

JESUS TRADITION IN EARLY PATRISTIC WRITINGS

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Early patristic writings provide us with a wealth of Jesus tradition. But in spite of this promising introductory statement, for those who are interested in early patristic Jesus traditions that have a chance to be historically reliable and are not known from the books which now make up the New Testament canon, the harvest may still be disappointing. However, even small scraps of possibly reliable extracanonical Jesus traditions deserve to be taken into account for the study of the historical Jesus. In this chapter we will give a survey of the different kinds of such extracanonical traditions, in order to make it clear in which context the more valuable ones—valuable with respect to the historical Jesus—have been transmitted.

We will confine our survey of early patristic writings roughly to authors of the second century CE, i.e., from Clement of Rome, whose *Epistle to the Corinthians* is usually dated to the end of the first century, to Clement of Alexandria, whose works date to the end of the second and the beginning of the third centuries. We will also pay attention to the philosopher Celsus who wrote a book against the Christians around 178 CE. He is certainly not a patristic author, but the fact that large parts of his book, *Alêthês Logos*, have been preserved in Origen's apology *Against Celsus* (of 248 CE) is a good reason to include him in this chapter.

In patristic writings of this period we will distinguish the following categories of Jesus traditions.

1. Extracanonical traditions about Jesus' origin, birth, youth, and baptism.
2. Traditions about Jesus' teaching that seem to derive from or are quoted from the canonical gospels.
3. Words of Jesus that may derive from an independent tradition that has also been included in the canonical gospels.
4. Traditions about Jesus' teaching and passion that are quoted or derived from extracanonical gospels.
5. *Agrapha* that seem to be transmitted independently.

6. Records of a secret oral tradition that Jesus transmitted to a small number of his disciples.
7. Extracanonial traditions about the risen Jesus.

Some comments may be added to this classification:

- a. We will see that often there is no unanimity about whether words of Jesus are borrowed from the canonical gospels or whether they derive from independent tradition that has also been included in these gospels (categories 2 and 3).
- b. Sometimes it is not clear whether a saying is quoted from an extracanonial gospel or should be classified as an independent *agraphon* (categories 4 and 5).
- c. For the second century the terms “canonical” and “extracanonial gospels” are admittedly anachronistic, but we use them for convenience’s sake.¹
- d. One possible category is conspicuously absent: early patristic literature does not contain any extracanonial records of miracles attributed to Jesus.

1. *Extracanonial Traditions about Jesus’ Origin, Birth, Youth, and Baptism*

Apart from the canonical stories on Jesus’ origin, birth, and baptism, Justin Martyr transmits the tradition that Jesus was born in a cave, which he considers a fulfilment of Isaiah 33:16 LXX (“he will dwell in a high cave of a strong rock”).² He relates that Jesus, who was considered the son of Joseph the carpenter, also worked as a carpenter and made ploughs and yokes.³ Justin narrates that, when Jesus stepped into the

¹ See R. Roukema, “La tradition apostolique et le canon du Nouveau Testament”, in *The Apostolic Age in Patristic Thought*, ed. A. Hilhorst, VigChr.S 70 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 86–103.

² Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 78.5–6 (cf. 70.2), ed. M. Marcovich, PTS 47, (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997). Jesus’ birth in a cave is also narrated in the *Protevangelium Jacobi* 18.1, ed. and comm. H. R. Smid, ApocrNT 1 (Assen: van Gorcum, 1965), 125–127.

³ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 88.8; cf. *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* 13.1, trans. in *The Apocryphal New Testament. A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation*, J. K. Elliott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 78.

water in order to be baptized, a fire was kindled in the Jordan.⁴ Justin's version of the divine voice that was heard from heaven after Jesus' baptism coincides with the text of the Codex Bezae and the Old-Latin version of Luke 3:22: "You are my Son, today I have begotten you".⁵ From an historical point of view these details on Jesus' birth and life must be considered legendary.⁶

Celsus's book against the Christians introduces a Jew who says that Jesus was born of the adultery of his mother with a soldier named Panthera, and that as a consequence the carpenter who was betrothed to her turned her out. His birth is said to have taken place in secret.⁷ Although this story seems related with the apparent Talmudic tradition concerning Jeshu ben Pandera (or Jeshua ben Pntr', or similar names),⁸ Johann Maier maintains that, in contradistinction to later Talmudic manuscripts and other Jewish literature, the original texts of the Talmud did not refer to Jesus. This conclusion makes him deny a connection between the Talmud and the far earlier tradition of Celsus' Jew; this

⁴ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 88.3 (PTS 47). This element also occurs in the *Sibylline Oracles* 6.4–6, ed. J. Geffken, GCS 8 (Leipzig: Hinrich'sche Buchhandlung, 1902), 130, trans. J. J. Collins, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth, vol. I (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983), 407, and in the *Praedicatio Pauli*, a text quoted in Pseudo-Cyprian, *De Rebaptismate* 17, ed. G. Hartel, CSEL 3,3; (vienna: Apud C. Geroldi Filium Bibliopolam Academiae, 1871), 90; see D. A. Bertrand, *Le baptême de Jésus. Histoire de l'exégèse aux deux premiers siècles*, BGBE 14 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1973), 43–44, 52–55, 96, 128. A variation of this tradition occurs in Tatian's Diatessaron and in Matthew 3:15 in the Old-Latin codices Vercellensis (a) and Sangermanensis (g¹), which testify that at Jesus' baptism a light shone from the water. See L. Leloir, *Le témoignage d'Ephrem sur le Diatessaron*, CSCO Sub 227, 19 (Leuven: Peeters, 1962), 105–107; P. Henne, "Pourquoi le Christ fut-il baptisé? La réponse de Justin", *RHPPhR* 77 (1993): 567–585, at 574–576.

⁵ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 88.8; 103.6 (PTS 47). See Bertrand, *Baptême*, 131–132; Henne, "Pourquoi le Christ fut-il baptisé?", 581–582. The *Gospel of the Ebionites* reads: "You are my beloved Son, in you I am well pleased, today I have begotten you"; in *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum*, ed. K. Aland, 15th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1996), 27.

⁶ S. A. Panimolle, "Storicità e umanità del Cristo nelle Apologie di S. Giustino Martire", *RivBib* 38 (1990): 191–223, investigates how Justin defended Jesus' historicity and humanity in his two Apologies, but this paper does not deal with extracanonical traditions.

⁷ Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.28; 1.32; 1.38–39; ed. and trans. M. Borret, SC 132 (Paris: Cerf, 1967). Cf. the English translation by H. Chadwick, *Origen. Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953; reprint 1980).

⁸ See M. Lods, "Étude sur les sources juives de la polémique de Celse contre les chrétiens", *RHPPhR* 21 (1941): 1–33.

judgement was accepted by Enrico Norelli.⁹ However, Celsus may have drawn on another Jewish source. Jane Schaberg presumes that the tradition of Jesus' illegitimate birth is most likely historical.¹⁰

Celsus' Jewish interlocutor also says that, because of his poverty, Jesus hired himself out as a workman in Egypt, where he tried his hand at certain (magical) powers, after which he returned full of conceit and gave himself the title of God.¹¹ This portrayal seems to originate from a malicious confusion of the canonical gospels and extracanonical traditions.¹²

Clement of Alexandria writes that Jesus' birth took place in the twenty-eighth year of Augustus (i.e., 4/3 BCE), when for the first time a census was ordered. For this information he quotes from Luke 3:1–2 that the word of the Lord came to John in the fifteenth year of Tiberius (i.e., 28/29 CE), and from Luke 3:23 that Jesus was about thirty years old when he was baptized. According to Clement there were 194 years, one month and thirteen days between Jesus' birth and the death of Commodus (who died December 31, 192 CE).¹³ From these data it may be computed that Jesus was born in 3 BCE, more precisely on November 18. However, Hans Förster points out that this does not fit in with Clement's reference to the census (cf. Luke 2:1) that took place in 6/7 CE.¹⁴ It is interesting that Clement also refers to those who said that Jesus' birth

⁹ J. Maier, *Jesus von Nazareth in der talmudischen Überlieferung*, EdF 82 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1978), 130–267; E. Norelli, “La tradizione sulla nascita di Gesù nell' ἈΛΗΘΗΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ di Celso”, in *Discorsi di verità. Paganesimo, giudaismo et cristianesimo a confronto nel Contro Celso di Origene*, ed. L. Perrone, SEAUG 61 (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1998), 133–166.

¹⁰ J. Schaberg, *The Illegitimacy of Jesus. A Feminist Theological Interpretation of the Infancy Narratives* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 165–169, 195; see also M. Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (London: Victor Gollanz, 1978), 58–61.

¹¹ Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.28 (SC 132).

¹² Cf., e.g., Matthew 2:13–20; 12:24; Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 69.7 (PTS 47); *Arabic Infancy Gospel* 9–26, trans. A. Walker, *Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, and Revelations*, ANCL 16 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1870), 103–111; *Pseudo-Matthew* 23, trans. Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 96. References to Celsus's knowledge of the canonical gospels occur, e.g., in Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.68; 2.13; 2.27; 2.49; 2.74 (SC 132); cf. Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, 58–60. D. Rouger, “Celse et la tradition évangélique du Codex de Bèze”, in *Codex Bezae. Studies from the Lunel Colloquium June 1994*, ed. D. C. Parker and C.-B. Amphoux, NTTS 22 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 240–247, concludes that Celsus used the “western text”.

¹³ Clement, *Stromateis* 1.145.1–5, ed. C. Mondésert, M. Caster, SC 30 (Paris: Cerf, 1951).

¹⁴ See H. Förster, *Die Feier der Geburt Christi in der Alten Kirche. Beiträge zur Erforschung der Anfänge des Epiphanie- und des Weihnachtfestes*, STAC 4 (Tübingen: Mohr, 2000), 11–15.

took place on the twenty-fifth of Pachon, which is May 20, in the twenty-eighth year of Augustus.¹⁵ Furthermore, he mentions followers of Basilides who maintained that Jesus was born on the twenty-fourth or twenty-fifth of Pharmouthi, which is April 19 or 20, the year remaining unspecified. The Basilideans said that Jesus was baptized in the fifteenth year of Tiberius on the fifteenth of Tubi (i.e., January 10, 28/29 CE), whereas some of them upheld that Jesus' baptism took place on the eleventh of Tubi (i.e., January 6).¹⁶ Reckoning from Commodus' death, Clement appears to date Jesus' death on November 18, 27 CE, but he also mentions the views of the Basilideans, who maintained that Jesus' passion took place in the sixteenth year of Tiberius (29/30 CE), either on the twenty-fifth of Phamenoth or on the twenty-fifth or the nineteenth of Pharmouthi (i.e., March 21, April 20 or 14).

Summarizing the complicated discussion of ancient calendars and proposed emendations of Clement's text that should eliminate the contradictions, Förster concludes that Clement knew different sources on Jesus' birth, baptism, and passion.¹⁷

2. Traditions on Jesus' Teaching that Seem to Derive from or Are Quoted from the Canonical Gospels

In the second century most references to Jesus are taken from, inspired by, or closely related to the canonical gospels, which implies that they mostly do not add anything new to the search for Jesus traditions that might possibly be historically reliable. In this section we will only introduce some monographs from 1950 onwards that deal with the reception of these gospels by Clement of Rome and second-century authors and which, admittedly, are more important for the textual history and the history of canonisation of these gospels than for the purpose of this chapter. However, since most of these monographs also pay attention

¹⁵ Clement, *Stromateis* 1.145.6 (SC 30); see Förster, *Feier*, 15.

¹⁶ Clement, *Stromateis* 1.146.2–4 (SC 30); see Förster, *Feier*, 15–16.

¹⁷ Förster, *Feier*, 11–38; 193. See, e.g., E. Preuschen, "Todesjahr und Todestag Jesu", *ZNW* 5 (1904): 1–17; R. H. Bainton, "Basilidean Chronology and New Testament Interpretation", *JBL* 51 (1932): 81–134; W. Hartke, *Über Jahrespunkte und Feste insbesondere das Weihnachtsfest*, *SSA* 6 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1956), 18–30; S. K. Roll, *Toward the Origins of Christmas*, *LiC* 5 (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1995), 77–79; W. A. Löhr, *Basilides und seine Schule. Eine Studie zur Theologie- und Kirchengeschichte des zweiten Jahrhunderts*, *WUNT* 83 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1996), 42–48.

to extracanonical traditions and since it is not always clear whether early patristic authors used the canonical gospels or similar independent traditions, most of these publications will appear to be relevant for the next sections as well.¹⁸

In 1950 Édouard Massaux published his thesis on the influence of the Gospel of Matthew before Irenaeus, in which he also pays attention to the other gospels.¹⁹ He points out the popularity of the Gospel of Matthew, and of the Sermon on the Mount in particular, in this period. He concludes that in comparison with Matthew, the Gospels of Luke and John are less influential, and that literary traces of the Gospel of Mark are absent.²⁰ But when in 1957 Helmut Koester (or, Köster) submitted his thesis on the synoptic tradition in the Apostolic Fathers, his conclusions differed considerably from Massaux's (whose thesis was unknown to him), for in his view words of Jesus were at that time still transmitted independently from the written gospels, so that it is often difficult to distinguish between reception of these gospels and common tradition.²¹ In 1959 F.-M. Braun published his study on the reception of the Gospel of John in the early church, but for our purpose it is not very useful.²² In 1967 A. J. Bellizoni concluded that Justin Martyr usually quoted from "post-canonical sources based on the synoptic gospels" rather than from the synoptic gospels themselves, and that "his harmonies were of a limited scope and were apparently composed for didactic purposes."²³ This hypothesis has been confirmed by Leslie L. Kline and Helmut Koester, but countered by Georg Strecker.²⁴ In 1973

¹⁸ For older research see M.-É. Boismard, "Une tradition para-synoptique attestée par les Pères anciens", in *The New Testament in Early Christianity*, ed. J. M. Sevrin, BEThL 86 (Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 177–195, at 177–181.

¹⁹ E. Massaux, *Influence de l'évangile de saint Matthieu sur la littérature chrétienne avant saint Irénée*, DGMFT II, 42 (Louvain and Gembloux, 1950); reprinted by F. Neiryck, ed., with a supplement by B. Dehandschutter, BETL 75 (Leuven: Peeters, 1986); also E. Massaux, "Le texte du sermon sur la montagne utilisé par saint Justin", *EThL* 28 (1952): 411–448.

²⁰ Massaux, *Influence*, 647–655.

²¹ H. Koester, *Synoptische Überlieferung bei den Apostolischen Vätern*, TU 65.5, 10 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957); idem, *Ancient Christian Gospels. Their History and Development* (London: SCM Press and Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1990).

²² F.-M. Braun, *Jean le Théologien et son évangile dans l'Église ancienne*, EtB (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1959).

²³ A. J. Bellizoni, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Writings of Justin Martyr*, NTS 17 (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 140–141.

²⁴ L. L. Kline, "Harmonized Sayings of Jesus in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies and Justin Martyr", *ZNW* 66 (1975): 223–241; G. Strecker, "Eine Evangelienharmonie bei Justin und Pseudoklemens?", *NTS* 24 (1978): 297–316; H. Koester, *Ancient Christian*

Donald Hagner presumed that Clement of Rome was acquainted with the synoptic gospels, but he admits that Clement's epistle provides us with little positive indication of this acquaintance.²⁵ In 1987 Wolf-Dietrich Köhler appeared less confident about the early use of the written Gospel of Matthew than Massaux in 1950, for in his thesis on the reception of Matthew before Irenaeus he concludes that in this period there was still much freedom and lack of precision in the use of written gospels.²⁶ Like Braun's book, three recent studies of the reception of the Fourth Gospel in the second century are not very useful for our purpose.²⁷

The fact that several of these monographs deal with the period before Irenaeus (Braun's study on John being the exception) suggests that Irenaeus's use of the canonical gospels differs from his predecessors. This is indeed the case, for Irenaeus is the first to maintain that only the four Gospels of Matthew, Luke, Mark, and John are authoritative.²⁸ Yet it is remarkable that, apart from his numerous explicit gospel quotations, Irenaeus also appeals to "the words of the Lord" as if these sayings were a distinct tradition, even though they occur in the gospels as well.²⁹ It is interesting that he even appeals to some extracanonical words of Jesus, to which we will come back in the fifth section.

In addition, it is noteworthy that Irenaeus refutes the opinion that Jesus preached during one year, which was based on Luke 4:19, "to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (KJV), and that he suffered in

Gospels, 360–402. For further discussion on Justin's use of a gospel harmony see C. D. Allert, *Revelation, Truth, Canon and Interpretation: Studies in Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho*, VigChr.S 64 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 20–21, 188–220, who is in favour of this hypothesis.

²⁵ D. A. Hagner, *The Use of the Old and New Testaments in Clement of Rome*, NT S 34 (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 135–178, 332–335, at 332.

²⁶ W.-D. Köhler, *Die Rezeption des Matthäusevangeliums in der Zeit vor Irenäus*, WUNT 2.24 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1987), 527–536.

²⁷ T. Nagel, *Die Rezeption des Johannesevangeliums im 2. Jahrhundert. Studien zur vorirenäischen Aneignung und Auslegung des vierten Evangeliums in christlicher und christlich-gnostischer Literatur*, ABG 2 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2000); C. E. Hill, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); B. Mutschler, *Das Corpus Johanneum bei Irenäus von Lyon. Studien und Kommentar zum dritten Buch von Adversus Haereses*, WUNT 189 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).

²⁸ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.9–11, ed. and trans. A. Rousseau, L. Doutreleau, SC 211 (Paris: Cerf, 1974).

²⁹ See H. von Campenhausen, *Die Entstehung der Christlichen Bibel*, BHTh 39 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1968), 223–237; Y.-M. Blanchard, *Aux sources du canon, le témoignage d'Irénée*, CFi 175 (Paris: Cerf, 1993), 196–229.

the twelfth month of this year. Irenaeus deduces from Luke 3:23 that when Jesus was baptized he had not yet completed his thirtieth year, and he concludes from John 8:57, where “the Jews” say to Jesus that he is not yet fifty years old, that such language is used for someone who is almost fifty. For Irenaeus this implies that Jesus had the advanced age of a master when he taught his disciples. For this view Irenaeus also invokes the authority of the presbyters who had heard this from John and the other apostles.³⁰ In 1857, W. Wigan Harvey pointed out the unsatisfactory character of this tradition.³¹

3. *Words of Jesus that May Derive from an Independent Tradition that Has Also Been Included in the Canonical Gospels*

Although it is often difficult to distinguish between the reception of the canonical gospels and independent oral traditions that have also been included into these gospels, it is inevitable to make this distinction. This comes to light, e.g., in Clement’s *Epistle to the Corinthians*, which contains two explicit sayings of Jesus. The first quotation reads, “Show mercy, that you may be shown mercy; forgive, that it may be forgiven you. As you do, so it will be done to you; as you give, so it will be given to you; as you judge, so you will be judged; as you show kindness, so will kindness be shown to you; the amount you dispense will be the amount you receive.”³² Even though this quotation is closely related to synoptic texts,³³ scholars who have studied this exhortation agree that Clement drew on an independent source.³⁴ Alfred Resch considers

³⁰ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 2.22.5–6, ed. and trans. A. Rousseau, L. Doutreleau, SC 294 (Paris: Cerf, 1982).

³¹ W. W. Harvey, *Sancti Irenaei episcopi Lugdunensis libros quinque Adversus Haereses*, vol. I (Cambridge: Typis Academicis, 1857), 331.

³² ἐλεᾶτε, ἵνα ἐλεηθῆτε· ἀφίετε, ἵνα ἀφεθῆ ὑμῖν· ὡς ποιεῖτε, οὕτω ποιηθήσεται ὑμῖν· ὡς δίδωτε, οὕτως δοθήσεται ὑμῖν· ὡς κρίνετε, οὕτως κριθήσεσθε· ὡς χρηστεύεσθε, οὕτως χρηστευθήσεται ὑμῖν· ᾧ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε, ἐν αὐτῷ μετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν. Clement, *Corinthians* 13:2, ed. and trans. B. D. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol. I, LCL 24, (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2003), 56–59.

³³ Cf. Matthew 5:7; 6:14–15; 7:1–2, 12; Mark 4:24; 11:25; Luke 6:31, 36–38.

³⁴ Massaux, *Influence*, 7–13; O. Knoch, *Eigenart und Bedeutung der Eschatologie im theologischen Aufriß des ersten Clemensbriefes. Eine Auslegungsgeschichtliche Untersuchung*, Theoph. 17 (Bonn: Peter Hanstein Verlag, 1964), 70, 73–74; M. Mees, “Schema und Dispositio in ihrer Bedeutung für die Formung der Herrenworte aus dem 1. Clemensbrief, Kap. 13,2”, *VetChr* 8 (1971): 257–272; Hagner, *Use*, 135–151; idem, “The Sayings of Jesus in the Apostolic Fathers and Justin Martyr”, in *Gospel Perspectives. The Jesus Tradition outside the Gospels*, ed. D. Wenham, vol. 5 (Sheffield: JSOT

this saying, including the non-synoptic words, “as you show kindness, so will kindness be shown to you,” an authentic word of Jesus.³⁵ It is noteworthy that both Polycarp and Clement of Alexandria also knew this saying or at least part of it, possibly thanks to Clement of Rome.³⁶ The other explicit quotation of a saying of Jesus in Clement’s epistle reads, “Woe to that person! It would have been good for him not to be born, rather than cause one of my chosen to stumble. Better for him to have a millstone cast about his neck and be drowned in the sea than to have corrupted one of my chosen.”³⁷ In this case several scholars presume that this text is taken from the Gospel of Matthew or from the synoptic gospels,³⁸ whereas others judge that it derives from independent tradition.³⁹

A similar dissension among scholars about the use either of the Gospel of Matthew or of independent tradition is true for the *Didache*. It is evident that this early Christian manual is often close to the Gospel of Matthew, especially to the Sermon on the Mount, and some scholars conclude that its author actually depended on this Gospel,⁴⁰ whereas others think that the author had access to independent Jesus tradition, so that this writing would throw light on the sources of the Gospels.⁴¹

Press, 1984), 233–268, at 234–237; Koester, *Synoptische Überlieferung*, 12–16; idem, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 66–69; Köhler, *Rezeption*, 67–71; A. Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, HNT 17 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1992), 54; H. E. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, KAV 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 214–216.

³⁵ A. Resch, *Agrapha. Aussercanonische Schriftfragmente*, 2nd ed; TU 30/NF 15.3–4 (Leipzig: Hinrich’sche Buchhandlung, 1906), 88; 386; cf. section 5.

³⁶ Polycarp, *Philippians* 2:3, ed. and trans. Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. I, LCL 24, 334–337; Clement, *Stromateis* 2.91.2 (SC 38).

³⁷ οὐαὶ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐκείνῳ· καλὸν ἦν αὐτῷ, εἰ οὐκ ἐγεννήθη, ἢ ἕνα τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν μου σκανδαλίσει· κρείττον ἦν αὐτῷ περιτεθῆναι μύλον καὶ καταποντισθῆναι εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, ἢ ἕνα τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν μου διαστρέψαι. Clement, *Corinthians* 46:8, ed. and trans. Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. I, LCL 24, 118–119.

³⁸ Massaux, *Influence*, 23–27; Köhler, *Rezeption*, 62–64; Knoch, *Eigenart und Bedeutung*, 70–72, who refers to the Gospels of both Matthew and Luke; Lindemann, *Clemensbriefe*, 137. Cf. Matthew 18:6; 26:24; Mark 9:42; 14:21; Luke 17:2; 22:22.

³⁹ Koester, *Synoptische Überlieferung*, 16–19; idem, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 69–70; Hagner, *Use*, 152–164; idem, “Sayings of Jesus”, 237–239; Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 496–498.

⁴⁰ E.g., Massaux, *Influence*, 604–641; Köhler, *Rezeption*, 19–56. C. M. Tuckett, “Synoptic Tradition in the *Didache*”, in *The New Testament in Early Christianity*, ed. J.-M. Sevrin, 197–230, concludes that the author of the *Didache* knew the finished Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

⁴¹ E.g., J.-P. Audet, *La Didachè. Instruction des apôtres*, EtB (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1958), 166–186; Hagner, “Sayings of Jesus”, 240–242; J. Draper, “The Jesus Tradition in the *Didache*”, in *Gospel Perspectives. The Jesus Tradition outside the Gospels*, ed. D. Wenham, vol. 5 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 269–287; W. Rordorf and A. Tuilier, *La*

An intermediary position is that the original text of the *Didache* was independent of the synoptic Gospels, and that later additions were influenced by them.⁴²

These different assessments of the use of the synoptic gospels, especially of the Gospel of Matthew, are also made with respect to the *Epistle of (Pseudo-)Barnabas*, the *Second Epistle of (Pseudo-)Clement*, and the Epistles of Ignatius of Antioch. In general Massaux mostly perceives a literary influence of the Gospel of Matthew in these “Apostolic Fathers”,⁴³ whereas Koester usually concludes that the authors drew on independent tradition,⁴⁴ and Köhler takes up an intermediary position. As for Justin Martyr, Köhler concludes that he quoted the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and Mark from memory and thus freely, but Köhler does not conclude that Justin drew on independent tradition that was also included into the synoptic gospels.⁴⁵ Yet Marie-Émile Boismard demonstrates with much acuity that not only Justin, but also Clement of Alexandria and other Fathers do sometimes quote an independent tradition that is more archaic than the textual form of the Gospel of Matthew.⁴⁶

doctrine des douze apôtres (Didachè), 2nd ed., SC 248^{bis} (Paris: Cerf, 1998), 83–91; H. van de Sandt, D. Flusser, *The Didache. Its Jewish Sources and its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity*, CRINT 3.5 (Assen: van Gorcum and Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 35–50; A. Milavec, “Synoptic Tradition in the *Didache* Revisited”, *J ECS* 11 (2003): 443–480; idem, *The Didache: Faith, Hope, and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.* (New York/Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 2003).

⁴² Koester, *Synoptische Überlieferung*, 159–241, at 239–241; C. N. Jefford, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, VigChr S 11 (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 144–145; K. Niederwimmer, *Die Didache*, KAV 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1989), 71–77.

⁴³ Moreover, see P. F. Beatrice, “Une citation de l’Évangile de Matthieu dans l’Épître de Barnabé”, in Sevrin, ed., *The New Testament in Early Christianity*, 231–245.

⁴⁴ In the case of Ignatius, Koester’s conclusions are confirmed by J. Smit Sibinga, “Ignatius and Matthew”, *NT* 8 (1966): 263–283, who concludes that the evidence is against Ignatius quoting Matthew.

⁴⁵ Köhler, *Rezeption*, 161–265, at 256–265; as for Justin’s knowledge of Mark, he disagrees with Massaux, *Influence*, 653, who does not find any literary influence of Mark in the literature before Irenaeus. Bellinzoni, *Sayings of Jesus*, 140, concludes that Justin used a harmony that also drew on Mark.

⁴⁶ Boismard, “Tradition para-synoptique”, 181–195; he discusses Matthew 5:16, 17, 37, and refers to many older studies.

4. *Traditions about Jesus' Teaching and Passion that are Quoted or Derived from Extracanonical Gospels*

Since extracanonical, "apocryphal" gospels are discussed as such in a previous chapter, we will give a survey only of those early patristic writings that include words of Jesus from such gospels, and some other traditions that may be related to these gospels.

Clement of Alexandria is the only second-century patristic author who explicitly quotes gospels that are now extracanonical. Although he speaks of "the four gospels that have been handed down to us"⁴⁷ and thus, like Irenaeus, recognizes their prominent position, Clement is remarkably free in drawing on other sources as well. A survey of his use of canonical and extracanonical sources has been given by J. Ruwet.⁴⁸ For example, without any reserve Clement quotes from the *Gospel of the Hebrews*: "He that wonders will reign, and he that has reigned will rest".⁴⁹ This saying is apparently meant as a word of Jesus, although Clement does not say so explicitly. In another context he quotes a longer version of this saying but without reference to the *Gospel of the Hebrews*: "He who seeks, will not stop till he finds; and having found, he will wonder; and wondering, he will reign; and reigning, he will rest".⁵⁰ With the same openness he quotes sayings from the *Traditions of Matthias*⁵¹ and from an anonymous gospel.⁵² Only when he quotes

⁴⁷ Clement, *Stromateis* 3.93.1 (GCS 52 [15]).

⁴⁸ J. Ruwet, "Clément d'Alexandrie, Canon des Écritures et Apocryphes", *Bib.* 29 (1948): 77–99, 391–408; see also J. A. Brooks, "Clement of Alexandria as a Witness to the Development of the New Testament Canon", *SecCen* 9 (1992): 41–55; Roukema, "Tradition apostolique", 99–100.

⁴⁹ ὁ θαυμάσας βασιλεύσει καὶ ὁ βασιλεύσας ἀναπαύσεται. Clement, *Stromateis* 2.45.5 (SC 38).

⁵⁰ οὐ πάσεται ὁ ζητῶν, ἕως ἂν εὕρῃ· εὐρὼν δὲ θαυμηθήσεται, θαυμηθεὶς δὲ βασιλεύσει, βασιλεύσας δὲ ἀναπαύσεται. Clement, *Stromateis* 5.96.3, ed. and trans. A. Le Boulluec, P. Voulet, SC 278 (Paris: Cerf, 1981); cf. Ruwet, "Canon", 398–400. The saying is also included in the *Gospel of Thomas* 2, ed. and trans. B. Layton, ed., *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7*, vol. I, NHS 22 (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 52–53, 113, 126.

⁵¹ Clement, *Stromateis* 2.45.4 ("Wonder at what is before you"; SC 38); Ruwet, "Canon", 401–402, doubts whether Clement personally knew this writing and thinks that he borrowed his quotations from another author.

⁵² Clement, *Stromateis* 5.63.7 ("My mystery is to me, and to the sons of my house", SC 278); cf. Ruwet, "Canon", 400–401.

Salome's dialogue with Jesus in the *Gospel of the Egyptians* does Clement sometimes display a slight reserve.⁵³

An exceptional record of a deed of Jesus noted by Clement holds that Jesus baptized Peter.⁵⁴ Since John 3:22, 3:26 and 4:1 present Jesus as a baptizer (which is "corrected" by John 4:2),⁵⁵ we should not exclude the possibility that this report of Peter's baptism is historically reliable.⁵⁶ Furthermore, Clement tells that when John wanted to feel Jesus' body, it yielded as he pressed on it and had no fleshly substance.⁵⁷ This docteric testimony is apparently borrowed from an apocryphal book.⁵⁸

Another exceptional tradition occurs in Clement's presumed *Epistle to Theodore*, which Morton Smith discovered in the Mar Saba monastery south-east of Jerusalem in 1958 and which he published in 1973.⁵⁹ The letter includes two fragments of a *Secret Gospel of Mark* that Mark had allegedly inserted into the initial, shorter version of his Gospel,

⁵³ Clement, *Stromateis* 3.45.3; 3.63.1–2; 3.64.1; 3.66.1–2; 3.92.2–93.1 (GCS 52 [15]). Jesus' answer to Salome's question, "How long shall death hold sway?" is: "As long as you women bear children". Other sayings of Jesus from the Gospel of the Egyptians are: "I came to destroy the works of the female"; his answer to Salome's remark, "I would have done better had I never given birth to a child" is: "Eat of every plant, but eat not of that which has bitterness in it"; his answer to Salome's question when she would know the answers to her questions: "When you trample on the robe of shame, and when the two shall be one, and the male with the female, and there is neither male nor female"; trans. J. E. L. Oulton, H. Chadwick, *Alexandrian Christianity*, LCC (London: SCM Press and Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), 61, 69–70, 83. Cf. Clement, *Excerpts from Theodotus* 67.2, ed. and trans. F. Sagnard, SC 23 (Paris: Cerf, 1970), 190–191; *Gospel of Thomas* 22; 37. See Ruwet, "Canon", 396–398 and S. Petersen, "Zerstört die Werke der Weiblichkeit!" *Maria Magdalena, Salome und andere Jüngerinnen Jesu in christlich-gnostischen Schriften*, NHMS 48 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 203–220.

⁵⁴ *Hypotyposesis* 5, ed. O. Stählin, L. Früchtel, GCS 17² (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1970), 196. The fragment goes on to relate that Peter baptized Andrew, and that Andrew baptized James and John, and these the others.

⁵⁵ E.g., K. Berger, *Theologiegeschichte des Urchristentums. Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen/Basel: Francke Verlag, 1995), 121–123.

⁵⁶ Church Fathers like Tertullian, Augustine, and Ambrose deduced Peter's baptism from his dialogue with Jesus in John 13:6–10, where Jesus calls Peter one who has bathed (ὁ λελουμένος). See D. A. Bertrand, "Jésus baptiste", in *Figures du Nouveau Testament chez les Pères*, ed. P. Maraval, Cahiers de Biblia Patristica 3 (Strasbourg: Centre d'Analyse et de Documentation Patristiques, 1991), 7–29, at 11–18.

⁵⁷ *In Epistolam primam Iohannis* 1.1, ed. O. Stählin, L. Früchtel (GCS 17²), 210.

⁵⁸ See the *Acts of John* 89; 93, ed. and trans. E. Junod and J.-D. Kaestli, *Acta Ioannis*, CCSA 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1983), 192–193, 196–197.

⁵⁹ M. Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1973).

and that are discussed elsewhere in this volume.⁶⁰ Since, except for Morton Smith, only a few scholars actually saw the manuscript,⁶¹ and it has been lost since then so that no one else had the opportunity to investigate it, this text has been suspected of being a falsification, although many scholars gave it the benefit of the doubt. However, when S. C. Carlson investigated the circumstances of the presumed discovery and scrutinized the photographs of the manuscript, he was able to prove definitely that the *Epistle to Theodore* and thus the fragments of the *Secret Gospel of Mark* were written by Morton Smith himself.⁶²

Apart from the works of Clement of Alexandria, the only other second century writing that apparently includes words of Jesus from extracanonical gospels is the *Second Epistle of (Pseudo-)Clement*.⁶³ Although the author quotes a good many words of Jesus that are known from or similar to the canonical gospels, this is not true of all his quotations.⁶⁴ Once the author explicitly refers to “the gospel” and quotes a saying of Jesus that occurs only partially in the canonical gospels. It reads, “For the Lord says in the gospel, ‘If you do not keep what is small, who will give you what is great? For I say you that the one who is faithful in very little is faithful also in much.’”⁶⁵ Koester suggests that

⁶⁰ See T. Nicklas’ article.

⁶¹ G. G. Stroumsa, “Comments on Charles Hedrick’s Article: A Testimony”, *J ECS* 11 (2003): 147–153, relates that David Flusser, Shlomo Pines, Archimandrite Meliton, and he himself saw the text in 1976.

⁶² S. C. Carlson, *The Gospel Hoax. Morton Smith’s Invention of Secret Mark* (Baylor University Press: Waco TX, 2005). See also A. Le Boulluec, “La lettre sur l’« Évangile Secret » de Marc et le *Quis Dives Salvetur* ? de Clément d’Alexandrie”, *Apocrypha* 7 (1996): 27–41; A. Jakab, “Une lettre « perdue » de Clément d’Alexandrie ? (Morton Smith et l’« Évangile Secret » de Marc)”, *Apocrypha* 10 (1999): 7–15; C. W. Hedrick, “The Secret Gospel of Mark: Stalemate in the Academy”, *J ECS* 11 (2003): 133–145; B. D. Ehrman, “Response to Charles Hedrick’s Stalemate”, *J ECS* 11 (2003): 155–163; E. Rau, *Das Geheime Markusevangelium. Ein Schriftfund voller Rätsel* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2003); P. Jeffrey, *The Secret Gospel of Mark Unveiled. Imagined Rituals of Sex, Death, and Madness in a Biblical Forgery* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

⁶³ For the presumed date of this writing see, e.g., Lindemann, *Clemensbriefe*, 195.

⁶⁴ See Massaux, *Influence*, 139–155; Koester, *Synoptische Überlieferung*, 62–111; *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 353–360; K. P. Donfried, *The Setting of Second Clement in Early Christianity*, NT S 38 (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 49–82, at 79–82; Hagner, “Sayings of Jesus”, 244–246; Köhler, *Rezeption*, 129–149.

⁶⁵ εἰ τὸ μικρὸν οὐκ ἐτηρήσατε, τὸ μέγα τίς ὑμῖν δώσει; λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ πιστὸς ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ καὶ ἐν πολλῷ πιστὸς ἐστίν. 2 *Clement* 8:5, ed. and trans. Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. I, LCL 24: 176–177; the second part of this saying corresponds to Luke 16:10. The first part corresponds to Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 2.34.3 (SC 294); see section 5, where we note that no claims for its authenticity have been made.

the author of *2 Clement* used a collection of words of Jesus based on Matthew, Luke, elaborations of synoptic words, and apocryphal texts, which collection was called “the Gospel” in 8:5.⁶⁶ According to R. Warns, all extracanonical sayings of Jesus quoted in *2 Clement* should be ascribed to this unknown gospel.⁶⁷ Yet neither Koester’s nor Warns’ thesis can be proven.⁶⁸ Since one of *2 Clement*’s extracanonical quotations is similar to Clement of Alexandria’s extracts from the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, the author might also have drawn on this gospel. The text in question reads, “For when the Lord himself was asked by someone when his kingdom would come, he said, ‘When the two are one, and the outside like the inside, and the male with the female is neither male nor female’, [then] ‘the kingdom of my Father will come’”.⁶⁹ Alfred Resch once defended the authenticity of this saying, but this confidence is not shared generally.⁷⁰ Koester thinks that another extracanonical saying of Jesus in *2 Clement* partially corresponds to the *Gospel of the Nazarenes*. It reads, “Even if you were nestled close to my breast but did not do what I have commanded, I would cast you away and say to you, ‘Leave me! I do not know where you are from, you who do what

⁶⁶ Koester, *Synoptische Überlieferung*, 110; *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 353–355.

⁶⁷ R. Warns, “Untersuchungen zum 2. Clemensbrief” (Dissertation, Marburg, 1989), 466–468, referred to by Lindemann, *Clemensbriefe*, 194.

⁶⁸ Cf. Hagner, *Use*, 282; Köhler, *Rezeption*, 147.

⁶⁹ ὅταν ἔσται τὰ δύο ἓν, καὶ τὸ ἔξω ὡς τὸ ἔσω, καὶ τὸ ἄρσεν μετὰ τῆς θηλείας, οὕτε ἄρσεν οὕτε θῆλυ... ἐλεύσεται ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ πατρὸς μου. *2 Clement* 12:2, 6, ed. and trans. Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. I, LCL 24: 182–185; cf. Clement, *Stromateis* 3.92.2 (GCS 52 [15]; see note 53); *Gospel of Thomas* 22. Since the other extracanonical quotations in *2 Clement* are not paralleled by the *Gospel of Thomas*, it is unlikely that he used this Gospel; cf. Donfried, *Setting*, 73–77, who also concludes that because of the dissimilarities with the *Gospel of the Egyptians* there is little reason to believe that *2 Clement* is dependent on this Gospel (see also *Setting*, 152–154).

⁷⁰ See T. Baarda, “2 Clement 12 and the Sayings of Jesus”, in *Logia. Les paroles de Jésus—The Sayings of Jesus*, ed. J. Delobel, BETL 59 (Leuven: Peeters, 1982), 529–556, at 551–553; also in T. Baarda, *Early Transmission of Words of Jesus. Thomas, Tatian and the Text of the New Testament* (Amsterdam: Free University Press, 1983), 261–288; he refers to A. Resch, “Miscellen zur neutestamentliche Schriftforschung, VI. Gal. 3,28 = Clem. Rom. II, 12,2”, *ZKWL* 9 (1888): 232–245. Later, Resch wrote more cautiously that the saying corresponds to Jesus’ teaching, in *Agrapha. Aussercanonische Schriftfragmente*, 2nd ed., TU 30/NF 15.3–4 (Leipzig, Hinrich’sche Buchhandlung, 1906), 95. D. M. MacDonald, *There is no Male and Female. The Fate of a Dominical Saying in Paul and Gnosticism*, HDR 20 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), maintains that the saying is very ancient, although he makes no judgement concerning its authenticity as a saying of Jesus; he assumes that Paul used it in Galatians 3:26–28. J. D. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus. The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 295–298, holds that it is an interpretation of a saying of the historical Jesus.

is lawless”.⁷¹ Köhler, however, doubts whether the attribution of the extracanonical words of this saying to the *Gospel of the Nazarenes* is correct.⁷² One may conclude that, as long as the presumed collection of words of Jesus allegedly used in *2 Clement* has not been rediscovered, it is wiser to classify this and other extracanonical words of Jesus quoted in *2 Clement* as independent *agrapha*, which will be discussed in the following section.

We will close this section by pointing out that Justin Martyr may have known and used the *Gospel of Peter*. Although Bellinzoni concludes that there are no parallels between Justin’s text of the sayings of Jesus and the *Gospel of Peter*, and Graham N. Stanton maintains that there is no evidence that Justin knew or used any apocryphal gospel, Adolf Harnack and Peter Pilhofer show that there are some correspondences between Justin’s discussion of Jesus’ passion and precisely the *Gospel of Peter*.⁷³ Among other, perhaps less convincing similarities both Harnack and Pilhofer point out that both Justin and the *Gospel of Peter* relate that the Jews (and not the Roman soldiers) mocked Jesus, saying “judge us” or “judge righteously, king of Israel”, and that the Jews (and not the Roman soldiers) crucified him.⁷⁴ For Pilhofer the proof of Justin’s knowledge of the *Gospel of Peter* is that both use the rare (and non-canonical) word λαχμός (“lot”) when the Jews cast lots in order

⁷¹ ἐὰν ᾗτε μετ’ ἐμοῦ συνηγμένοι ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ μου καὶ μὴ ποιήτε τὰς ἐντολάς μου, ἀποβαλῶ ὑμᾶς καὶ ἐρῶ ὑμῖν· ὑπάγετε ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ, οὐκ οἶδα ὑμᾶς, πόθεν ἐστέ, ἐργάται ἀνομίας, *2 Clement* 4:5, ed. and trans. Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. I, LCL 24: 170–171; Koester, *Synoptische Überlieferung*, 91–93; *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 355–357. Resch, *Agrapha*², 168, and J. H. Ropes, *Die Sprüche Jesu die in den kanonischen Evangelien nicht überliefert sind* (see note 79), 57–58, consider this text a mixture of “canonical” texts (Matthew 7:23; 25:12; Luke 13:25–27; John 13:23; 14:21; 15:10, 14).

⁷² Köhler, *Rezeption*, 143–144, 288–302. Resch, *Agrapha*², 168, does not consider it an original word of Jesus.

⁷³ Bellinzoni, *Sayings of Jesus*, 139; G. N. Stanton, “Jesus Traditions and Gospels in Justin Martyr and Irenaeus”, in *The Biblical Canons*, ed. J.-M. Auers, H. J. de Jonge, BETL 153 (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 353–370, at 364; A. Harnack, *Bruchstücke des Evangeliums und der Apokalypse des Petrus*, TU 9.2 (Leipzig, Hinrich’sche Buchhandlung, 1893), 37–41; P. Pilhofer, “Justin und das Petrus-evangelium”, *ZNW* 81 (1990): 60–78. Bellinzoni, *Sayings of Jesus*, 139, points at the difference between Jesus’ word on the cross in Justin’s *Dialogue* 99.1 (PTS 47), “God, God, why have you forsaken me?” and the *Gospel of Peter* 6.19, ed. and trans. M. G. Mara, SC 201 (Paris: Cerf, 1973), “My power, [my] power, you have forsaken me”.

⁷⁴ κρῖνον ἡμῖν. Justin, *1 Apology* 35.6, ed. M. Marcovich, PTS 38 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994); δικαίως κρῖνε, βασιλεῦ Ἰσραηλ. *Gospel of Peter* 3.7 (SC 201); Harnack, *Bruchstücke*, 38–39; Pilhofer, “Justin”, 69–73.

to divide Jesus' cloths.⁷⁵ John Dominic Crossan hypothesizes that the *Gospel of Peter* goes back to a very early "Cross Gospel" (from the middle of the first century CE), which implies that the traditions that Justin seems to have borrowed from it might be more reliable than the accounts of the canonical gospels.⁷⁶ According to the present author, however, there is no basis for attributing historicity to these details, which exonerate the Romans from Jesus' death to the detriment of the Jews.

5. *Agrapha that Seem to be Transmitted Independently*

In 1776 J. G. Körner introduced the term *agrapha* as a designation of sayings of Jesus that have been transmitted apart from the New Testament.⁷⁷ In some way this term has historical roots, for in the second century it was used for the secret teaching that Jesus had allegedly transmitted to a small number of his disciples, and to which we will come back in the following section. However, in research of the last centuries the term *agrapha* is, with some variations, mostly used in the meaning introduced by Körner.⁷⁸ In 1889 Alfred Resch wrote an important study of the extracanonical words of Jesus that were known at that time, in which he launched the hypothesis that originally there was a Hebrew gospel consisting of words of Jesus, upon which the authors of the synoptic gospels and of the New Testament epistles would have drawn. Because of the criticism of this theory by several reviewers, of whom James Hardy Ropes was the most prominent, and since in the meantime other sayings of Jesus had been found in Oxyrhynchus, Resch published an improved and enlarged second edition in 1906, in which he however maintained his theory of an early source used by the New Testament

⁷⁵ Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 97.3 (PTS 47); *Gospel of Peter* 4,12 (SC 201); Pilhofer, "Justin", 73–75; also Harnack, *Bruchstücke*, 39.

⁷⁶ J. D. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke. The Origins of the Passion Narrative* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 16–30, 60, 188, 191–197, 404–410.

⁷⁷ J. G. Koerner, *De sermonibus Christi ἀγράφοις* (Dissertation, Leipzig, 1776), as mentioned by Resch, *Agrapha*², 1 (where 1776 should be read instead of 1778); 14.

⁷⁸ J. P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew. Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, ABRL (New York: 1991), 1:112, explains the term *agrapha* as "unwritten [sayings and deeds]" of Jesus (emphasis RR).

authors.⁷⁹ Resch's and Ropes' fundamental studies also contain surveys of older research on extracanonical words of Jesus.⁸⁰

Resch points to the different meanings that can be attached to the term *agrapha*. If it is used in opposition to γράφειν or γραφή in general, it refers to oral tradition. It may also be used in opposition to the canonical Scriptures, so that both isolated extracanonical words of Jesus and sayings that occur in apocryphal writings like the *Gospel of the Hebrews* and the *Gospel of the Egyptians* are all considered *agrapha*. Yet Resch prefers to restrict the term to the category of extracanonical sayings of Jesus that have been transmitted apart from the apocryphal writings, and thus to distinguish between *agrapha* and *apocrypha*.⁸¹ In his conclusions Resch gives a list of thirty-six *agrapha* that he considers authentic words of Jesus.⁸² Ropes is more restrictive; he counts fourteen *agrapha* that are, in his view, probably authentic words of Jesus.⁸³ However, both Resch and Ropes take these *agrapha* from all possible sources, even from the New Testament itself, of which the most evident one is Jesus' saying quoted in Acts 20:35, "It is more blessed to give than to receive".⁸⁴ Furthermore, they draw their selections of highly valuable *agrapha* from New Testament manuscripts,⁸⁵ patristic literature of several centuries, and, in the case of Ropes, from the *Gospel of the Hebrews* and the *Talmud*.⁸⁶ This implies that many of their selected *agrapha* are not relevant to the present chapter.

⁷⁹ A. Resch, *Agrapha. Ausserkanonische Evangelienfragmente in möglichster Vollständigkeit zusammengestellt und quellenkritisch untersucht*, TU 5.4 (Leipzig: Hinrich'sche Buchhandlung, 1889); idem, *Agrapha. Aussercanonische Schriftfragmente*, 2nd ed., TU 30/NF 15.3-4 (Leipzig: Hinrich'sche Buchhandlung, 1906) (we refer to the second edition); J. H. Ropes, *Die Sprüche Jesu die in den kanonischen Evangelien nicht überliefert sind. Eine kritische Bearbeitung des von D. Alfred Resch gesammelten Materials*, TU 14.3 (Leipzig: Hinrich'sche Buchhandlung, 1896).

⁸⁰ Resch, *Agrapha*², 1; 11-22; Ropes, *Sprüche*, 1-10.

⁸¹ Resch, *Agrapha*², 2.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 385-387.

⁸³ Ropes, *Sprüche Jesu*, 160-161.

⁸⁴ Resch, *Agrapha*², 24-25, 385; Ropes, *Sprüche Jesu*, 136-137, 160. Strangely enough, Resch does not pay any attention to 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, which Ropes, *Sprüche Jesu*, 152-154, 161, considers a probably authentic saying of Jesus.

⁸⁵ For example, the pericope of the adulterous woman (John 7:53-8:11) is also considered an *agraphon*; Resch, *Agrapha*², 386. Ropes, *Sprüche Jesu*, 144, 160, notes that one may assume that Papias says of this passage that it occurs in the *Gospel of the Hebrews*; see Eusebius, *Church History* 3.39.17, ed. and trans. K. Lake, vol. I, LCL 153 (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heineman, 1926).

⁸⁶ Ropes, *Sprüche Jesu*, 145-151.

In 1948 Joachim Jeremias published another survey of twenty-one *agrapha* that he considered most valuable, ten of which he regarded as authentic words of Jesus. In 1963 he published an enlarged and revised third edition in which he selected eighteen *agrapha* that in his view might be historically authentic.⁸⁷ Most of these sayings occur either in the New Testament (Acts 20:35; 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17), in New Testament manuscripts, in Oxyrhynchus papyri, or in extracanonical gospels, so that only a few sayings of his selection stem from the early patristic literature discussed in this chapter.

In the present chapter we follow Resch's distinction between words of Jesus quoted from extracanonical gospels (which were discussed in section 4),⁸⁸ and other words that cannot be attributed to one of the extracanonical gospels and seem to be transmitted independently. However, in the preceding section we saw that sometimes it is difficult to establish the provenance of sayings that might be quoted from extracanonical gospels, although this is not said explicitly. In any case, we will now deal with those *agrapha* of Jesus that have been quoted by patristic authors of the period we investigate, where these were not mentioned in the preceding sections.

In the beginning of the second century, Papias of Hierapolis appears to be an important person for the collection of oral Jesus traditions, for Eusebius quotes from his five books entitled *Interpretation of the Lord's Sayings* that he preferred the *viva vox* (ζῶση φωνή καὶ μενούσα) of presbyters who had known Jesus' apostles and other disciples to written documents.⁸⁹ Several scholars pointed out that Papias' preference for oral transmission of a master's teaching stands in a firm Greek tradition.⁹⁰ However, since his *Interpretation of the Lord's Sayings* itself

⁸⁷ J. Jeremias, *Unbekannte Jesusworte*, AThANT 16 (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1948; 3rd ed. Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1963) (we refer to the third edition).

⁸⁸ In addition, see T. Nicklas' articles in this volume

⁸⁹ Eusebius, *Church History* 3.39.1–17 (LCL 153). See U. H. J. Körtner, *Papias von Hierapolis. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des frühen Christentums*, FRLANT 133 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983); J. Kürzinger, *Papias von Hierapolis und die Evangelien des Neuen Testaments*, EichM 4 (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1983).

⁹⁰ L. Alexander, "The Living Voice: Scepticism towards the Written Word in Early Christian and in Graeco-Roman Texts", in *The Bible in Three Dimensions. Essays in Celebration of Forty Years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield*, ed. D. J. A. Clines, S. E. Fowl, and S. E. Porter, JSOT S 87 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1990), 221–247; W. A. Lohr, "Kanongeschichtliche Beobachtungen zum Verhältnis von mündlicher und schriftlicher Tradition im zweiten Jahrhundert", ZNW 85 (1994): 234–258; J. Mansfeld, "Papias over traditie", *NedThT* 49 (1995): 140–153; A. D. Baum, "Papias, der Vorzug der *viva vox* und die Evangelienchriften", *NTS* 44 (1998): 144–151.

is lost, we depend on early testimonies to his collection.⁹¹ Of the remaining fragments only one text contains an otherwise unknown saying of Jesus, followed by a short dialogue with Judas. The *agraphon* has been transmitted by Irenaeus and deals with the abundant fertility of the earth during the eschatological millennium, which was doubted by Judas.⁹² Scholars who have studied this description of the millennium, which resembles several Jewish apocalyptic texts, do not accept it as an authentic saying of Jesus.⁹³

The *Epistle of (Pseudo-)Barnabas* contains three *agrapha* that are, or may be, attributed to Jesus (apart from other *agrapha* that are quoted as Old Testament texts). The first one is introduced by “the Lord says” and reads, “See! I am making the final things like the first”.⁹⁴ This saying resembles the synoptic text, “So the last will be first, and the first will be last”,⁹⁵ and Revelation 21:4–5, “for the first things have passed away . . . See, I am making all things new”. Resch interprets “the Lord” as Jesus, but he does not conclude that this is an authentic saying, and Ropes agrees.⁹⁶ Koester, however, holds that the expression “the Lord says” points to an Old Testament apocryphon.⁹⁷ The second *agraphon* concerning Jesus deals with the question why the priests alone had to eat the intestines of the scapegoat, unwashed, with vinegar (the source of which is unknown).⁹⁸ The answer is, “Why is this? Since you are about to give me gall mixed with vinegar to drink—when I am about to offer my flesh on behalf of the sins of my new people—you alone are to eat, while the people fast and mourn in sackcloth and ashes”.⁹⁹

⁹¹ The fragments have been edited by R. M. Hübner and translated by J. Kürzinger, in Kürzinger, *Papias*, 89–138.

⁹² Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.33.3–4, ed. and trans. A. Rousseau, L. Doutreleau, C. Mercier, SC 153 (Paris: Cerf, 1969); Kürzinger, *Papias*, 94–95.

⁹³ Resch, *Agrapha*², 166–167; Ropes, *Sprüche Jesu*, 109–111; Jeremias, *Unbekannte Jesusworte*³, 37–38; Körtner, *Papias*, 97–107; J. D. Dubois, “Remarques sur le fragment de Papias cité par Irénée”, *RHPhR* 71 (1991): 3–10.

⁹⁴ ἰδοῦ, ποιῶ τὰ ἔσχατα ὡς τὰ πρῶτα. *Barnabas* 6:13, ed. and trans. Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. II, LCL 25 (Cambridge MA/London: Harvard University Press, 2003), 34–35.

⁹⁵ Matthew 20:16; cf. 19:30; Mark 10:31.

⁹⁶ Resch, *Agrapha*², 167–168; Ropes, *Sprüche Jesu*, 43–44.

⁹⁷ Koester, *Synoptische Überlieferung*, 127. P. Prigent and R. A. Kraft, *Épître de Barnabé*, SC 172 (Paris: Cerf, 1971), 125, and F. R. Prostmeier, *Der Barnabasbrief*, KAV 8 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 275–276, do not interpret this text as an authentic saying of Jesus.

⁹⁸ *Barnabas* 7:4, ed. and trans. Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. II, LCL 25.

⁹⁹ πρὸς τί; ἐπειδὴ ἐμὲ ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν μέλλοντα τοῦ λαοῦ μου τοῦ καινοῦ προσφέρειν τὴν σάρκα μου μέλλετε ποτίζειν χολὴν μετὰ ὄξους, φάγετε ὑμεῖς μόνοι, τοῦ λαοῦ

This is apparently meant to be a saying of Jesus, but Koester correctly judges that it has been shaped by the author.¹⁰⁰ The third *agraphon* is explicitly attributed to Jesus and reads, “And so he says: those who wish to see me and touch my kingdom must take hold of me through pain and suffering”.¹⁰¹ Resch is optimistic about its authenticity, but Ropes judges that by these words the author summarizes and explains his preceding passage and does so by introducing Jesus without the intention to quote a traditional saying.¹⁰²

Justin Martyr transmits three *agrapha* in his *Dialogue with Trypho*. The first one reads, “There will be divisions and factions”.¹⁰³ According to Resch this is an authentic word of Jesus quoted by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:19 (“there have to be factions among you”), but Ropes rejects this hypothesis; Jeremias considers the saying possibly authentic.¹⁰⁴ Justin’s second *agraphon* reads, “In whatsoever things I shall apprehend you, in them also I shall judge you”.¹⁰⁵ In Resch’s view this is an authentic saying of Jesus, but this judgement is generally denied, since Clement of Alexandria¹⁰⁶ and many other Fathers quote similar forms of this saying without attributing it to Jesus, and some of them consider it a quotation from Ezekiel.¹⁰⁷ Justin’s third *agraphon* is for-

νηστεύοντος καὶ κοπτομένου ἐπὶ σάκκου καὶ σποδοῦ. *Barnabas* 7:5, ed. and trans. Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. II, LCL 25.

¹⁰⁰ Koester, *Synoptische Überlieferung*, 128, 148–152; similarly Prigent and Kraft, *Épître de Barnabé*, 132; Prostmeier, *Barnabasbrief*, 296–298. Resch, *Agrapha*², and Ropes, *Sprüche Jesu*, do not discuss this text.

¹⁰¹ οὕτω, φησὶν, οἱ θέλοντές με ἰδεῖν καὶ ἅψασθαί μου τῆς βασιλείας ὀφείλουσιν θλιβέντες καὶ παθόντες λαβεῖν με. *Barnabas* 7:11, ed. and trans. Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. II, LCL 25.

¹⁰² Resch, *Agrapha*², 89–90; Ropes, *Sprüche Jesu*, 17–18. Koester, *Synoptische Überlieferung*, 127, and Prostmeier, *Barnabasbrief*, 316–317, agree with Ropes, but according to Prigent and Kraft, *Épître de Barnabé*, 137, it is unlikely that the author coined this saying.

¹⁰³ ἔσονται σχίσματα καὶ αἰρέσεις. Justin, *Dialogue* 35.3 (PTS 47).

¹⁰⁴ Resch, *Agrapha*², 100–101, 386; Ropes, *Sprüche Jesu*, 96–97; Jeremias, *Unbekannte Jesusworte*³, 74–75. Cf. Bellinzoni, *Sayings of Jesus*, 101–102, 131; Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 361–362, 371–374. All these authors also refer to later patristic citations of this saying.

¹⁰⁵ ἐν οἷς ἂν ὑμᾶς καταλάβω, ἐν τούτοις καὶ κρινῶ. Justin, *Dialogue*, 47.5 (PTS 47); trans. Th. B. Falls, FaCh 6 (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1948).

¹⁰⁶ Clement, *The Rich Man’s Salvation* 40, ed. and trans. G. W. Butterworth, LCL 92 (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press / London: William Heinemann, 1919), 352–353.

¹⁰⁷ Resch, *Agrapha*², 102, 322–325, 386; Ropes, *Sprüche Jesu*, 137–140; A. J. Bellinzoni, “The Source of the Agraphon in Justin Martyr’s *Dialogue with Trypho* 47:5”, *VigChr* 17 (1963): 65–70; idem, *Sayings of Jesus*, 131–134.

mulated in indirect speech; Jesus predicts that after his resurrection on the third day he had to “appear again at Jerusalem to eat and to drink with his disciples; and predicted that in the meantime before his second advent there would arise, as I already stated, heresies and false prophets in his name”.¹⁰⁸ Resch analyses the traditions included in this saying without pleading for its authenticity.¹⁰⁹

One more saying of Jesus reported by Justin may be worth quoting, although its authenticity is not acknowledged. In his first *Apology*, when explaining the meaning of baptism, Justin quotes Christ as follows: “Unless you are born again, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven”.¹¹⁰ With regard to the related texts in John 3:3 and 3:5 (“Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God”; “unless one is born of water and spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God”; RSV), Bellinzoni concludes that “Justin has independently preserved a liturgical baptismal text in an older form than that found in John”, and that this “is the only instance where Justin quotes a pre-gospel tradition”.¹¹¹ Other scholars, like Köhler and Nagel, are less confident that Justin makes use of a pre-gospel tradition and suggest that, apart from Matthew 18:3 (“Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven”), he consciously or unconsciously alludes to the Gospel of John.¹¹²

In a treatise *On the Resurrection*, which was formerly attributed to Justin but is now generally held not to be by him, Resch finds the

¹⁰⁸ ... καὶ παλιν παραγενήσεσθαι ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ, καὶ τότε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ συμπιεῖν πάλιν καὶ συμφαγεῖν· καὶ ἐν τῷ μεταξύ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ χρόνῳ, ὡς προέφην, γενήσεσθαι αἱρέσεις καὶ ψευδοπροφήτας ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ προεμήνυσε. Justin, *Dialogue*, 51.2 (PTS 47; Marcovich’s reading αἱρέσεις is his emendation of ἱερεῖς (“priests”) in the manuscript; moreover, after ψευδοπροφήτας he adds <καὶ ψευδοχρίστους> from Matthew 24:24 and *Dialogue* 35.15–16; 82.10).

¹⁰⁹ Resch, *Agrapha*², 172–174; cf., e.g., Acts 1:4; 10:41; Ignatius, *Smyrneans* 3:3 (LCL 24).

¹¹⁰ ἂν μὴ ἀναγεννηθῆτε, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν. Justin, *1 Apology* 61.4, ed. E. J. Goodspeed, *Die ältesten Apologeten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1914); Justin continues, ὅτι δὲ καὶ ἀδύνατον εἰς τὰς μήτρας τῶν τεκουσῶν τοὺς ἀπαξ γενομένους ἐμβῆναι, φανερόν πάνσιν ἐστί (“Now it is clear to all that it is impossible for those who have once come into being to enter into their mothers’ wombs”; *1 Apology* 61.5, ed. Goodspeed; Marcovich, PTS 38, reads γεννωμένους instead of γενομένους), which corresponds to John 3:4, although the wording is different; translation L. W. Barnard, *St. Justin Martyr: The First and Second Apologies*, ACW 56 (New York and Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 1997).

¹¹¹ Bellinzoni, *Sayings of Jesus*, 134–138, at 136–137, 138. Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 361, agrees.

¹¹² Köhler, *Rezeption*, 207–209; Nagel, *Rezeption*, 96–100.

following *agraphon*, which he considers authentic: “He said that our dwelling-place is in heaven”;¹¹³ he thinks that this saying was part of the presumed extracanonical gospel that would have been used by several New Testament authors.¹¹⁴ Ropes, however, does not consider these words a real quotation, but a free rendering of a well-known early Christian idea that also occurs in New Testament texts.¹¹⁵

Apart from the three extracanonical sayings of Jesus in 2 *Clement* that were discussed in section 4, one other *agraphon* deserves to be mentioned, although Resch does not claim its authenticity. It is included in the following dialogue: “For the Lord said, ‘You will be like sheep in the midst of wolves’. But Peter replied to him, ‘What if the wolves rip apart the sheep?’ Jesus said to Peter, ‘After they are dead, the sheep should fear the wolves no longer. So too you: do not fear those who kill you and then can do nothing more to you; but fear the one who, after you die, has the power to cast your body and soul into the hell of fire.’”¹¹⁶ Interestingly, Ropes considers this dialogue probably authentic.¹¹⁷

We saw that Irenaeus quotes one of Papias’ testimonies to sayings of Jesus. Two other *agrapha* occur in his extant works. The first one reads, according to the Greek text preserved by Epiphanius and the Latin translation, “I have often desired (ἐπεθύμησα) to hear one of these words, and I had (ἔσχον) no one who uttered them”, but the editors conjecture that the text should read, “They have often desired (ἐπεθύμησαν) to hear one of these words, and they had (ἔσχον) no one

¹¹³ καθὼς εἶρηκεν, ἐν οὐρανῷ τὴν κατοίκησιν ὑπάρχειν. Pseudo-Justin, *On the Resurrection* 9, ed. M. Heimgartner, PTS 54 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001).

¹¹⁴ Resch, *Agrapha*², 103–104, 386; he refers to Philipians 3:20; 2 Corinthians 5:1–2; Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 12:22; 13:14; John 14:2.

¹¹⁵ Ropes, *Sprüche Jesu*, 32–33.

¹¹⁶ λέγει γὰρ ὁ κύριος: ἔσεσθε ὡς ἀρνία ἐν μέσῳ λύκων. ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Πέτρος αὐτῷ λέγει· ἐὰν οὖν διασπαράξωσιν οἱ λύκοι τὰ ἀρνία; εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ Πέτρῳ· μὴ φοβείσθωσαν τὰ ἀρνία τοὺς λύκους μετὰ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν αὐτά; καὶ ὑμεῖς μὴ φοβείσθε τοὺς ἀποκτείνοντας ὑμᾶς καὶ μηδὲν ὑμῖν δυναμένους ποιεῖν, ἀλλὰ φοβείσθε τὸν μετὰ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν ὑμᾶς ἔχοντα ἐξουσίαν ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος τοῦ βαλεῖν εἰς γέενναν πυρός. 2 *Clement* 5:2–4, ed. and trans. Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. I, LCL 24: 170–173; cf. Matthew 10:16; 10:28; Luke 10:3; 12:4–5; Resch, *Agrapha*², 169–170. Koester, *Synoptische Überlieferung*, 94–99 speaks of “sekundäre Bildung” and suggests that it may originate from the *Gospel of the Nazarenes* (98–99); Köhler, *Rezeption*, 144–146, also supposes an extracanonical source.

¹¹⁷ Ropes, *Sprüche Jesu*, 146–147; 161.

who uttered them”.¹¹⁸ This conjecture is confirmed by the plural in a similar saying in the *Gospel of Thomas*, “Many times you have desired to hear these words which I am saying to you, and you have no one else to hear them from”.¹¹⁹ Moreover, this saying is paralleled by Matthew 13:17 (“Many prophets and righteous men longed... to hear what you hear, but did not hear it”) and Luke 10:24 (“Many prophets and kings desired... to hear what you hear, but did not hear it”).¹²⁰ The second *agraphon* quoted by Irenaeus reads, “If you have not been faithful in that which is small, who will give you that which is great?”¹²¹ and corresponds to the quotation from “the gospel” in *2 Clement* 8:5 which was discussed in the preceding section. Neither Resch nor Ropes makes a claim for its authenticity.¹²²

Apart from Clement of Alexandria’s quotations from extracanonical Gospels, discussed in section 4, he is also a rich source of (other) *agrapha*, of which we will discuss the most important ones.¹²³ He quotes, apparently as a word of Jesus, “Seek what is great, he says, and the small things will be added unto you”,¹²⁴ which is similar to Matthew 6:33 (“Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you”, according to Codex Sinaiticus). Resch considers it an authentic saying, and Ropes and Jeremias think that it may be authentic.¹²⁵ Ruwet, however, calls it a “pseudo-logion”.¹²⁶ Clement is the first author who quotes as a text from Scripture a saying that was

¹¹⁸ πολλὰκις ἐπεθύμησα[ν] ἀκοῦσαι ἓνα τῶν λόγων τούτων, καὶ οὐκ ἔσχον τὸν ἐροῦντα. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.20.2, ed., trans., and notes A. Rousseau, L. Doutreleau, SC 263, 290–291; SC 264, 264–265.

¹¹⁹ *Gospel of Thomas* 38, trans. T. O. Lambdin, in *Nag Hammadi Codex II*, 2–7, ed. B. Layton, vol. I (NHS 20), 69.

¹²⁰ Resch, *Agrapha*², 179, and Ropes, *Sprüche Jesu*, 56–57, regard this text as a parallel of the synoptic saying.

¹²¹ *Si in modico fideles non fuistis, quod magnum est quis dabit uobis?* Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 2.34.3 (SC 294).

¹²² Resch, *Agrapha*², 170; Ropes, *Sprüche Jesu*, 16–17.

¹²³ They have been collected and investigated by J. Ruwet, “Les « Agrapha » dans les œuvres de Clément d’Alexandrie”, *Bib.* 30 (1949): 133–160.

¹²⁴ αἰτεῖσθε γάρ, φησί, τὰ μεγάλα, καὶ τὰ μικρὰ ὑμῖν προστεθήσεται. Clement, *Stromateis* 1.158.2 (SC 30); cf. 4.34.6, ed. and trans. A. van den Hoek and C. Mondésert SC 463 (Paris: Cerf, 2001).

¹²⁵ Resch, *Agrapha*², 111–112; 387; Ropes, *Sprüche Jesu*, 140; Jeremias, *Unbekannte Jesusworte*³, 94–95. These authors also indicate where Origen and other Church Fathers quoted this *agraphon* and added καὶ αἰτεῖτε τὰ ἐπουράνια, καὶ τὰ ἐπίγεια ὑμῖν προστεθήσεται (“Seek the heavenly things, and the earthly things will be added unto you”).

¹²⁶ Ruwet, “Agrapha”, 138–139.

very popular in early Christianity and was considered a word of Jesus, “Be skilful money-changers”.¹²⁷ Resch does indeed accept this as an authentic word of Jesus, and Ropes and Jeremias rank it among the *agrapha* that are possibly authentic.¹²⁸ Next, Clement quotes as a saying of the Lord, “Let not the married person seek a divorce, nor the unmarried person marriage; he who has confessed his intention of being celibate, let him remain unmarried”,¹²⁹ which seems to be inspired by 1 Corinthians 7:27 and 7:32–36. Resch suggests that it may stem from the *Gospel of the Egyptians*; Ropes agrees and emphasizes that it cannot be authentic.¹³⁰ In his sermon on the rich man’s salvation (on Mark 10:17–31) Clement quotes as a saying of the Lord, “For I will give not only to my friends, but also to the friends of my friends”.¹³¹ This means that Jesus will be lenient towards those who give alms to the poor. However, Ruwet speaks of a “pseudo-citation” coined by Clement.¹³² In his *Excerpts from Theodotus* he quotes a word of the Saviour that was in use among the Valentinians, “Save yourself and your soul”.¹³³ Ropes rejects this as a word of Jesus, but according to Jeremias it may be authentic.¹³⁴ All other presumed *agrapha* in Clement’s works are either not clearly attributed to Jesus, or are too close to canonical texts to be discussed here and should be considered free quotations.

¹²⁷ γίνεσθε δὲ δόκιμοι τραπεζίται. Clement, *Stromateis* 1.177.2 (SC 30).

¹²⁸ Resch, *Agrapha*², 112–128, 386; Ropes, *Sprüche Jesu*, 141–143, 160; Jeremias, *Unbekannte Jesusworte*³, 95–98. Ruwet, “Agrapha”, 146–148, has the rather unlikely suggestion that Clement did not consider this saying a word of Jesus but “une formule plus expressive” of 1 Thessalonians 5:21. See J. S. Vos, “Das Agraphon ‘Seid kundige Geldwechsler’ bei Origenes”, in *Sayings of Jesus: Canonical and Non-Canonical. Essays in Honour of Tjitze Baarda*, ed. W. L. Petersen, J. S. Vos, and H. J. de Jonge, NT S 89 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 277–302.

¹²⁹ ὁ γήμας μὴ ἐκβαλλέτω καὶ ὁ μὴ γαμήσας μὴ γαμείτω, ὁ κατὰ πρόθεσιν εὐνουχίας ὁμολογήσας μὴ γῆμαι ἄγαμος διαμενέτω. Clement, *Stromateis* 3.97.4 (GCS 52 [15]); trans. Oulton and Chadwick, *Alexandrian Christianity*, 86, where—as in GCS 52—only the first part is printed as a saying of the Lord.

¹³⁰ Resch, *Agrapha*², 182–183; Ropes, *Sprüche Jesu*, 107–108; Ruwet, “Agrapha”, 136–138, presumes that the second part is Clement’s interpretation of the Lord’s saying.

¹³¹ δῶσω γὰρ οὐ μόνον τοῖς φίλοις, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς φίλοις τῶν φίλων. Clement, *The Rich Man’s Salvation* 33.1 (LCL 92).

¹³² Ruwet, “Agrapha”, 140–141. Neither Resch nor Ropes pays attention to this *agraphon*.

¹³³ σώζου σὺ καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ σου. Clement, *Excerpts from Theodotus* 2.2 (SC 23).

¹³⁴ Ropes, *Sprüche Jesu*, 122; Jeremias, *Unbekannte Jesusworte*³, 75–77. Resch does not discuss this saying.

Moreover, numerous *agrapha* occur in patristic literature of the third and fourth centuries, a few of which are sometimes considered authentic or possibly authentic.¹³⁵

6. *Records of a Secret Oral Tradition that Jesus Transmitted to a Small Number of his Disciples*

In the preceding section we saw that Papias preferred the oral transmission of Jesus' teaching to written reports. His preference was not only firmly rooted in the Greek tradition of oral teaching, according to which books were less reliable, but was also shared by other Christians and Christian Gnostics of the second century and beyond, which implies that Papias was not alone in preferring oral tradition.¹³⁶ Often this oral tradition was regarded as secret. For example, Irenaeus repeatedly refers to the secret traditions of his Gnostic adversaries; once he says that the Valentinians read these traditions in ἄγραφα, by which he means writings that are foreign to the Scriptures.¹³⁷ On another occasion he reports the heretics' claim that the tradition of the truth was not transmitted by writings, but by the *viva vox*, for which they quoted 1 Corinthians 2:6 ("Yet among the mature we speak wisdom, though not a wisdom of this age").¹³⁸

In this chapter we will not dwell on the "heretical" Gnostic traditions, but point out that the patristic author Clement of Alexandria also says that Christian teaching is both unwritten (ἄγραφος) and written (ἔγραφος).¹³⁹ Like the other Gnostics he speaks of a "gnostic tradition"

¹³⁵ For the Pseudo-Clementine literature see L. L. Kline, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*, SBL DS 14 (Missoula, MT: SBL / Scholars' Press, 1975); J. van Amersfoort, *Het Evangelie van Thomas en de Pseudo-Clementinen. Een studie van de woorden van Jezus in het Evangelie van Thomas en hun parallellen in de evangeliecitaten in de Pseudo-Clementijnse Homiliae en Recognitiones* (Dissertation, Utrecht, 1984).

¹³⁶ As a matter of fact, Jews also attached much importance to oral tradition; see B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript. Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup and Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1964), 71–189; M. S. Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth. Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism, 200 BCE–400 CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). For this section see also R. Roukema, *Jesus, Gnosis and Dogma* (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 132–144.

¹³⁷ E.g., Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.3.1; 1.8.1 (ἐξ ἀγράφων ἀναγινώσκοντες); 1.8.5; 1.11.1; 1.21.1; 1.24.6; 1.25.5; 1.30.14 (SC 264).

¹³⁸ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.2.1 (SC 211).

¹³⁹ Clement, *Stromateis* 1.7.1; cf. 1.4.1; 1.5.1 (SC 30).

that Christ taught to his apostles and that had been transmitted ἀγράφως to a small number of people.¹⁴⁰ Once he says that the Lord transmitted this *gnosis* to James the Just, John, and Peter *after his resurrection*, and that they subsequently transmitted it to the other apostles, and these to the seventy.¹⁴¹ However, if according to Clement Jesus transmitted his Gnostic teaching only after his resurrection, this element should be included in our following section. In any case, Clement maintains that his own tutors taught him the true tradition that came directly from the apostles Peter, James, John, and Paul.¹⁴² It is this oral tradition that he intends to commit to writing in his miscellaneous notes called *Stromateis*.

Jean Daniélou shows that Clement's *gnosis* includes contemplation of the divine world, the ascension of the soul, and knowledge of the abodes and the hierarchy of the angels. Daniélou demonstrates that these traditions originate from the apocalyptic milieu that is known from Jewish and Christian apocrypha.¹⁴³ Salvatore Lilla puts a stronger emphasis on the Platonic frame of Clement's esotericism, and this too is correct.¹⁴⁴ These authors do not ask whether these traditions may go back to the historical Jesus. In 1954, R. P. C. Hanson regarded Clement's claim as entirely untrustworthy.¹⁴⁵ Margaret Barker, however, associates the secret teaching that, according to the canonical gospels, Jesus gave to his disciples (Mark 4:11–12), with the hidden tradition mentioned by Clement. Furthermore, she refers to Ignatius of Antioch and to

¹⁴⁰ Clement, *Stromateis* 6.61.1–3, ed. and trans. P. Descourtieux, SC 446 (Paris: Cerf, 1999); cf. 1.15.2 (SC 30); 4.3.2 (SC 463); 7.55.6, ed. and trans. A. Le Boulluec, SC 428 (Paris: Cerf, 1997). In order to distinguish between the “heretical” and Clement's Gnostics, we use a small letter for Clement's *gnostic* tradition. For his distance vis-à-vis the “heretical” use of the term “gnostic”, see, e.g., his *Instructor* 1.52.2, ed. H. M. Marrou and M. Harl, SC 70 (Paris: Cerf, 1960), 168–169; *Stromateis* 3.30.1 (GCS 52 [15]).

¹⁴¹ Clement, *Hypotyposesis* 7 (GCS 17²), which is borrowed from Eusebius, *Church History* 2.1.4 (LCL 153).

¹⁴² Clement, *Stromateis* 1.11.1–3 (SC 30).

¹⁴³ J. Daniélou, *Message évangélique et culture hellénistique aux II^e et III^e siècles*, BT HD 2 (Paris: Desclée, 1961), 409–425; also idem, *Théologie du judéo-christianisme*, BT HD 1 (Paris: Desclée, 1958), 59–64.

¹⁴⁴ S. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria. A Study of Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971). See also G. G. Stroumsa, *Hidden Wisdom. Esoteric Traditions and the Roots of Christian Mysticism*, SHR 70 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 27–45, 109–131.

¹⁴⁵ R. P. C. Hanson, *Origen's Doctrine of Tradition* (London: SPCK, 1954), 67–71.

Irenaeus who also write about the arrangement of the heavenly realms, and to other patristic authors who testify to a secret tradition.¹⁴⁶

In order to assess the reliability of the reports of this secret Jesus tradition, one should bear in mind that in the synoptic gospels Jesus is often linked with angels and with heaven, and speaks about angels.¹⁴⁷ We read that his baptism is followed by a vision of the heavens torn open (Mark 1:10), and he allegedly had a vision of Satan falling from heaven (Luke 10:18).¹⁴⁸ This implies that the synoptic gospels depict Jesus as an apocalyptic visionary of heavenly things, and this finds some confirmation in the Gospel of John.¹⁴⁹ If it is true that Jesus was an apocalyptic visionary, we cannot exclude *a priori* the possibility that some of his experiences and teachings in this field were remembered and transmitted after his death, without being included in the canonical gospels. Yet one cannot make a reasonable case that Clement's secret tradition as he wrote it down in his *Stromateis* originated from the historical Jesus. At most, one can say that Clement was acquainted with Jewish apocalyptic traditions with which Jesus too may have been familiar.

7. *Extracanonical Traditions about the Risen Jesus*

Of course, traditions about the risen Jesus cannot be called historical, but belong to the realm of faith. Yet to complete this survey we will mention the few sayings of the risen Jesus that are quoted in early patristic literature.

In order to confirm that Jesus had risen bodily from death, Ignatius relates that after his resurrection Jesus came to those who were with Peter and said, "Reach out, touch me and see that I am not a bodiless

¹⁴⁶ M. Barker, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2000), 1–4; eadem, *The Great High Priest. The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy* (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2003), 1–14; she refers to Ignatius, *Trallians* 5, ed. and trans. Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. I, LCL 24, and to Irenaeus, *Demonstration of the Gospel* 3; 9–10, trans. A. Rousseau, SC 406 (Paris: Cerf, 1995).

¹⁴⁷ E.g., Mark 1:13; 8:38; 12:25; 13:27; 13:32; Matthew 19:28; 26:53; Luke 12:8–9.

¹⁴⁸ See U. B. Müller, "Vision und Botschaft. Erwägungen zur prophetischen Struktur der Verkündigung Jesu", *ZThK* 74 (1977): 416–448; S. Vollenweider, "'Ich sah den Satan wie einen Blitz vom Himmel fallen' (Lk 10,18)", *ZNW* 79 (1988): 187–203; J. Marcus, "Jesus' Baptismal Vision", *NTS* 41 (1995): 512–521; M. Barker, *The Risen Lord. The Jesus of History as the Christ of Faith*, SJT CIT (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 27–41.

¹⁴⁹ E.g., John 3:12–13; 3:31; 6:38; 6:51; 8:23.

demon". Ignatius then says that the disciples touched Jesus and that he ate and drank with them.¹⁵⁰

Clement of Alexandria quotes from the *Preaching of Peter* a saying of Jesus to his apostles which is apparently situated after his resurrection. It reads, "If any one of Israel, then, wants to repent, and by my name to believe in God, his sins shall be forgiven him. After twelve years, go forth into the world, that no one may say, 'We have not heard'".¹⁵¹ Another saying from the *Preaching of Peter* quoted by Clement is explicitly situated after Jesus' resurrection and contains his commission to the twelve apostles to preach the gospel in the whole world, so that mankind may know that God is one and that salvation and knowledge of the future are given by faith in Christ.¹⁵²

8. Conclusions

As we stated in the introduction to this chapter, the harvest of possibly authentic Jesus traditions in the patristic literature that we investigated is fairly meagre, especially if we distrust some of Resch's isolated positive assessments. The result consists of a small number of words of Jesus that, according to some scholars, are authentic or may be authentic.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ The saying reads, λάβετε, ψηλαφήσατέ με καὶ ἴδετε, ὅτι οὐκ εἰμὶ δαιμόνιον ἄσώματον. Ignatius, *Smyrneans* 3:1–3, ed. and trans. Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. I, LCL 24, 298–299 (who spells it "daimon"); cf. Luke 24:39–43. Part of this saying is also quoted by Origen, *De Principiis* 1 praef. 8, ed. H. Görgemanns, H. Karpp, *Origenes Vier Bücher von den Prinzipien*, TzF 24 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976), 94–95 (*non sum daemonium incorporeum*), who attributes it to the *Doctrina Petri*. Eusebius, *Church History* 3.36.11 (LCL 153), however, writes that he does not know the source of this quotation. Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus* 16.3–4, ed. and trans. A. Ceresa-Gastaldo, BPat 12 (Florence: Nardini, 1988), 106–107, 264, ascribes it to the *Gospel of the Hebrews*.

¹⁵¹ ἔάν μὲν οὖν τις θελήσῃ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ μετανοήσας διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος μου πιστεῦειν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, ἀφεθήσονται αὐτῷ αἱ ἁμαρτίαι. μετὰ <δὲ> δώδεκα ἔτη ἐξέλθετε εἰς τὸν κόσμον. μή τις εἴπῃ· οὐκ ἠκούσαμεν. Clement, *Stromateis* 6.43.3 (SC 446). The tradition that the apostles should wait twelve years before going out to preach to the gentiles is confirmed by Apollonius, who wrote a book at the end of the second century, extracts of which have been preserved by Eusebius, *Church History* 5.18.14 (LCL 153), and also occurs in the *Acts of Peter* 5, ed. R. A. Lipsius, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, vol. I (Leipzig, 1891, reprint Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1959), 49.

¹⁵² Clement, *Stromateis* 6.48.1–2 (SC 446).

¹⁵³ Clement of Rome, *Corinthians* 13:2: "Show mercy, that you may be shown mercy; forgive, that it may be forgiven you. As you do, so it will be done to you; as you give, so it will be given to you; as you judge, so you will be judged; as you show kindness, so will kindness be shown to you; the amount you dispense will be the amount you receive"; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 1.158.2: "Seek what is great, and the small

Undoubtedly the reason why their authenticity is surmised is that, except for the dictum “Be skilful money-changers”, these sayings resemble Jesus’ teaching according to the synoptic gospels. Furthermore, although some scholars might conclude that the traditions of Jesus’ illegitimate birth and Peter’s baptism by Jesus may be historical, these elements cannot be established as historically reliable facts.

These results coincide with John P. Meier’s verdict that not much is to be expected from the *agrapha* (understood as “unwritten [sayings and deeds]”), and with James D. G. Dunn’s assessment, that “They [i.e., the *agrapha*, understood as “unknown sayings”; RR] do not add much to the overall picture, their credibility as sayings of Jesus largely depending on their compatibility with the more familiar Synoptic traditions”.¹⁵⁴

things will be added unto you”; *Stromateis* 1.177.2: “Be skilful money-changers”; *Excerpts from Theodotus* 2.2: “Save yourself and your soul”.

¹⁵⁴ Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 1:112–141, at 114; J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, Christianity in the Making 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 172.

