae, not unlike the rest of the Gospel."

[33] Linnemann, *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte,* 178–82, provided detailed reconstructions of each tradition.

> narrative is a single cast—a tremendous compositional and theological achievement.[34]

The form-critical conception of the evangelists as simply collectors of tradition was rejected by Linnemann in favor of a view that credits Mark as an author who composed the Gospel from individual units in order to present Jesus as the crucified Son of God.[35]

Linnemann's dismantling of the form-critical consensus of a preMarkan passion narrative received early favorable English reviews.[36] All three of Johnson, Readron, and Perrin were convinced by her deconstruction of the arguments for an early, connected preMarkan passion narrative. However, her arguments failed to alter the landscape of NT studies, where the existence of a preMarkan passion narrative remained the consensus for several more decades.

2. ***Challenges from Orality Studies***

Developments is orality studies in the mid-twentieth century challenged all aspects of the form-critical conception of Jesus tradition. These developments took place in Scandinavian, American, and European scholarship and a few biblical scholars readily accepted these new insights and applied them to the Gospels. The systematic undoing of form criticism took place of decades, with many scholars unwilling to accept the changes taking place to the assured results of a generation of scholarship. The challenge from

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[34] Linnemann, Studien zur Passionsgeschichte, 175, my translation.

[35] Linnemann, Studien zur Passionsgeschichte, 175.

[36] Benjamin A. Johnson, review of *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte*, by Eta Linnemann, *JBL* 90.4 (1971): 496–97; Patrick Henry Reardon, review of *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte*, by Eta Linnemann, *ICBQ* 34.1 (1972): 86–87; Norman Perrin, review of *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte* by Eta Linnemann, *Bib* 55.1 (1974): 132–34.

orality studies has proved to be too overwhelming for form criticism, as recent scholarship has adopted these findings and moved away from a form-critical conception of Jesus tradition.

2.1 Rabbinic Judaism as Model for Oral Jesus Traditions

Harald Riesenfeld (1913–2008) observed that the Greek terms (παραλαμβάνω and παραδίδομι) used for transmission of tradition were the same in both the NT authors and rabbinic literature.[37] For Riesenfeld, the transmission of the pre-literary Jesus tradition was not flexible, as the form critics conceived it, rather, in comparison to the rabbinic traditions, was a "rigidly controlled" passing of the tradition through memorization. Furthermore, Riesenfeld argued against the form critics' assumption that communities controlled the transmission of Jesus tradition and instead proposed that qualified individuals, such as the Twelve, Paul, and eyewitnesses of Jesus' ministry, were tasked with preserving and handing on these traditions.[38]

These observations were expanded by his student, Birger Gerhardsson (1926–2013), through an examination of rabbinic tradition, which he believed to be the most comparable to the Jesus tradition.[39] Although he was criticized for anachronism, Gerhardsson understood that the rabbinic literature was later, and he did not suggest the

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[37] Harald Riesenfeld, "The Gospel Tradition and Its Beginning," in *The Gospel Tradition*, ed. W. D. Davies (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970), 1–26, here 16.

[38] Harald Riesenfeld, *The Gospel Transmission and Its Beginnings: A Study in the Limits of 'Formgeschichte'* (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1957), 19–20.

[39] Birger Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Lund: Gleerup, 1961); idem., *Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity* (Lund: Gleerup, 1964); idem., *The Origins of the Gospel Traditions* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979).

transmission of Jesus tradition was modelled on the rabbinic. Rather, it was the closest in time, religion, and culture to the Jesus tradition. In Gerhardsson's reconstruction, the rabbis committed large amounts of tradition to memory, including the oral Torah, and then later learning methods of interpretation.[40] Occasionally writing was used to aid in memorization, but memorization came through rote repetition and the use of oral aids, such as singing or chanting and catchwords.[41]

In Gerhardsson's rabbinic model, teachers would present their material in memorable ways so their students could easily memorize it. For Gerhardsson, the Gospels present Jesus as a teacher and, following the practices of good teachers in an oral environment, he would have made his teachings memorable to his disciples and repeated it until they committed it to their memory.[42] After Jesus' death, the Twelve operated as the controlling force of the Jesus tradition, ensuring it was faithfully and carefully preserved and passed on.[43]

Gerhardsson's work received early criticism, especially from traditional form critics whose method he sought to replace. The two chief criticisms of his rabbinic model were the anachronistic nature of the comparison between rabbinic Judaism and the early Jesus tradition and the lack of any evidence that Jesus and his disciples transmitted tradition in the ways Gerhardsson proposed.[44] While Gerhardsson's model did not replace

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[40] Gerhardsson, *Memory*, 158.

[41] Gerhardsson, *Memory*, 148–70

[42] Gerhardsson, *Memory*, 326–28; idem., *Reliability*, 42.

[43] Gerhardsson, *Memory*, 324–25.

[44] For critiques of Gerhardsson's rabbinic model, Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, "Note: *Memory and Manuscript: The Origins and Transmission of the Gospel Tradition*," *TS* 23 (1962): 442–57; Morton Smith, "A Comparison of Early Christian and Early Rabbinic Tradition," *JBL* 82 (1963): 169–76; Jacob Neusner,

form criticism as the dominant model of Jesus tradition, it was an important alternative that exposed flaws within the form-critical paradigm.[45] Gerhardsson did not address the concept of a preMarkan passion narrative directly, but his rabbinic model undermined several presuppositions that were foundational for the hypothesis. Notably, Gerhardsasson problematized the thesis that the Jesus tradition originated in the preaching of the early church.[46] Gerhardsson acknowledged that preaching may be a scenario was used, he distinguished use of the Jesus tradition from its transmission.[47] The form-critical idea that preaching required a connected narrative and this narrativized Jesus tradition arose and was transmitted through the sermon must be reconsidered in light of Gerhardsson's work. One does not have to accept his thesis that the Twelve controlled the tradition from Jerusalem to acknowledge that the form critics did not provide a historically comparable model of oral tradition and many their fundamental assumptions do not hold up to critical scrutiny.

"In Quest of the Historical Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai," *HTR* 59 (1966): 391–413; R. P. C. Hanson, *Tradition in the Early Church* (London: SCM Press, 1962), 10–17; W. D. Davies, "Reflections on a Scandinavian Approach to the 'Gospel Tradition,'" in *Neotestamentica et Patristica: Freundesgabe Oscar* Cullmann, ed. W. C. van Unnik, NovTSup 6 (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 14–34; Gütgemanns, *Candid Questions*, 213–14.

[45] Werner H. Kelber, "Conclusion: The Work of Birger Gerhardsson in Perspective," in *Jesus and Memory: Traditions in Oral and Scribal Perspectives*, eds. Werner H. Kelber and Samuel Bryskog (Waco: Baylor, 2009), 173–206, here 174–78; Tuomas Havukainen, "Birger Gerhardsson on the Transmissions of Jesus Traditions—How Did the Rabbinic Model Advance a Scholarly Discourse?" *Iesus Aboensis: Åbo Akademi Journal for Historical Jesus Research* 1 (2015): 49–63.

[46] Gerhardsson, *Memory*, 324.

[47] Gerhardsson, *Memory*, 41.

2.2 E. P Sanders and the Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition

E. P. Sanders (1937–2022) wrote on the Synoptic tradition after Gerhardsson and even situated his work in relation to Gerhardsson's rabbinic model.[48] While Gerhardsson stressed the rigidity of the Jesus tradition, Sanders examined the ways the Jesus tradition changed after the textualization of the Synoptic Gospels. Although Sanders focused on textual changes to the Jesus tradition, his work did have implications for the oral tradition and undermined several of form criticism's laws of transmission. Sanders observed that the form critics did not derive their laws of transmission from a systematic treatment of all available evidence; rather, they simply used examples of changes which led to an oversimplification of these laws of transmission.[49] Through a comprehensive examination of Synoptic and post-canonical works, Sanders examined the evidence for the tendencies of increasing length, diminishing Semitisms, and increasing detail.

The tendency of diminishing Semitisms was particularly important for identification and reconstruction of the preMarkan passion narrative. For Taylor, the presence of Semitisms in the passion narrative were indications of an early passion narrative. Through his analysis on the Synoptic Gospels, Sanders concluded that the presence of Semitisms is not sufficient to determine an early date, and for some historical reliability, for the Jesus tradition.[50] Sanders stated that the use of Semitisms to attribute tradition to either the historical Jesus or to the early Palestinian church were "clearly

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[48] E. P. Sanders, *The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition*, SNTSMS 9 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 26–28.

[49] Sanders, *Tendencies*, 24–25.

[50] Sanders, *Tendencies*, 190–255, esp. 249–55.

misguided."[51] The same may be said regarding the use of Semitisms to identify preMarkan sources.

2.3 Orality Studies

Outside biblical scholarship, scholars of orality and oral cultures observed the "textualist bias" of scholarship that subsumes and evaluates everything under a "literary-textual model."[52] Under this model, the textualization is the natural culmination of oral tradition, an idea that guided form criticism. The pioneering work of Albert Lord, Walter Ong, and Milman Parry in the field of oral studies revealed form criticism's inadequate conception of the oral Jesus tradition but until recently few biblical scholars accounted for these findings in their examination and reconstruction of Jesus tradition.

Albert Lord continued Milman Parry's work through an examination of the oral tradition behind Homeric and medieval epics and developed his theory of oral performance and composition.[53] Lord concluded that the performers who travelled and recited these epic poems never told the same epic poem twice—each performance was unique.[54] Lord concluded, "The picture that emerges is not really one of conflict between preserver of tradition and creative artist; it is rather one of the preservation of tradition by

[51] Sanders, *Tendencies*, 232.

[52] John Miles Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 87; Milman Perry, *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Perry*, ed. Adam Parry (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[53] Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 3rd ed., ed. David F. Elmer, Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019).

[54] Lord, *Singer*, 25.

the constant re-creation of it."[55] This aspect of oral tradition undermined the idea that pure forms of tradition could be recovered behind the Gospels, one of form criticism's central aims. Additionally, according to Lord's theory of oral tradition, there was not a singular tradition attainable behind the Gospels, but varying performances of the Jesus traditions.

Walter Ong continued this emphasis on oral tradition, focusing his research on the differences between orality and textuality and the shifts that take place as cultures shift from an oral culture to a textual culture.[56] Ong distinguished primary orality, a culture untouched by print or writing, from secondary orality, a culture in which orality is sustained through new technologies.[57] Oral memory's flexibility and its use of formulaic elements distinguished it from textual memory. Ong wrote several articles applying his theory of orality to the biblical text.[58] In these essays, Ong connected death with textuality, an idea that was adopted and applied to the Gospel of Mark by Werner Kelber.[59] Ong's work overturned every aspect of form criticism, as Kelber has confirmed.[60] As Kelber summarized, Ong's work has problematized the concept of form

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[55] Lord, *Singer*, 29.

[56] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, 30th Anniversary ed., with additional Chapters by John Hartley (New York: Routledge, 2002).

[57] Ong, *Orality*, 11.

[58] Walter J. Ong, "Marthana: Death and Life in the Text of the Book," in *Interfaces of the World: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 230–71; idem., "Text as Interpretation: Mark and After," in *Supplementary Studies*, vol. 2 of *Faith and Contexts*, eds. Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 147–69.

[59] See below.

[60] Werner H. Kelber, "The Work of Walter J. Ong and Biblical Scholarship," in *Imprints, Voiceprints, and Footprints of Memory:Collected Essays of Werner H. Kelber* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 441–64, here 454–63.

and replaced it with performance; it overturned the idea of a singular original Jesus tradition and replaced it with "plural originals"; it has shown that oral units of tradition are not detachable from a literary composition; form criticism's downplaying of the distinction between orality and textuality was invalid; form criticism did not account for the interplay of oral and scribal tradition; and, in an environment of oral and scribal interplay, form criticism's evolutionary model is undone.[61]

Kelber's Gospel scholarship has continued to adopt, explore, and further these conceptions of oral tradition and textuality to the Gospels and his work will be examined below. Other scholars have embraced this paradigm and applied to the Jesus tradition and to the Gospels. Notably, for the question of the preMarkan passion narrative, Thomas Boomershine has offered a performance-critical commentary on the passion narrative that highlighted the "distinctive sounds" that were significant for the meaning of the passion narrative.[62] Boomershine argued that performance of the Markan passion narrative in the wake of the Judean-Roman War (66–70 CE) presented Jesus as a Messiah of peace during violent struggles against Rome.[63] Boomershine, however, did not deal with the question of a preMarkan passion narrative or justify why he separated the Markan passion narrative from the remainder of the Gospel in his view of performance.

The orality studies of Lord, Parry, and Ong had significant implications for form-critical scholarship as their findings overturned the entire form-critical paradigm.

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[61] Kelber, "Work," 454–63.

[62] Thomes E. Boomershine, *The Messiah of Peace: A Performance-Criticism Commentary on Mark's Passion Narrative,* Biblical Performance Criticism 12 (Eugene: Cascade, 2015), xii.

[63] Boomershine, *Messiah*, 363–67.

However, Gospel scholars were not quick to abandon form criticism and the results of decades of research. However, Kelber applied these insights to the Gospel and to the idea of a preMarkan passion narrative as he attempted to reimagine the origins of the Gospel.

2.3.1 Werner H. Kelber (b. 1935)

The most thorough critique of form criticism and the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis came in the writings of Kelber. In contrast to Linnemann, who remained within the form-critical paradigm, Kelber rejected the hypothesis of a preMarkan passion narrative based on his rejection of the form-critical method *in toto*. The influence of orality studies by Ong, Parry, Lord, and others led Kelber to dismiss almost every aspect of form criticism in favor of what he called an "orality-scribality-memory-performance criticism."[64] After reviewing recent scholarly attempts to reconstruct a preMarkan passion narrative, Kelber observed:

> What the search for the pre-Markan passion narrative demonstrates is a substantial lack of agreement as to scope and nature, genre and setting of the passion tradition. Without exaggeration, the stylistic, literary-critical decomposition of the passion text has led to a vast divergence of opinions on almost every single verse. If the scholarship of the past half century teaches us anything, it is that the extraordinarily dense textuality of the Markan passion narrative does not lend itself well to decompositioning.[65]

For Kelber, these "increasingly contradictory" form-critical attempts to reconstruct the preMarkan passion narrative failed to address fundamental linguistic concerns, in particular the relationship between oral tradition and life and the relationship between

[64] Kelber, "Work," 463.

[65] Werner H. Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 189.

textuality and death.[66] Kelber's arguments on the correlation between textuality and death have been rightly criticized, as discussed below, but his thorough critique of the form-critical conception of Jesus tradition has influenced scholars whose work rethinks the results of decades of form-critical research.

In Kelber's understanding of orality and textuality, the oral medium was not conducive for dealing with the death of Jesus, the loss of the temple, or the demise of the disciples. Kelber contrasted the oral medium of Q with the textualized Gospel of Mark. While Kelber rejected the reconstruction of most preMarkan sources, he observed that Q, the lone source that "can be reconstructed with a degree of certainty," did not mention the death of Jesus, but instead presented Jesus as more than a prophet and the oral medium allowed the authority of Jesus to remain present in the community.[67]

> A tradition that focuses on the continuation of Jesus' words cannot simultaneously bring to consciousness what put an end to his speaking. As long as Jesus is perceived as speaking in the present, there is no need, and hardly a possibility, of recapturing the story of his death.[68]

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[66] Kelber, *Oral and Written Gospel*, 188.

[67] Kelber, *Oral and Written Gospel*, 192, 201. Alan Kirk, "The Memory of Violence and the Death of Jesus in Q," in *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity,* ed. Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher, Semeia Studies 52 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 191–206, observed, contra Kelber, that the violence of the cross had a "rippling effect" across the memory of earliest Christianity, which influenced the traditions in Q. Kelber's assumption that Q can be reconstructed has been challenged by Ruben Zimmermann, "Memory and Form Criticism: The Typicality of Memory as a Bridge between Orality and Literacy in the Early Christian Remembering Process," in *The Interface of Orality and Writing: Speaking, Seeing, Writing in the Shaping of New* Genres, ed. Annette Weissenrieder and Robert B. Coote, WUNT 260 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 130–43, here 139; Cf. Dieter T. Roth, *The Parables in Q*, LNTS 582 (London: T & T Clark, 2018), 40–44.

[68] Kelber, *Oral and Written Gospel*, 201.

In this media environment, the textualization of the Gospel of Mark was a "counterform to an oral tradition fraught with gnosticizing proclivities."[69] In contrast to form-critical arguments that identified the pivotal break between the historical Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ and downplayed (or ignored) the transition from oral tradition to written Gospel, Kelber insisted that the decisive break in the Jesus tradition came when the oral Jesus tradition was textualized thus "transforming Jesus the speaker of kingdom parables into the parable of the kingdom of God."[70]

The most significant triumph of Mark's textualization of the Jesus tradition into a Gospel for Kelber was the creation of the passion narrative. In writing a Gospel, Mark subordinated the oral tradition to his literary creation, the passion narrative, so that the text could "overcome oral mentality."[71] The narrative coherence displayed in the passion narrative was an indication that it was a literary creation, the bulk of which was composed by the evangelist.[72] The evangelist built this narrative from other texts, namely the Jewish Scriptures: "The passion narrative is largely built on texts and texts recycled into the oral medium, that is, secondary orality."[73] As these scriptural texts were taken from their original context and used to build the passion narrative, Kelber saw no substantial difference between the way that Mark decontextualized and recontextualized the Jesus tradition and the Jewish Scriptures. Thus, for Kelber the passion narrative was a

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[69] Werner H.Kelber, "Apostolic Traditions and the Form of the Gospel," in *Imprints, Voiceprints, and Footprints of Memory*, 11–32, here 30.

[70] Kelber, *Oral and Written Gospel*, 220.

[71] Kelber, *Oral and Written Gospel*, 186.

[72] Kelber, *Oral and Written Gospel*, 196.

[73] Kelber, *Oral and Written Gospel*, 197.

Markan creation based on reflection on the Jewish Scriptures as the earliest Christians dealt with the loss of the Jerusalem temple and the devastation of the Jewish War.

Subsequent scholarship has shown Kelber's thesis to be deficient at multiple points.[74] However, his appraisal of the deficiencies of form criticism, notably their disregard for the difference between orality and textuality, the evolutionary view that oral Jesus tradition would naturally end in a written Gospel, and the problems with the idea of a pure form in a predominantly oral environment were welcome steps forward in scholarly understandings of the media environment of early Christianity. The form-critical conception of Jesus tradition must be updated, if not totally left behind, though not all scholars have been willing to move on from form criticism.

3. Challenges from Redaction Critics

One of the most repeated claims about the Markan passion narrative is that Mark 14–16 displays a level of narrative coherence not found in the previous thirteen chapters. As previous chapters detailed, Schmidt's observation that the topographical and chronological details present in the passion narrative were so different from the remainder of Jesus tradition that their presence suggested the existence of an early preMarkan passion narrative was accepted and repeated by almost every scholar writing on the topic. However, not all redaction critics accepted Schmidt's observation. The

[74] Larry Hurtado, "The Gospel of Mark: Evolutionary or Revolutionary Document?," *JSNT* 40 (1990): 15–32; idem., "Greco-Roman Textuality and the Gospel of Mark: A Critical Assessment of Werner Kelber's *The Oral and Written Gospel*," BBR 7 (1991): 91–106; John Halverson, "Oral and Written Gospel: A Critique of Werner Kelber," *NTS* 40 (1994): 180–95; Thomas E. Boomershine, "Peter's Denial as Polemic or Confession: The Implications of Media Criticism for Biblical Hermeneutics," *Semeia* 39 (1987): 47–68; Peter J. J. Botha, "The Task of Understanding the Gospel Traditions: Werner Kelber's Contribution to New Testament Research," *HTS* 46 (1990): 47–70.

edited volume *The Passion in Mark* was an attempt to demonstrate that a redaction-critical analysis of the Gospel revealed all major Markan themes culminated in the passion narrative.[75] As the volume questioned the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis, one of the assured results of previous scholarship, it was not well-received by some reviewers. Raymond Brown wrote that these essays "almost caused me to think that the Mark in my NT is a different work from the one they were interpreting."[76] Morna Hooker was more positive in her review, and although she found many of the essays unsatisfactory, the volume was important in highlighted the need to challenge form criticism's unexamined assumption of the existence of a preMarkan passion narrative.[77] The volume was dominated by John Donahue and Kelber, who both also wrote on the preMarkan passion narrative in other works. In this section, I will examine the contributions of Kelber and Donahue on the literary whole of Mark and their criticques of form criticism individually. For the remaining chapters, I will summarize and discuss their attempts to show Mark as a unity and observe where later scholarship has overturned some of their approaches to Mark.

[75] Werner H. Kelber, ed., *The Passion in Mark: Studies on Mark 14–16* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976).

[76] Raymond Brown, review of *The Passion in Mark: Studies on Mark 14–16*, ed. Werner H. Kelber, *CBQ* 39.2 (1977): 283–85, here 285. He concluded the review, "The competence and the reputation of the contributors demand a major debate, if I am not alone in my disagreement."

[77] Morna D. Hooker, review of *The Passion in Mark: Studies on Mark 14–16*, ed. Werner H. Kelber, *JTS* (1978): 195–96.

3.1 Kelber on Narrative Coherence and Narrative Competence

As the previous section observed, Kelber was influential in adopting and applying orality and literary studies in his approach to the Gospels. In addition to these approaches, Kelber championed the narrative and thematic unity of Mark throughout his writings. Whereas previous scholars identified the narrative unity of Mark 14–16 as a sign of an earlier source, Kelber viewed narrative unity as the sign of a competent author: "What the coherence, vividness, and realism of a story prove is first and foremost narrative competence."[78] The display of narrative competence did not come from the oral stage of tradition, but is evidence for Kelber that the author of Mark was responsible for constructing the passion narrative and these indications of narrative competence, including causal connections, logical connections, and the temporal framework, arise from Mark's hand, not from the earliest oral tradition or a preMarkan stage of development.

Kelber concluded that these claims call into question the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis: "The issue is not why Jesus' passion demanded an early preMkan connected narrative form, because it did not, but the issue is why Mk created the Gospel whole in its present form."[79] Kelber answered this question by situating the Gospel in its first-century context of the Jewish War and the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70

[78] Kelber, *Oral and Written Gospel*, 188.

[79] Werner H. Kelber, "Conclusion: From Passion Narrative to Gospel," in *The Passion in Mark*, 153–80, here 158.

CE.[80] The destruction of the temple and the experiences of suffering and loss led to the transmission of the Jesus tradition "from oral fluidity to textual stability."[81]

3.2 Donahue and the Trial before the Sanhedrin (Mark 14:53–65)

The previous chapter has already discussed Donahue's critique of both the existence of a preMarkan passion narrative and the aims of redaction criticism. Donahue argued the trial scene in its final form (Mark 14:53–65) was from Mark's hand.[82] Throughout his writings, Donahue stressed that Markan christology cannot be derived simply from verses, phrases, or vocabulary determined to be Markan redaction. Instead, Markan christology may be found in the ways that Mark weaves together various traditions into a coherent narrative in the entirety of the Gospel. For Donahue, the trial before the Sanhedrin brings together multiple themes present throughout Mark—discipleship, the contrast between Jesus and Peter, the opposition between Jesus and the temple, Jesus' ministry as the revelation of the kingdom of God, a royal christology, and the suffering Son of Man who is also the future exalted Son of Man.[83]

The temple saying (Mark 14:58) is especially important for Donahue's argument. Against previous scholars. Donahue argued that the expectation of a Messiah who would destroy the old temple and build a new one was a creation of modern scholarship.[84] The

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[80] Kelber, *Oral and Written Gospel*, 210–11; idem., *Mark's Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 13–14.

[81] Kelber, *Oral and Written Gospel*, 211.

[82] John R. Donahue, "Temple, Trial, and Royal Christology," in *The Passion in Mark*, 61–79.

[83] Donahue, "Temple," 78.

[84] Donahue, "Temple," 68.

temple saying was used by Mark to bring anti-temple and anti-Jerusalem themes to a climax. Earlier in the Gospel scribes from Jerusalem accused Jesus of being demon possessed (Mark 3:22). Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem debated ceremonial purity with Jesus (Mark 7:1–13). On the journey to Jerusalem Jesus faced opposition and suffering (Mark 8:27–10:52). Mark 13 predicted the destruction of the Jerusalem. Jesus declared the temple was no longer a place of worship (Mark 11:15–18). The withered fig tree was a symbol for the fruitlessness of the temple (Mark 11:13–14, 20–21). The Gospel records multiple instances of the temple leaders desire to kill Jesus (Mark 11:18; 12:12; 14:1). The temple saying brings these themes together to declare that Jesus' ministry is bringing about the end of the current temple and the beginning of a new temple (cf. the tear of the temple veil, Mark 15:38). Additionally, for Donahue, the temple emphasis addresses the community of Christ followers in the aftermath of the destruction of the temple in the Jewish War.[85] Donahue showed that although Markan sources may be identified, the Gospel is too coherent to be broken down into its component parts. Instead, the arguments for a preMarkan passion narrative are weakened through a demonstration of the thematic coherence of the entire Gospel that brings themes to a culmination in the closing chapters.

3.3 The Passion in Mark

The remaining chapters in *The Passion in Mark* were not as convincing as Kelber and Donahue's contributions. Vernon Robbins observed the links between the feeding

[85] Donahue, "Temple," 70.

stories (Mark 6:30–44; 8:1–10) and the Last Supper (Mark 14:12–25).[86] Robbins found links between these stories, but his conclusion that these stories were used to combat false messianic claimants who were trying to gain new followers through the performance of miracles and breaking of bread outran the available evidence. Perrin argued that "what matters is the *function* of the text concerned in the Gospel as a whole" in his chapter on Mark 14:61–62.[87] In Perrin's view, Mark 14:61–62 functioned as both the high point of Mark's christology and prepared the reader for the centurion's confession. In this way, the high priest's question interpreted the death and resurrection of Jesus as the Messiah and Son of Man and also anticipated his resurrection. Kim Dewey tackled Peter's denial of Jesus (Mark 14:53–54, 66–72) and attempted to place it within a larger trajectory of the reception of Peter in early Christianity.[88] In her reading, Peter became a negative model through his failures and stands in opposition to Jesus. Theodore Weeden's essay is dependent on Mark being written in opposition to a *theios anēr* christology and the evangelist's alterations to a preMarkan tradition.[89] Finally, John Dominic Crossan argued that there were no versions of the empty tomb tradition prior to the writing of Mark.[90] Crossan concluded that the tradition that Jesus was buried by his enemies (John 19:31–32) was older than the tradition that Jesus was buried by his friends

[86] Vernon K. Robbins, "Last Meal: Preparation, Betrayal, and Absence," in *The Passion in Mark*, 21–40.

[87] Norman Perrin, "The High Priest's Question and Jesus' Answer," in *The Passion in Mark*, 80–95, here 90.

[88] Kim E. Dewey, "Peter's Curse and Cursed Peter," in *The Passion in Mark*, 96–114.

[89] Theodore J. Weeden, Sr., "The Cross as Power in Weakness," in *The Passion in Mark*, 115–34.

[90] John Dominic Crossan, "Empty Tomb and Absent Lord," in *The Passion in Mark*, 135–52.

and followers. The friends and followers of Jesus did not know the burial site the Gospel of Mark offered an "anti-tradition" of the empty tomb.[91]

While the essays failed to convince in the particulars of their arguments, the overall effect of the volume is that the Gospel must be read and understood in its entirety. The Jesus tradition and Markan redaction are not opposed but must be taken together to provide a full account of Markan theology. The volume demonstrated that the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis could be questioned on multiple levels because the theology of Mark 14–16 coheres with the entirety of the Gospel.

4. *Conclusion*

This chapter explored challenges to the form-critical conception of Jesus tradition and, along with it, challenges to the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis. The challenges from within form criticism from Bertram and Linnemann problematized the distinction between individual units of Jesus tradition and a coherent passion narrative and argued for treating the origin and development of the passion narrative as all other Jesus traditions. This critique of the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis, however, retained the form-critical approach to Jesus tradition. Challenges to the form-critical paradigm from orality studies and redaction studies thoroughly showed that the form-critical conception of Jesus tradition was untenable.

The works of Gerhardson, Sanders, Lord, Parry, Ong, Kelber, and Donahue attacked the form-critical method from every possible angle. Gerhardson provided a

[91] Crossan, "Empty Tomb," 152.

Rabbinic model of transmission that was a close parallel in the ancient world. Sanders showed that many of the tendencies of form criticism's conception of Jesus tradition were incorrect. Studies on orality and textuality from Lord, Parry, and Ong overturned the form criticism's reconstruction of oral tradition. The evolutionary model of oral Jesus tradition culminating into literary texts was undone. The form-critical concept of a pure form of tradition was upended in favor of many varying instances and performances of tradition. In Kelber's work, these advances were turned toward the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis and revealed it to be no longer justifiable.

6. Challenges to the Form-Critical Consensus and Attempts to Revive the PreMarkan Passion Narrative Hypothesis

Despite the death blows dealt to the form-critical consensus from within form criticism, from orality studies, and from redaction-critical studies, the preMarkan passion narrative continued to garner supporters who attempted to approach the hypothesis from new angles. Others, however, questioned the hypothesis from similar directions. The following sections observe how the preMarkan passion narrative was recreated and recast in support of new directions in historical Jesus scholarship. The search for the genre of the preMarkan passion narrative picked up a thread suggested by Schmidt in 1919 but coupled this search with attempts to identify genres within Second Temple literature. Efforts to delineate the relationship between Jesus tradition in the Gospel of Peter and the canonical Gospels led Crossan to posit a source that replaced the preMarkan passion narrative. Attempts to answer the criticism that there were not sufficient methodological controls on the reconstruction of the preMarkan passion narrative led scholars to consider the relationship between Mark and John and how an independent Fourth Gospel could serve as a means of delimiting the content of a preMarkan passion narrative. These new directions did not jettison the hypothesis but accepted and sought to reinforce the probability of the existence of the preMarkan passion narrative and its unique status in the Jesus tradition.

At the same time, these new direction in the genre of the Gospels and the literary relationship of the Gospels were also used to reveal the shortcomings of form criticism

and the preMarkan passion narrative. The identification of the Gospel as Greco-Roman biography places the passion narrative in the literary world of the death scenes of other famous men from the ancient world. If extended death scenes are a part of the genre of the Gospels and are not at odds with prior episodic narratives in the same work, significant arguments for the preMarkan passion narrative are undermined. Similarly, if the Gospel of John was familiar with Mark, there is no need to appeal to a preMarkan passion narrative as the source of the Markan and Johannine passion narratives. This chapter will trace these debates and conclude that the identification of Mark as biography and arguments in support of John's use of Mark continue the offensive against the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis detailed in the last chapter.

1. The Genre of the Gospel and the Genre of the PreMarkan Passion Narrative

The question of the genre of the passion narrative was taken up by Nickelsburg, Yarbro Collins, and Broadhead as generic identity would place the preMarkan passion narrative on firmer ground. Both Nickelsburg and Yarbro Collins used the identification of the genre of the preMarkan passion narrative as a tool to bolster the hypothesis and place it on firmer ground. If a suitable and comparable genre for the preMarkan passion narrative could be identified in the ancient world, it would lend plausibility to its existence before the Gospel. At the same time, Markan scholars began to move away from form criticism's claim that the genre of the Gospels was unique from other literature from the ancient world. Following the work of C. W. Votaw from 1915, scholars reconsidered the Gospels as ancient biography, a view that was dismissed for much of the twentieth century but would become a nearly consensus view by the early 2000's. This section

begins with arguments for a generic identity of the preMarkan passion narrative and attempts to repackage the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis. The section concludes with the Gospels as biography, highlighting the ways in which this identification removes several arguments in favor of a preMarkan passion narrative.

1.1 The Suffering Righteous One

The question of the Suffering Righteous One as a literary motif occupied scholars in their search for influences on the preMarkan passion narrative, as discussed in the previous chapter. However, none of Schmidt, Dodd, Lindars, or Ruppert posited a distinctive genre of the Suffering Righteous One as they were only concerned with literary motifs and identifying earlier sources. The work of connecting isolating a literary genre and connecting this genre to the preMarkan passion narrative was taken up by George Nickelsburg.

Nickelsburg identified a genre of Jewish literature he labelled "the story of persecution and vindication of the righteous person" from Gen 37–50, the story of Ahikar, Esther, Dan 3 and 6, Susanna, and Wis 2, 4–5.[1] These narratives all recount the rescue and vindication of a righteous person through narrative elements found consistently throughout these narratives.[2] According to Nickelsburg, previous attempts to locate motifs in the passion narrative by Ruppert, Lindars, Dodd, and others failed to see the generic implications of their work because they were not concerned with the literary

[1] Nickelsburg, *Resurrection,* 67–83, 251–52.

[2] Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 253–59, with a detailed chart plotting these narrative elements across these texts on 254–55.

shape of the texts from which they found the motif of the Suffering Righteous One.[3] Nickelsburg plotted these narrative elements onto the Markan passion narrative, though he had to go back to Mark 11:15–18 and Jesus' cleansing of the temple to ensure that all of his narrative elements were present in Mark. From this, Nickelsburg concluded that the Markan passion narrative fits into the genre of the persecution and vindication of a righteous person. With this generic identification in hand, Nickelsburg proceeded to the possibility of a preMarkan passion narrative:

> Since we have now identified these Markan passages as major components of a known genre, and since they have a certain homogeneity in expression and structure, the tension between them and their Markan context is, in my view, best explained by the hypothesis that they derive from a pre-Markan passion narrative.[4]

The preMarkan passion narrative used this genre in order to show how the death and vindication of Jesus inaugurated a new order after the destruction of the temple.[5]

The fit of the Markan passion narrative into the narrative elements and scheme presented by Nickelsburg was not always clear. Adela Yarbro Collins criticized several of Nickelsburg's narrative elements as too abstract, including "Rescue" which applied to both rescue from death and rescue after death.[6] Additionally, Mark 14:12–52, 65–72; 15:21–25, 27–28, 33, 35, 40–47 did not fit into Nickelsburg's narrative elements. If these passages were identified as Markan redactions, as Nickelsburg did, their omission is not a significant blow to his hypothesis.

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[3] Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 259.

[4] Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 278.

[5] Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 272–77.

[6] Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, Hermenia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2007), 628.

The important question of whether the genre of the Suffering Righteous One was actually present in the ancient literature or was simply a modern scholarly construct was raised incisively by Donald Juel:

> If there existed no mythic construct such as an apocalyptic Son of man or a Suffering Servant or a Righteous Sufferer, but only the scriptural potential for the construction of such figures, what appear to us as coherent interpretative traditions may well be the product of our imaginations.[7]

Stephen Ahearne-Kroll criticized Ruppert and others along similar lines and observed that the texts used by Ruppert, and by extension Nickelsburg, span over 1000 years, were written in multiple genres, and in different social contexts:

> By collapsing these gaps in time, culture, and genre, Ruppert ignores discontinuities and thus creates a simplistic picture of the relationship between these texts and the communities that read and heard them. He takes disparate works that may or may not be related to each other literarily, abstracts an idealized figure from these texts, and then claims that the necessity of the suffering of the Righteous One rose to the level of dogma during this time period. … The texts could have little to do with each other, and therefore grouping them together with clear developmental relationships might be too speculative. [8]

Any scholar wishing to postulate that the motif of the Suffering Righteous One as "in the air" in first century Palestine must overcome by Ahearne-Kroll's observations.[9] The suggestion raised by Juel quoted above should caution modern scholars from constructing too much. There is simply too much we cannot know about these traditions. While the

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[7] Donald Juel, *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 22.

[8] Stephen P. Ahearne-Kroll, *The Psalms of Lament in Mark's Passion: Jesus' Davidic Suffering*, SNTSMS 142 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 14–15.

[9] Holly J. Carey, *Jesus' Cry from the Cross: Towards a First-Century Understanding of the Intertextual relationship between Psalm 22 and the Narrative of Mark's Gospel*, LNTS 398 (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 97–106 , esp. 100 n. 18, attempted to overcome Ahearne-Kroll's criticism of Ruppert. She observed that Ahearne-Kroll did not engage Nickelsburg's work on the Suffering Righteous One and regarded their evidence of a shared tradition across centuries as persuasive.

evidence shows there may have been a literary theme of the Suffering Righteous One, it in no way demonstrates the existence of a known genre and cannot be used as evidence of a preMarkan passion narrative.

1.2 Stories of the Death of Famous Men

The search for the genre of the preMarkan passion narrative was not limited to ancient Jewish writings. Collins looked to Hellenistic writings for a literary form she labelled "story of a death of a famous man," or τελευταί.[10] She observed that the death of Zechariah in 2 Chr 24:20–22 was possibly composed under the influence of Persian or Greek historiography around the fifth century BCE. From this she infers the existence of a literary genre from this time period called τελευταί by the Greeks, which describes portions of larger works although these accounts could circulate independently and orally.[11] Through a survey of ancient literature, Yarbro Collins attempted to show that the genre of τελευταί was "closely linked to history and biography and the variety associated with it reflects the variety of history."[12] An examination of τελευταί in Greek and Roman historiographical works are, according to Yarbro Collins, helpful for understanding the texts labeled Jewish martyrdoms. For example, the stories of persecution and death in 2

[10] Collins, *Mark*, 629. Collin's previous work on the preMarkan passion narrative was updated and reprinted in *Mark.* Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Genre of the Passion Narrative," *Studia Theologica* 47 (1993): 3–28; idem., "From Noble Death to Crucified Messiah," *NTS* 40 (1994): 481–503; idem., "Mark's Interpretation of the Death of Jesus," *JBL* 128.3 (2009): 545–54.

[11] Yarbro Collins, *Mark,* 629.

[12] Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 629–30.

Maccabees are described as "a creative adaptation of the 'noble death' type to a Jewish cultural context."[13]

After surveying Greek, Roman, and Jewish examples of τελευταί, Yarbro Collins turns to the genre of the preMarkan passion narrative as τελευτή.[14] Although Jesus was neither a prominent man nor a noble in the ancient Mediterranean world, the preMarkan passion presented him as the Messiah and king of Israel.[15] The problem with this generic identification of a preMarkan passion narrative lies in Yarbro Collins' method: "My discussion of the genre of the oldest passion narrative is based on my tentative reconstruction of the pre-Markan source."[16] She constructed a hypothetical source and then sought a generic identification for this hypothetical entity. The Markan passion narrative was also a τελευτή, though the reconstruction and generic identity of her preMarkan passion narrative allowed Collins to postulate the ways in which the evangelist significantly altered the τελευτή genre.[17] In contrast to Collins, Helen Bond identified the Gospel of Mark as ancient biography and saw no need to propose a preMarkan passion narrative because chronological accounts of a person's death were common in the genre.[18] This model is more suitable for the evidence presented by

[13] Yarbro Collins, "Genre," 9.

[14] Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 638.

[15] Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 638.

[16] Yarbro Collins, "Genre," 14. For Collins' reconstruction of the preMarkan passion narrative, Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Beginning of the Gospel: Probings of Mark in Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1992), 92–118; idem., "Genre," 21–22; idem., 819.

[17] Collins, "Genre," 18–19.

[18] Helen Bond, *The First Biography of Jesus: Genre and Meaning in Mark's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), 110–11; idem., "A Fitting End? Self-Denial and a Slave's Death in Mark's *Life of Jesus*, *NTS* 65 (2019): 425–42.

Collins, as she observed that τελευταί were embedded within Hellenistic historiographical and biographical works.

1.3 Pronouncement Reports in a Passion Context

Edwin Broadhead critiqued previous attempts to identify the genre of the passion narrative as too plot-focused at the expense of formal analysis. Broadhead examined the individual scenes within Mark 14–16 and proposed that the formal description of the scenes was "pronouncement reports with a passion context."[19] He finds three patterns present within the Markan passion narrative—a normative pattern of pronouncement reports (14:1–11, 12–26, 32–42, 43–53a, 53–65), alterations to the pattern (14:26–32a, 66–72; 15:1–15, 20c–37; 16:1–8), and report scenes (15:16–20. 38–47).[20] By identifying the individual scenes as pronouncement reports, Broadhead was able to compare the Markan passion narrative to other synoptic pronouncement stories and did not elevate the passion narrative to a unique standing in the earliest Jesus tradition.[21] Broadhead did not stress the uniqueness of the preMarkan passion narrative, but instead concluded that the passion narrative and the rest of the Gospels share a common origin in the memory of the words of Jesus.[22] In contrast to previous form-critical studies that emphasized the narrative elements, Broadhead suggested the sayings tradition within the passion narrative possibly represents "the earliest development of the Gospel tradition" as the

[19] Broadhead, "Form and Function," 26.

[20] Broadhead, "Form and Function," 9–17.

[21] Broadhead, "Form and Function," 18, differentiates between pronouncement scenes within a ministry context and pronouncement scenes within a passion context.

[22] Broadhead, "Form and Function," 26.

early church remembered the final words Jesus spoke.[23]. Although he did not engage her work, Broadhead's proposal was like Linnemann's as both attempted to identify the form of individual units within the passion narrative with form-critical categories.

1.4 The Gospel of Mark as Biography

These studies of the genre of the passion narrative were dependent upon the results of form criticism and reinforced the assumption that the preMarkan passion narrative held a unique place within the Gospel tradition. Form criticism assumed the Gospels were not biographies and instead belonged to low literature. Recent research into the genre of the Gospels has overturned this assumption and instead place the Gospels within the genre of ancient biography.[24] If the Gospels may be identified as biography, it is a significant blow to the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis. Burridge identified a number of features and themes present in biographies, including death scenes as a standard part of biography.[25] In his survey of ancient biography, Burridge observed that there was no standard allocation of space for a given part of the subject's life. Some authors may emphasize the subject's birth and early life while others may stress the subject's career. Approximately 40% of the Gospel of Mark is spent on the last week of Jesus' life, which

[23] Broadhead, "Form and Function," 25.

[24] Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*, 3rd ed. (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2020); Bond, *First Biography;* C. W. Votaw, "The Gospels and Contemporary Biography," *AJT* 19 (1915): 45–73, 217–49; Charles Talbert, *What Is a Gospel? The Genre of the Canonical Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977).

[25] Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, 160.

is not outside the generic limits of biography, as nearly a quarter of the *Apollonius of Tyana* are focused on the final days.[26]

The preMarkan passion narrative was subjected to critique by Bond as she provided a reading of the Gospel as biography.[27] She observed that other ancient biographies contained a chronological account of the final days and death, even when the earlier narration was episodic.[28] This does not discount Mark's use of sources of knowledge of multiple traditions and interpretations of the passion tradition as Jesus' followers attempted to understand his violent and shameful death.[29] The evangelist's task was to edit and arrange these varying Jesus traditions and interpretations of his death into a coherent whole.

In her assessment of the passion narrative in Mark, Bond confirmed her reading of Mark as biography by showing how Jesus' death as a slave brought together the Gospel's emphasis on self-denial and shame.[30] The identification of the Gospel of Mark as biography eliminates many of the arguments for the preMarkan passion narrative, as Burridge and Bond have shown. The change from an episodic narrative in the early chapters to a more cohesive narrative in the final chapters is no longer an exception to explain but a feature of ancient biography. The description of Mark as a passion narrative with an extended introduction no longer holds, as the large percentage of space dedicated

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[26] Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, 162–63.

[27] Bond, *First Biography*, 110–12

[28] Bond, *First Biography*, 111.

[29] Bond, *First Biography*, 112.

[30] Bond, *First Biography*, 224–52.

to Jesus' final week is comparable to other known ancient biographies. The genres proposed by Nickelsburg, Yarbro Collins, and Broadhead were not shown to exist outside of larger works in the ancient world. Of course, the author of Mark drew from multiple passion traditions as he composed the Gospel. However, the composition of the passion narrative is to be credited to the evangelist who emphasized the final week of Jesus' life in his biography of Jesus.

2. *Gospel Relations and the Question of a PreMarkan Passion Narrative*

The discovery of the Gospel of Peter in 1896 prompted nearly immediate argument on its relationship to the canonical Gospels and whether it may preserve earlier Jesus traditions that those found in the NT. Just three days after viewing the manuscript, J. A. Robinson gave a lecture where he stated that the Gospel of. Peter knew only the four canonical Gospels and did not know any additional traditions.[31] In Germany, Adolf von Harnack took a less dogmatic approach to the question of dependence on the canonical Gospels and, while acknowledging Gospel of Peter's reliance on canonical traditions, observed that the Gospel also contained independent Jesus traditions.[32] In 1918 Dibelius briefly

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[31] J. Armitage Robinson, "The Gospel according to Peter," in *The Gospel according to Peter, and the Revelation to Peter: Two Lectures on the Newly Discovered Fragments together with the Greek Texts*, eds. J. Armitage Robinson and Montague Rhodes James (London: Clay, 1982), 11–36, here 32–33. Those arguing for dependence on the canonical Gospels include H. B. Swete, *ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΚΑΤΑ ΠΕΤΡΟΝ: The Akhmîm Fragment of the Apocryphal Gospel of St. Peter* (London: Macmillan, 1893); Theodore Zahn, *Das Evangelium des Petrus* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1893); Léon Vaganay, *L'Evangile de Pierre*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Gabalda, 1930); Raymond E. Brown, "The Gospel of Peter and Canonical Gospel Priority," NTS 33 (1987): 321–43; Frans Neirynck, "The Apocryphal Gospels and the Gospel of Mark," in *The New Testament in Early Christianity*, ed. Jean-Marie Servin (Leuven: Leuven University, 1989), 140–57.

[32] Adolf von Harnack, *Bruchstücke des Evangeliums und der Apokalypse des Petrus* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1893), 32–37; Scholars who argued for independence from the canonical Gospels include, P. Gardner-Smith, "The Gospel of Peter," *JTS* 27 (1925–26): 255–71; idem., "The Date of the Gospel of Peter," *JTS* 27 (1925–26): 401–07; Jürgen Denker, *Die theologiegeschichtliche Stellung des Petrusevangeliums: Ein Beitrag ur Frühgeschichte des Doketismus* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1975).

explored the possibilities for understanding the development of the passion narrative by comparison of the Gospel of Peter with the canonical Gospels, but interest in solving the exact relationship between these Gospels waned in the mid-twentieth century.[33] The work of Helmut Koester and John Dominic Crossan raised these questions anew and their work suggested that the canonical Gospels were dependent on the traditions found in Gospel of Peter.

The form-critical conception of Synoptic relationships assumed the independence of the Gospels of Mark and John. To many, the similarities between the passion narratives in Mark and John provided evidence that both used a preMarkan passion narrative to construct their respective passion narratives. One of the possible reasons previous attempts to reconstruct a preMarkan passion narrative came to so many different and often conflicting results is the lack of a control text with which to compare Mark in order to isolate shared traditions that originate from a common source. In Q scholarship, the text of Q is reconstructed from a close comparison of the text of Matthew and Luke which limits what words may or may not go back to Q.[34] If John is indeed independent from the Synoptics, then the similarities in the Markan and Johannine passion narratives may provide evidence of the contents of the preMarkan passion narrative. However, if John can be shown to use Mark in the construction of his Gospel, it removes one of the strongest arguments for the existence of a preMarkan passion narrative.

[33] Dibelius, "Die alttestamentlichen Motiv."

[34] This is not a positive argument for Q, only an observation of the differences between reconstructing Q and the preMarkan passion narrative.

2.1 The Gospel of Peter and the PreMarkan Passion Narrative

The work of Koester and his students led the way in reassessing Gospel of Peter's relationship to the canonical Gospels.[35] Koester rejected the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis of a historical report later supplemented by scriptural reflections (Bultmann).[36] The traditional form-critical conception of the preMarkan passion narrative made sense to Koester only if the Gospel Peter was dependent upon the canonical Gospels. For Koester, the earliest attempts to remember the passion would not have focused on repeating them as they actually happened, but instead would have used the Psalms and prophets to reflect on Jesus as the Suffering Righteous One. Following the judgments of Vielhauer and Decker, Koester observed that the way in which the Gospel of Peter interpreted the Jewish Scriptures reflected the earliest Jesus tradition and the teaching and preaching of the earliest community; the historicizing interest of the canonical Gospels betrayed their later date of composition.[37] Koester did not reconstruct the earliest passion source as Crossan, but his work opened the door for Crossan's most detailed reconstruction, though Koester did not adopt all aspects of Crossan's reconstructed Cross Gospel.

In Crossan's work the preMarkan passion narrative was replaced by an early source present in Gospel of Peter and concluded that all canonical and non-canonical

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[35] Helmut Koester, "Apocryphal and Canonical Gospels," *HTR* 73 (1980): 105–30, here 126–30; B. A. Johnson, "Empty Tomb Tradition in the Gospel of Peter" (ThD diss. Harvard University, 1965).

[36] Koester, "Apocryphal and Canonical Gospels," 127.

[37] Koester, "Apocryphal and Canonical Gospels," 128; idem., *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* (Philadelphia: Trinity International Press, 1992), 218.

passion narratives were dependent on his early source.[38] He claimed that all four canonical Gospels were dependent upon an early form of the Gospel of Peter for the material in the passion narrative.[39] He referred to the earliest stage of the Gospel of Peter as "The Cross Gospel," whose achievement was the "move from the *prophetic passion* to the *narrative passion*, to create from discrete prophetic allusions and composite prophetic fulfillments a coherent and sequential story."[40] This Cross Gospel consisted of three units: (1) the crucifixion and deposition in Gos. Pet. 1:1–2; 2:5c–6:22, (2) the tomb and the guards in Gos. Pet. 7:25; 8:28–9:24, and (3) the resurrection and confession in Gos. Pet. 9:35–10:42; 11:45–49.[41] The author of Mark was the first to utilize the Cross Gospel when composing a Gospel, changing the model from "innocence rescued to martyrdom vindicated."[42] According to Crossan, the only sources Mark had for his passion narrative were the Cross Gospel and his own imagination. Crossan proposed four phases in the development of the passion tradition that reimagined previous scholarship and provided a new alternative, an alternative that was reminiscent of previous form-critical attempts. The "historical passion" referred to the actual events surrounding the death of Jesus, which Crossan claimed those closest to Jesus knew no details other than he was crucified

[38] John Dominic Crossan, *The Cross That Spoke: The Origins of the Passion Narrative* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), xiv.

[39] John Dominic Crossan, "The Cross That Spoke: The Earliest Narrative of the Passion and Resurrection," *Forum* 3.2 (1987): 3–22; idem., *The Cross That Spoke: The Origins of the Passion Narrative* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 3–22; idem., *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992), 389–91.

[40] Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, 389, italics original.

[41] Crossan, *Cross That Spoke,* 16.

[42] Crossan, *Cross That Spoke,* 16–17; idem., *Historical Jesus*, 389–91.

at Jerusalem during Passover.[43] The "prophetic passion" comprised applications of individual passages in the prophets and psalms to the passion, e.g. to the historical information that Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate, this phase applied Ps 2.[44] Next, the "narrative passion" took the prophetic passages and crafted a coherent and chronological narrative.[45] Traditionally, this phase was considered to be the earliest and the location of preMarkan passion narrative. However, Crossan places this phase third and substituted the Cross Gospel for the preMarkan passion narrative. Finally, the "polemical passion" added anti-Jewish polemic.[46]

Crossan's provocative thesis on the origins of the passion tradition received mixed reviews.[47] Paul Mirecki and Arthur Dewey accepted Crossan's proposal with modifications.[48] Koester applauded Crossan's attempt to rethink the development of the passion tradition but could not accept his reconstruction of the Cross Gospel.[49] Others, including Raymond Brown, Joel Green, and Paul Foster have argued against Crossan's

[43] Crossan, *Cross That Spoke*,405.

[44] Crossan, *Cross That Spoke*, 406.

[45] Crossan, *Cross That Spoke*, 406.

[46] Crossan, *Cross That Spoke*, 406–07; idem., *Who Killed Jesus? Exposing the Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Gospel Story of the Death of Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996).

[47] Paul Foster, "The Gospel of Peter: Directions and Issues in Contemporary Research," *CBR* 9.3 (2011): 310–38, here 311–19.

[48] P. A. Mirecki, "Peter, Gospel of," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 278–71; Arthur J. Dewey, "'Time to Murder and Create': Visions and Revisions in the Gospel of Peter," *Semeia* 49 (1990): 101–127.

[49] Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 219–20.

reconstruction and argued for Gospel of Peter's dependence on the canonical Gospels.[50] My purpose here is not to enter this long and detailed argument. Instead, I want to observe the ways in which the form-critical conception of the preMarkan passion narrative shaped the ideas and debate around Gospel of Peter and the existence of an early passion source. The only significant change was the attempt to place the hypothetical Cross Gospel as the point of origins of the tradition. This document was still used by Mark and John independently and was known to Matthew and Luke through Mark. Although the details were different, Crossan's attempt to rethink the origins of the passion narrative is only distinguishable from previous form-critical attempts only in his incorporation of the Gospel of Peter into the earliest phase of this trajectory.

2.2 The Johannine Passion Narrative and the PreMarkan Passion Narrative

In his two volumes on the Markan and Johannine passion narrative Matty Myllykoski attempted to trace the development of the preMarkan passion narrative in order to reconstruct the events of Jesus' final days.[51] In order to move past the impasse of previous studies, Myllykoski dispensed with source critical tools such as word statistics and genre and instead insisted on reading Mark as a narrative unity in order to discern its development:

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[50] Raymond Brown, "The *Gospel of Peter* and Canonical Gospel Priority," *NTS* 33 (1987): 321–43; idem. *The Death of the Messiah*, 2:1317–49; Joel B. Green, "The Gospel of Peter: Source for a Pre-Canonical Passion Narrative?" *ZNW* 78 (1987): 293–301.

[51] Matty Myllykoski, *Die letzten Tage Jesu: Markus und Johannes, ihre Traditionen und die historische Frage*, Band I, Suomalaisen Tiedekatemian Toimituksia [Annales Academia Scientiarum Fennicae] B/256 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1991); idem., *Die letzten Tage Jesu: Markus, Johannes, ihre Traditioned und die historische Frage*, Band II , Suomalaisen Tiedekatemian Toimituksia [Annales Academia Scientiarum Fennicae] B/272 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1994.

> The form or genre of the evangelist's sources are not known beforehand. An important starting point is that the reader knows the test only as a continuous narrative. The narrative thread itself should be the criterion for analysis. The narrative content of the individual sentences and sections must be taken seriously in their own contexts.[52]

Myllykoski's approach assumed that breaks in the continuity of the narrative indicated the use of an earlier source, that the Gospel of John was independent of Mark, and that the earliest recoverable passion narrative provided accurate historical information on Jesus' final days. Instead of comparing the texts of Mark and John to uncover a common source, Myllykoski reconstructed the preMarkan passion narrative from Mark and then used John to verify his reconstruction. Through this method, Myllykoski identified the earliest layer as the oldest passion report (*die älteste Passionsbericht*), a report of Jesus' cursing of the Temple, his arrest, the trial before the high priest, the mocking, and the crucifixion. The oldest tradition focused on Jesus' identity as "King of the Jews."[53] An enlarged passion narrative developed from this old passion source, which Myllykoski called the extended passion story (*die erweiterte Passionsgeschichte*).[54] Both Mark and John used this passion narrative in the construction of their Gospels. Myllykoski's study of the preMarkan passion narrative is significant, not for his reconstruction of its development, but for his attempt to get beyond the gridlock of previous form and

[52] Myllykoski, *Die letzten Tage Jesu*, I:36, my translation.

[53] Myllykoski, *Die letzten Tage Jesu*; II: 138–39. *Die älteste Passionsbericht* contained Mark 11:11, 15, 27b, 28; 14:1–2, 10–11, 17, 26, 43, 45, 46–47, 50, 53a, 61b, 62a, 65ca; 15:1, 2, 3, 15b, 9a, 20b–22a, 23–24a, 26, 26.

[54] Myllykoski, *Die letzten Tage Jesu*, II:162–65. In addition to the passages listed for *die älteste Passionsbericht*, *die erweiterte Passionsgeschichte* contained Mark 11:8–10; 14:3–8, 17–20, 27a, 29–31, 33–36, 41–42, 54, 66–72; 15:6–15a, 16–18, 19b, 24b, 27, 29a, 30, 34, 36a, 40, 42–47; John 20:1, 11bß, 12, 19ac, 20, 22–23. For Johannine parallels, *Die letzten Tage Jesu*, I: 191–92.

redactional-critical attempts through the use of John as a means of verifying his preMarkan source.

In his Göttingen dissertation, Wolfgang Reinbold attempted to reconstruct the earliest passion narrative in order to subject it to thorough historical analysis, though he was much less optimistic on the ability to find historical material than Myllykoski.[55] After reviewing arguments for and against John's dependence on the Synoptics, Reinbold held to their independence and proposed that the way to reconstruct the preMarkan passion narrative was through a comparison of Mark and John.[56] Here Reinbold attempted to distinguish his work from Mohr and Myllykoski. While they identified the earliest layer of the Markan passion narrative and then looked to John, Reinbold began with a detailed comparison of the two accounts which he claimed gave a higher probability of identifying traditional material.[57] Reinbold evoked the methodology of establishing the text of Q, and even distinguished between multiple recensions of the earliest passion narrative, *Passionsbericht*^{Mark} and *Passionsbericht*^{John}, in a manner similar to Q recensions known by Matthew or Luke.

Reinbold began by establishing the maximum possible content for the preMarkan passion narrative by identifying all Markan and Johannine parallels.[58]He then removed special material considered secondary additions and passages he considered later

[55] Wolfgang Reinbold, *Die älteste Bericht über der Tod Jesu: Literarische Analyse und historische Kritik der Passionsdarstellung der Evangelien*, BZNM 69 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994).

[56] Reinbold, *Die älteste Bericht*, 73.

[57] Reinbold, *Der älteste Bericht*, 74.

[58] Reinbold, *Die älteste Bericht*, 79–80.

developments.[59] The oldest passion account (*die älteste Passionsbericht*) contained nine scenes: the Plot to Kill Jesus (Mark 14:1–2//John 11:47–57), Jesus' Entry in Jerusalem (Mark 11:1–10//John 12:12-19), the Last Supper and Prediction of Judas' Betrayal and Peter's Denial (Mark 14:17–21, 29–31//John 13:2a, 21–30, 36–38), Arrest (Mark 14:42, 43–52//John 18:1–11[14, 31c]), Trial before High Priest and Peter's Denial (Mark 14:53–72//John 18:12–27), Trial before Pilate and Release of Barabbas (Mark 15:1–15a//John 18:28–38; 19:4–16a), the Mocking of Jesus (Mark 15:15b–20a//John 19:1–3), Crucifixion and Death of Jesus (Mark 15:20b–41//John 19:16b–30), and the Burial (Mark 15:42–47//John 19:38–42).[60] Reinbold classified the earliest passion account as "a (popular) history report or a διήγησις" and accepted Nickelsburg's thematic classification of the Suffering Righteous One, though he did not find all of the parallels to Jewish or Hellenistic martyr stories convincing.[61] This narrative arose in the 50s in response Claudius's expulsion of the Jews from Rome in an attempt to emphasize Jesus' innocence and the guilt of the Jewish leaders.[62]

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[59] Reinbold, *Der älteste Bericht*, 80–91. Secondary additions included The Controversy Pericope (Mark 11:27–33; 12:13–40), The Cursing of the Fig Tree, the Parable of the Vineyard, and the Widow's Mite (Mark 11:12–14, 19–25; 12:1–12, 41–44), the Synoptic Apocalypse (Mark 13), the Discourse to the Greeks (John 12:20–36), Summary of Jesus' Ministry (John 12:37–50), the Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet (John 13:1–20), and the Farewell Discourse (John 13:31–45; 14:1–17, 26). Passages considered representing later developments of the passion narrative included Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus (Mark 14:11–12), the Preparation for the Passover (Mark 14:12–16), the Institution of the Eucharist (Mark 14:22–25), the Prediction of the Disciples' Denial (Mark 14:26–28), Gethsemane (Mark 14:32–42), and the Confirmation of Jesus' Death (John 19:31–37). The versions of the Anointing (Mark 14:3–9// John 12:1–11) represented independent variations of a common story that was inserted into the oldest passion narrative because of its connection to Jesus' burial. Since the Cleansing of the Temple (Mark 11:15–17//John 2:13–17) was not connected to the Johannine passion narrative it could not have belonged to the oldest preMarkan passion narrative but was added at a later stage of its development.

[60] Reinbold, *Die älteste Bericht*, 91–97.

[61] Reinbold, *Die älteste Bericht*, 193–94, my translation.

[62] Reinbold, *Die älteste Bericht*, 213–15.

2.2.1 John's Knowledge of Mark and the PreMarkan Passion Narraitve

While any attempts to establish stricter methodological controls on the reconstruction of a preMarkan passion narrative should be commended, their method has a fatal flaw. If the author of the Fourth Gospel was dependent on Mark, through direct literary dependence or through oral tradition, the results of Mohr, Myllykoski, and Reinbold's reconstructions are nullified. D. Moody Smith chronicled shifts in scholarly opinion concerning the relationship between John and the Synoptics and observed that since the 1970s scholars have become more open to the ways in which John may have known and used the Synoptic Gospels.[63] If John can be shown to be dependent on Mark, then a foundational form-critical argument for the existence of a preMarkan passion narrative is removed and the development of the passion traditions can be explained without appealing to this hypothetical source.

Recent research has continued the trend of acknowledging John's use of Mark and the various ways the evangelist edited, responded to, and rewrote Mark's Gospel.[64] The Markan and Johannine passion narrative share a number of similar details, a similar plot structure, and some vocabulary (as detailed above). Bond has argued for John's rewriting of Mark's passion, transforming the shame of Jesus' death in Mark into a story of his triumph.[65] This account of the ways John used Mark is convincing, as Bond builds on the work of others who show that John is an author who was beholden to his source material

[63] D. Moody Smith, *John Among the Gospels*, 2nd ed. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001).

[64] Eve-Marie Becker, Helen K. Bond, and Catrin H. Williams, eds., *John's Transformation of Mark* (London: T & T Clark, 2021).

[65] Helen K. Bond, "The Triumph of the King: John's Transformation of Mark's Account of the Passion," in *John's Transformation of Mark*, 251–67, here 253–56.

but instead creatively engaged with prior Gospels and shaped his own narrative of Jesus' final days. As Williams demonstrated in her article in the same volume, John's rewriting of the Markan passion narrative in more in line with analogous works in the ancient world that the mechanical ways Matthew and Luke used Mark.[66]

3. Conclusion

Despite the assaults on the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis by Linnemann, Kelber, and Schenke, the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis continued well into the 1980s and 1990s. While the number of attempted reconstructions did not approach the heyday of the 1970s, scholars continued to build on the form-critical foundation and introduced new avenues through which to confirm the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis and sought to identify its genre, determine its relationship to Gospel of Peter, and to establish tighter methodological controls on its reconstruction through the use of John. These developments led Joel Green to declare that form-critical arguments "retain abiding significance" as he and others continued to build a history of the passion traditions around form-critical assumptions.[67]

The explanatory power of the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis continued to serve commentators on the Gospel of Mark, though detailed reconstructions were not as likely to be a part of a commentary published as it was in previous eras. A survey of commentaries reveals that while the preMarkan passion narrative is still assumed, it plays

[66] Williams, "John's 'Rewriting' of Mark," 51–66.

[67] Joel B. Green, *The Death of Jesus: Tradition and Interpretation in the Passion Narrative*, WUNT II 33 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988), 173.

a lesser role in the exegesis of the text than in previous generations of Markan scholarship.[68] Other commentators have abandoned the hypothesis and instead focused on the passion narrative's connection with the previous thirteen chapters.[69] The hypothesis once considered form criticism's most "assured result" no longer holds the prominent place it once did and though scholars pay lip service to the hypothesis, scholarship has moved away from attempts to reconstruct preMarkan sources and toward an appreciation of the unity of the Markan text. The last two chapters have shown that form criticism was challenged from multiple perspectives and its conception of oral Jesus tradition, the textualization of the Gospels, the genre of the Gospels, and its view of the literary relationship between Gospels no longer stands to scholarly scrutiny.

[68] Joel Marcus, *Mark 8–16: A New Translation with Introduction and* Commentary, Vol. 27a AB (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 924–27; Robert H. Stein, Mark, BECNT (Grand Rapids, Baker, 2008), 627–28; Camille Focant, *The Gospel according to Mark: A Commentary*, trans. Leslie Robert Keylock (Eugene: Pickwick, 2012), 20, 557–58.

[69] Morna H. Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, BNTC (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 324–25; Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 806; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 1, 547–48.

Conclusion

Over the course of the last century, from Johannes Weiss's 1892 commentary on Mark to Helen Bond's 2020 monograph on Mark, scholars have sought to provide an answer to the question of the origins of the passion narrative prior to the Gospel of Mark. Weiss was the inaugurator of the form-critical quest for the preMarkan passion narrative; Bond found a way to account for the passion narrative outside of a form-critical conception of Jesus tradition. This thesis set out to answer the questions regarding the origins of the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis, why it remained at the forefront of scholarly attempts to get behind the Gospels, and why scholars largely abandoned the quest to reconstruct its contents but still held to its existence as a source for Mark. The answer to these questions is centered on the dominance of form criticism on the discipline over the last century.

The first three chapters traced the rise of the form-critical conception of Jesus tradition from the late 1880s through its emergence in British scholarship. Chapter one demonstrated that the emergence of the form-critical conception of Jesus tradition that began with the history of religions school in the late nineteenth century and was formalized in the germinal form-critical writings of Schmidt, Dibelius, and Bultmann. The second chapter detailed how the preMarkan passion narrative naturally arose from the form-critical conception of Jesus tradition. The emphasis on pre-literary individual units of Jesus tradition detached from any narrative context did not fit the data the form

critics observed in Mark 14–16. This led them to hypothesize a hypothetical source, the preMarkan passion narrative, which the evangelist, as a compiler and editor, took over with minor modifications. Prior to the arrival of from criticism from Germany into English scholarship, the great British source critics, B. H. Streeter and J. C. Hawkins, did not detect a preMarkan passion narrative as a source for the Gospel. The third chapter documented the preMarkan passion narrative's arrival in British Gospel scholarship. As Taylor, Lightfoot, Dodd, and Nineham introduced form criticism to English language scholarship, they demonstrated the usefulness and flexibility of the hypothesis for both historical Jesus research and for theology. Chapter four detailed the explosion of preMarkan narrative hypotheses in the "Golden Age" following WWII with the development of the redactional-critical method. The view that the evangelists were not simply mere compilers, but authors who strategically arranged the Jesus tradition they received for theological purposes launched a plethora of preMarkan passion narrative hyoptheses, with little to no agreement about the scope, contents, and development of this source. The fifth and sixth chapters documented challenges to the form-critical consensus that dominated twentieth-century Gospel scholarship from within form criticism, from studies on orality and literacy, from redactional-critical studies, from genre studies, and from studies on the literary relationship between John and Mark. The current state of Gospel scholarship has overturned all of form criticism's assumptions about the origins, transmission, and textualization of Jesus tradition. With form criticism's operating assumptions overturned, the preMarkan passion narrative hypothesis is also proved to be deficient.

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