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The Guards of the Tomb **(Matt 27:62–66 and 28:11–15)**

Matthew's Apologetic Legend Revisited

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I dedicate this book to my parents Maija and Reino Kankaanniemi.

Sastamala, December 2010
Kankaanniemi

Matti

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1.0 Introduction

For most who study the Gospel of Matthew within the standard solution of the synoptic problem, the evangelist seems to be a rather conservative redactor.¹ He all but empties his primary source, the Gospel of Mark, and makes extensive use of the hypothetical Q-source. Consequently, it may be presumed that the first evangelist felt comfortable in building his narrative on those elements he found in the sources available. In the passion narrative his dependence on one source, the gospel of Mark, only tightens.² Then, somewhat strikingly, he adds to the Markan story a pericope of Judas' death (27:3-10), resurrecting saints (27:52-53) and interweaves the finding of the empty tomb with a story of guards (27:62-66, 28:4, 28:11-15). He apparently did not simply discard the Markan scroll, deciding to continue on his own since he returns to the Markan storyline when telling about the women's visit to the tomb.³ The exceptional nature in the addition of the guard story is also seen in the explanatory clause at the end of the pericope (28:15) where Matthew says that the story has been spread among Jews "until this day". By using this expression Matthew creates an explicit link to the moment of writing. For some reason the narrative about the guards was of such importance for Matthew that he was ready to compromise his otherwise close adherence to Mark's text. There is also an interesting explicit reference to the *Sitz im Leben* of the evangelist in 28:15b, where the contemporary Jewish accusation of the theft is mentioned.

A cursory look at the scholarly literature may leave the impression that scholarly consensus is firm and solid on the nature, history and function

¹ DAVIES & ALLISON (1988:95): "The author of Matthew does, in our judgement, deserve the label "conservative redactor"...Matthew must also be considered a creative writer."

² See DAVIES & ALLISON (1988:122-124) for the small amount of Matthean Sondergut in the Passion narrative.

³ Whether Matthew was dependent on Mark after 28:9 must be, I am afraid, left open. There is no consensus on Mark's ending and strictly speaking we cannot know whether Matthew's copy of Mark's Gospel ended in 16:8. Many important commentators of Mark argue for a longer original. See e.g. EVANS 2001:540-551, FRANCE 2002:682-688, GUNDRY 1993:1009-1012, WITHERINGTON 2001:418. On the other hand the oldest copies of Mark's Gospel end at 16:8, and the curious way to end a book with the particle γὰρ is not unheard of in literature. See AEJMELAEUS 1994:13-15 and LANE 1974:590-592.

of the guard story.⁴ It is often understood as an apologetic legend created and written by the evangelist to counter the contemporary Jewish accusation of the disciples having stolen the body of Jesus from the tomb. However, this popular view has not gone unchallenged. In his monograph on the resurrection of Jesus N. T. Wright takes an outrightly positive stance on the historical basis of the story, claiming that there is nothing implausible in it.⁵ This stands in striking contrast to another exhaustive treatise of Jesus' resurrection, written by Finnish scholar Lars Aejmelaeus, who gives a considerable space to the analysis of the guard story.⁶ According to him, the contradictory nature of the story excludes the possibility of any historical repercussions.

To say anything about such a thoroughly studied subject as the resurrection narratives in the New Testament is a formidable task, and the sheer volume of secondary literature challenges even the quickest of readers. However, the guard story ranks low with regard to the amount of scholarly attention it has attracted. Indicative of this is that Paul Hoffman's bibliography of some 200 important exegetical studies on the resurrection of Jesus includes only one which is exclusively dedicated to the Matthean guard story.⁷ Although we are not exploring exegetical *terra incognita*, the lack of seminal studies repeatedly cited in relevant literature encourages us to wonder whether every stone really has been turned in the pursuit of the most reasonable origin for this Matthean *Eigentümlichkeit*.⁸

Handling of the story varies greatly from one scholar to another. Many scholars who write about the resurrection in the New Testament all but

⁴ As put by GRASS (1956:23): "Dass es sich bei dieser Geschichte um eine nachträglich erfundene apologetische Legende handelt, ist heute bis weit in die konservative Forschung hinein anerkannt". This statement is also cited by BROER (1972:62) who adds: „Diese Meinung hat sich auch bei katholischen Autoren in den letzten Jahren mehr und mehr durchgesetzt“

⁵ WRIGHT 2003:637-638.

⁶ AEJMELAEUS 1994:129-161. See also BROER 1972:60-78.

⁷ HOFFMAN 1988:453-481. The study referred to is BLOEM 1979.

⁸ A few studies have been written from a literary critical point of view. See e.g. HEIL 1991, GIBLIN 1975, WEREN 2002 and ADELBERT 2002. As for the historicity of the story the treatments of BROER 1972, KRATZ 1973, PESCH 1966 and HOFFMANN 1988 are often cited, as well as WENHAM 1973 and CRAIG 1984.

ignore the whole passage, or skip over it with only a passing remark.⁹ Some regard the story as an apologetic legend and doubt whether anything can be gained from it when studying the origin or the history of the resurrection belief.¹⁰ The possibility of the whole Jewish accusation being a Matthean fabrication has even been put forward but without any significant following.¹¹ Others agree as far as the apologetic and legendary nature of the narrative is concerned, but take a slightly more optimistic stand when evaluating the opportunity to gain information about the origin of the resurrection belief by using this pericope.¹² One case supporting this optimism is the claim that the Jewish counter-propaganda implicitly admits the historicity of the empty tomb of Jesus.¹³ Furthermore it has been argued that, be it legend or not, the narrative supports the idea of essential corporeality of the resurrection in a Jewish context. Finally, a number of scholars are optimistically oriented toward the story having a historical core.¹⁴

⁹ See e.g. LADD (1975) and CATCHPOLE (2000) both of whom have written a monograph on the resurrection of Jesus. PERKINS (1984:124) calls this an apologetic legend and seemingly does not see any relevance in it for the questions she handles in her book because she does not analyze the guard story at all.

¹⁰ See PERRIN 1977:49, AEJMELAEUS 1994:138-161, ALLISON 2005:312, BROWN 1994:1289-1313 (he does not regard the story primarily as apologetic but apocalyptic eschatology), DUNN 2003a:830, LÜDEMANN 1994:124, PERRIN 1977:49 and SCHNACKENBURG 2002:292. So also LUZ (2002:388) who states: "Hier liegt kein geschichtlicher Bericht vor, sondern eine von Christen für Christen erzählte, genauer gesagt: eine von Matthäus für seine Leser/innn weitgehend fingierte polemische Legende."

¹¹ With all the fear and trembling acquired when the magic of *opinio communis* is appealed to, I refer to the impression built over the years within the world of Biblical studies and argue that the majority of scholars do not regard evangelists as shadow boxers. By this I mean that they do not invent accusations and denigrating remarks just to shoot them down.

¹² So e.g. FULLER 1971:72-73, VERMES 1973:40 and WEDDERBURN 1999:61. O'COLLINS (1993:20) regards the story as a good argument for the historicity of the empty tomb, but does not comment on the story proper.

¹³ This is central in William Lane Craig's numerous publications where the pericope is presented as an argument for the historicity of the empty tomb of Jesus. See e.g. CRAIG 1981, 1984, 1994, 1995, 1997.

¹⁴ So e.g. WENHAM 1973, MOUNCE 1981:262, OSBORN 1984:215-216, CRAIG 1984:271-283, BLOMBERG 1992:424, DAVIS 1993, GUNDRY 1994:XX-XXI, HAGNER 1995:863 (is cautiously positive and states that "the question concerning the historical reliability of this narrative (and that of 28:11-15) is difficult".) KEENER 1999:696-697, BOCKMUEHL 2001a:112-113 (is slightly optimistic but does not take a clear stand. He uses the term

This variety of views and interpretations, therefore, justifies the task of the present study – to accomplish a tradition-historical analysis of the Matthean guard story. To do this we proceed as follows.¹⁵

First we analyze the arguments for the nonhistoricity of the narrative. This part functions simultaneously as a historical research survey with a focus on the arguments used. At this phase we are interested in the question of whether the criteria of non-historicity are met by the arguments used. What is presently at stake is not the historicity of the narrative itself, which cannot be argued on the grounds of possible invalidity of the arguments for non-historicity.¹⁶ This procedure is also necessary in the reconstruction of the tradition history of the narrative. Valid arguments against the historicity may provide valuable clues of its original *Sitz im Leben*.

Secondly, we perform redaction and source critical analyses of the narrative in an attempt to solve the disputed question as to whether

“apologetic excursus” instead of the common “apologetic legend”), WILKINS 2002:187-188, WRIGHT 2003:636-640, NOLLAND 2005:1235, FRANCE 2007:1093 and TURNER 2008:676.

¹⁵ In the era of synchronically oriented approaches it is useful to give due heed to the words of CATCHPOLE (1997:168): “Source criticism, form criticism and redaction criticism, which together bring tradition-history to light, have not outlived their usefulness, and we cannot suppose that they will ever cease to be.” This is also the terminological starting point of this study, which combines these three separate tools under a common nominator i.e. tradition historical study.

¹⁶ This is of course dependent on the stand we take on the burden of proof question. E.g. BLOMBERG & GOETZ (1981) argue that whenever the non-historicity cannot be demonstrated the text should be taken as historical. The opposite is argued by PERRIN (1969:71): “First and most important we have the criterion of dissimilarity: material may be ascribed to Jesus only if it can be shown to be distinctive of him, which usually will mean dissimilar to known tendencies in Judaism before him or the church after him.” MCELENEY (1972) suggests a criterion called criterion of historical presumption which is more or less the same as the burden of proof question and DAHL (1969:133) goes along with this by stating that “...the total perspective of the scholar is decisive for an evaluation of the case in point, and not vice versa.” While I am in general agreement with McEleney and Dahl I would emphasize the literary genre and character of the given text. Many invented narratives are not shown to be false (in the historical sense) with the help of negative criteria i.e. the criteria of inauthenticity. As has been often pointed out e.g. modern day fictitious detective stories are coherent and not in disagreement with any known facts.

Matthew used an earlier version of the guard story as a source or not.¹⁷ This is done by analyzing the alleged Mattheanisms in the narrative after a theoretical evaluation of the much-used word-statistical method in respective criticisms. The use of non-Matthean words and expressions, often referred to when the existence of a pre-Matthean source is argued, is also analyzed.

Thirdly, and building on the results of the earlier parts, we study the function of the narrative in the conflict between the Jews and Christians. To do this it is necessary to provide meaningful reconstructions of i) the conflict between the Jews and Christians in the first century, and ii) the origin of the narrative of the empty tomb. After this the guard story is analyzed within the framework of these reconstructions and with some help of social-scientific methods applied e.g. in the studies of conflict rhetoric.

The conclusions drawn from this research shed some light on the origin and function of the guard story. Additionally, the results of this study will hopefully contribute to the present scholarly discussion on the origin and early history of the resurrection faith and its role in the Jewish-Christian conflict in the first century.

¹⁷ The order in our procedure is similar to that of BROER (1972:60-78) who first brings forward the arguments against the historicity of the story and then analyzes the possibility of the use of a pre-Matthean tradition.

2.0. Arguments for the Non-Historicity of Matthew's Guard Story

2.1. Alleged Historical Improbabilities and Inconsistencies

Matthew recounted the narrative of the guards in a book which was soon to become the most popular gospel within the Christian movement. It was a story told for people with at least a vague idea of what was plausible in the first century context and what was not. Obviously, on the basis of the later reception of the book, the author succeeded in convincing at least some of its readers.¹⁸ While this does not mean that the story is historical, it does imply that the narrative was probably accepted as such by people who knew the customs of the Roman guards. Even if it may be claimed that the burden of proof must lay on the shoulders of those arguing in favour of the historicity of the story, the burden hardly lays as heavily on those doubting the basic coherence of the narrative, fictitious or not. Whether a given story is incoherent, remains to be shown explicitly, particularly if the author is generally known to be a careful and skilful narrator. Consequently I find for example Marxen's confidence slightly exaggerated when he, without providing a single example, claims that "the internal contradictions show that events could not have taken place as reported" and then concludes that "Matthew made it up".¹⁹ To argue that a text is full of internal contradictions always requires evidence. Producing such evidence should not, due to the length of the story, be too demanding a task. Besides, internal contradictions are often seen as an indication of faithfulness to the tradition, and not as a legitimation for concluding "the author made it up".²⁰

¹⁸ The role of the gospel according to Matthew is generally considered to be superior to other canonical gospels in the first Christian centuries. See FRANCE 1989:15-20.

¹⁹ MARXEN 1990:83.

²⁰ See e.g. MEIER (1994:798-837) where, after a meticulous analysis of John 11, he concludes that the evangelist has combined two traditions and due to clumsiness it is reasonable to assume that there is some kind of a historical episode behind them, and not that the evangelist "made it up". See also BURKETT 1994.

A more recommendable line of inquiry is Aejmelaeus' detailed elaboration of basically the same argument, i.e., that "28:15b is the only historical part of the pericope" and "the historical impossibility of the story is seen almost every detail in it".²¹ What makes this argument worth serious and detailed consideration is the fact that Wright argues exactly the opposite, concluding that "there is nothing improbable in this narrative; indeed, it makes good sense all round".²²

Before proceeding to the analysis proper, it is useful to bring forward two considerations. Firstly, the evaluation of the internal consistency is only one step into a broader tradition-historical analysis of a given story. Should the narrative turn out to be plausible, this would merely demonstrate that that one specific argument against historicity is erased. Secondly, most stories can contain a few inconsistencies or inner tensions and still give a rather good description of the real events. Nevertheless, Aejmelaeus is correct in arguing that if there is a historical improbability or inconsistency in almost every detail of a narrative, it is legitimate to regard it as non-historical. However, this may not be as clear if the number of the problems is significantly small.

What follows is an attempt to gather together all those alleged inconsistencies and improbabilities, which have been brought forward in literature concerning the Matthean guard story (GS). When arguments are basically the same they are set under the same label in order to avoid needless repetition. While it is impossible to gather every argument possibly made during the history of modern critical studies, those presented here are the most popular in scholarly literature, and which wrestle with this particular passage.

Alleged historical improbabilities and inconsistencies

- 1) The chief priests and the Pharisees would not go to Pilate on the Sabbath.
- 2) Pilate would not give guards to the high priest.

²¹ AEJMELAEUS 1994:139-143.

²² WRIGHT 2003:637.

- 3) The guards would have risked their lives by claiming to have been sleeping.
- 4) The guards could not have told about the theft of the body if they had been sleeping.
- 5) The guards would have reported to Pilate, not to the high priests.
- 6) The supernatural experience did not move the priests or the guards.
- 7) Pilate would have punished the soldiers for sleeping on duty.
- 8) The disciples were not punished for tomb raiding, even though it was a serious crime.

2.1.1. Delegation on the Sabbath

In Matthew's narrative, the Pharisees and chief priests went to Pilate on the Sabbath to ask for someone to guard the tomb. Numerous scholars have seen this as a major problem in the story.²³ Would the religious leaders have broken the Sabbath law in this way? Is it not, rather than being historical fact, Matthew's way of using irony in implying how the hypocritical leaders broke the very law they thought they defended?²⁴ It has also been claimed that Matthew was slightly embarrassed himself about this information, and thus avoided naming the day as the Sabbath using circumlocution instead.²⁵ The Sabbath timing has been also seen as a necessity within the narrative framework.²⁶

²³ AEJMELAEUS 1994:138-139, LUZ 2002:392, and with some reservation FULLER 1971:72. AEJMELAEUS (1994:139) states: "Chief priests visit Pilate at Sabbath, a thing hard to believe (Mt 27:62). [and in fn 86]... Robinson, Grass, Fuller, Broer, Schweitzer, Fischer, Albright-Mann regard the curious occurrence of the Sabbath theme as a demonstration of the Evangelist's loyalty to his sources. The interpretation does not convince." [Transl. mine] Aejmelaeus regards this unbelievable while he suggests that these "Sabbath-observing" chief priests would command the "Sabbath-observing" Levite Temple Police to guard the tomb.

²⁴ AEJMELAEUS (1994:139) cites approvingly Haapa who states: " In their blind fear the enemies of Jesus violate the rules concerning Sabbath". [Transl. mine]

²⁵ SCHNACKENBURG (2002:292): "The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation" (cf. Mark 15:42), is the Sabbath, which Matthew is probably unwilling to name directly because of the Sabbath rest." AEJMELAEUS (1994:139) agrees: "Matthew has understood the difficulty in this data and does not speak directly of the Sabbath, but avoidingly about "the day after the day of preparation". The same kind of impression would result if we spoke, instead of Christmas day, about 'the day after Christmas Eve'." [Transl. mine]

²⁶ LÜDEMANN (1994:122) states: "Strikingly, the session before Pilate takes place on the

The anomaly can also be read in the opposite way, and probably should be, since this line of reasoning leaves a few important questions open. Why exactly would it have been impossible for the chief priests and the Pharisees to go to Pilate on the Sabbath? Exceptions to Sabbath rules were not unknown; and it is not clear exactly which rule the delegation would have broken.²⁷ Even if they had done so, for example by extending the number of steps allowed to be taken on the Sabbath, the reason would probably have sufficed covering the violation of the law. According to the narrative they were fighting against a deception which certainly was a good enough motive to break even the Sabbath rule. Furthermore, religious leaders breaking the law was not unheard of, and thus the leaders' delegation to Pilate on Sabbath can hardly be regarded as "historical improbable or impossible".

If Matthew had felt uncomfortable in using the proper word -the Sabbath- as many commentators have noted, and presuming that he had invented the story and was thus not restricted by any tradition, he could have moved the delegation to the Friday, just before the Sabbath. Choosing the Sabbath was, from the apologetical point of view, an obvious "bottle neck" in the persuasiveness of the story, since the disciples could have stolen the body on the Friday night.²⁸ Thus, there would not have been any significant hindrance to setting the timing on the Friday night.²⁹ Furthermore, if irony and the implication of hypocrisy

Sabbath, not for historical reasons but because this is necessary for the narrative."

²⁷ Some merit is also to be given for the point made by CARSON (1984:586): "The chief priests and the Pharisees would not necessarily be defiling themselves by approaching Pilate on the Sabbath, provided they did not travel more than a Sabbath day's journey to get there and did not enter his residence (cf. John 18:28)." If we consider Matthew to be a Jew with a high respect for the Law (5:17-20) it is possibly not without any relevance that he feels comfortable to write about Jesus' flexibility concerning the Sabbath law. Here we have a Jewish writer in the 1st century who probably thought that there is not necessarily any contradiction between fulfilling the law and e.g. plucking the grain on the Sabbath (Mt 12:1-8).

²⁸ As noted e.g. by HAGNER 1995:863.

²⁹ Against LÜDEMANN (1994:122). It should be noted that the delegation could have made its request before the Sabbath began. Roman soldiers were hardly bound by any Sabbath rules. It may be argued that the concealment of the tomb implies that it was first checked, which would exclude the possibility of an earlier theft of the body. However, the story creates an impression that the stone was not moved, only concealed thus

were important in this part of the story, and the reason for the timing was dependent on this motive, we would expect Matthew to underline it by naming the Sabbath. He had the opportunity to set the timing of the delegation on the Friday or on the Sabbath, but for some reason he opted for the apologetically weaker one. If an author creates an apologetic story and includes a fact which he or she is fully aware is counter-productive for his or her cause, this “inconsistency” or “historical improbability” can hardly count as an argument for the non-historicity of the story.³⁰ Thus we conclude that this particular argument for the non-historicity of the Matthean GS is not convincing.

2.1.2. Pilate Would Not Have Given a Roman Guard to the Jewish Leaders

Aejmelaeus argues that Pilate would not have given a *κουστωδία* to the high priest.³¹ He argues that i) a Roman governor does not act like this, ii) the occupying force was not used for tasks of this kind and iii) the chief priests had troops of their own to use.

A few scholars have tried to avoid this (and numerous other problems) by suggesting that the guards used were actually the Jewish temple guard.³² According to Craig, one of the proponents of this view, Matthew would have strengthened his apology by explicitly naming that the guards were Romans. While this is possible, the interpretation does not enjoy a majority status.

leaving this counter-argument viable.

³⁰ As a matter of fact we come close to the principle which is often called a “criterion of embarrassment”.

³¹ AEJMELAEUS 1994:141: “It is extremely improbable that a Roman governor would have given a guard to the chief priests (Mt 27:65). This is not the way Roman governors work and occupying soldiers are not given tasks of this nature. Further, the chief priests had his own guards available.” [transl. mine] Essentially the same is argued e.g. by HARE 1993:323 and LUZ 2002:392.

³² CRAIG 1984:273. So also CARSON (1984:586) who derives this from the fact that the guards report to the chief priests

Hare points out that the fact that the chief priests went to Pilate suggests that the Roman guard was in question.³³ On the other hand it is probable that the chief priest would have needed Pilate's permission to set their own guards to watch the tomb of a criminal judged and crucified by the Romans. Thus this argument against the temple police assumption fails to convince. A much more serious counterargument is the fact that it is hard to understand why the governor needed to be calmed down because of the failure of the high priest's militia. Furthermore, no reasonable answer is found to the question as to why the chief priests and elders would have bribed the temple guard, which was under their command, when simply a threat of punishment would have sufficed. It seems to me that arguments for the guard (in Matthew's mind at least) consisting of Roman soldiers are significantly stronger than those for their being temple guards.

The first reservation concerning Aejmelaeus reasoning is that he does not provide any hard data to support his argument. On the other hand Matthew, who had lived his entire life in an occupied country, did not regard the allocation of the guards as improbable or impossible.³⁴ Given the lack of hard data I tend to prefer a viewpoint of a first century author when it comes to assessing the plausibility of a certain feature in the story.³⁵

It was Pilate's duty to guarantee the peace and undisturbed tax flow to the Roman Empire, and soldiers were there to enable him to perform this task. I find it plausible in every respect that Pilate was willing to give a couple of dozen soldiers to a "pre-emptive task" in order to avoid any uprising in Jerusalem. Since Aejmelaeus builds a general historical analogy to the situation in occupied countries, I find it legitimate to point out that occupiers have often provided their military force for the use of a cooperative local government. So against Aejmelaeus, we can conclude that the occupying force is used exactly in this kind of task.

³³ HARE 1993:326.

³⁴ For a good general presentation about the soldiers in the Gospels see e.g. HOBBS 2002.

³⁵ This does not mean that Matthew could not have erred. Geographical and chronological differences may have been considerable, and the Roman habits e.g. in Syria in 60-85 A.D. (possible location of the first evangelist) are not necessarily same as those in Jerusalem in the late 20s.

2.1.3. The Absence of the Temple Police?

The Levite temple police probably played some kind of a role in the arrest of Jesus. Scholarly estimates about the size of the arresting party vary from a small group of a few dozen soldiers to a greater collection of the temple police and volunteer assistants. If the temple police was used for arrests why could the chief priests not have ordered them to guard the tomb?

1) Since the crucifixion was conducted by the Romans, it is understandable that the priests did not feel free to send the troops under their own command to the tomb (of a punished criminal) without Pilate's consent. It may have been more natural to send Roman troops there because once Jesus had been brought before Pilate the responsibility for Jesus had been transferred to the Romans.

2) The chief priests could have thought that the temple police were not strong enough for the purpose. According to the Synoptics (Mk 14:43, Mt 26:47, Lk 22:47) Jesus was arrested by ὄχλος and the role of the temple police is not explicit in this description.³⁶ If the arresting party did not consist only of the regular temple police but rather that additional auxiliary troops were considered necessary, this may imply that the military strength of the temple police was rather limited. It is striking that the temple police did not intervene when Jesus rioted in the temple if the action was not only symbolic, but really had something of the magnitude implied by Mark when he writes that καὶ οὐκ ἤφιεν ἵνα τις διενέγκῃ σκευὸς διὰ τοῦ ἱεροῦ. If the popularity of Jesus among the

³⁶ DAVIES & ALLISON (1997:507) regard Mark's and Matthew's expression ὄχλος as a reference to the temple police. So also HURTADO (1989:243) when commenting Mark 14:43. KEENER (1999:640) and LANE (1974:525) regard ὄχλος as a group of professionals although they believe that the temple police had been strengthened with auxiliary police troops. FRANCE (2007:1011-1012): "A force sent out by the "chief priests and the elders of the people" sounds like an official posse recruited by or on behalf of the Sanhedrin (and including, perhaps led by, "the high priest's slave"), and so would probably have consisted of some of the temple guards, perhaps augmented by less formal recruits or volunteers; v. 55 appears to be addressed to temple guards." The description of the armament suggests that the ὄχλος was not actually a permanent military group. Basically the same idea is supported by e.g. BLOMBERG 1992:397, HAGNER 1995:711 and SCHNACKENBURG 2002:273.

crowd was what had caused the fear and passivity of the temple police, the same could have applied to the time after the crucifixion as well. Once Jesus had been given over to Romans, the chief priests and the temple police would no longer have had to be afraid of the crowd to same extent.

3) If the story about the high priest's servant being injured during the arrest is historical, it could provide sufficient reason for the chief priests and elders to expect some violence on the part of the disciples.³⁷ While the arresting party had the advantage of surprise in Gethsemane, the opposite could have been the case at the tomb had the disciples decided to attack there. Knowing the number of Jesus' supporters and their willingness to put up a fight, the quest for better equipped and possibly a greater number of trained Roman soldiers is understandable.

4) It is possible that the Levite temple police would have regarded it a violation of the Sabbath law to have guarded the tomb on the Sabbath.

The question as to why the temple police was not used is thus interesting in its own right but, as seen above, it hardly counts as an argument of any force against the coherence or historical plausibility of the story.

2.1.4. The Guards Risked Severe Punishment by Claiming to Have Slept

It is often pointed out that the idea of Roman guards sleeping while on guard is not meaningful due to the strict punishments for neglecting their duty.³⁸ However, the narrative never claims that the guard slept, but rather that the chief priests and the elders suggested sleeping as an explanation. Consequently, the question should be "could the chief priests have suggested such an explanation". Given that the guards failed to guard the tomb, they were already likely to be severely punished. So it

³⁷ For the essential historicity of the story see BAUCKHAM 2006:183-187 and THEISSEN 1991:188-189. See also a detailed discussion in BROWN 1994:268-271.

³⁸ LÜDEMANN 1994:124, AEJMELAEUS 1994:142. But see BROWN (1994:1311) who argues that this did not automatically mean the death penalty.

is natural that the chief priests held all the strings when it came to coming up with a suitable explanation for the things reported.³⁹ It is useful to consider what choices they had: i) to claim that the disciples robbed the tomb by violence, ii) to put a new seal on the tomb, to command the guards to return to their post and pretend that nothing had ever happened, iii) to claim that the body had been stolen without the guards noticing it.

The first option is not plausible since the noisy altercation would have alerted troops from nearby garricks to come and help the guards in the fight.⁴⁰ Signs of the battle would also have been apparent in the participants. The second option is a little better, but not without problems. Sooner or later the guard would have left the tomb and the risk of someone finding the tomb empty would have remained. The third option, with all its problems, still seems the best available when the narrative flow is followed. In that case the situation was “the disciples’ word against the chief priests’ word” (stolen or not stolen) instead of “a demonstrable fact against the chief priests’ word” (empty tomb against the counter claim). When faced with only uncomfortable choices it is natural that the least uncomfortable is chosen. This logic applied, the argument against the coherence of the story can be questioned.

2.1.5. If Sleeping, the Guards Could Not Have Told about the Theft of the Body

Aejmealeus wonders how the guards could inform the chief priests about ἅπαντα τὰ γινόμενα if they were ὡς νεκροί.⁴¹ Further, he pays attention to the problem that “the soldiers cannot simultaneously claim to have slept in duty and to know who had stolen the body”.

³⁹ Or as pointed by OSBORN (1984:216): “Perhaps the guards also agreed to the lie to the priests because they simply had no other choice; they were pawns in the hands of the Jews.”

⁴⁰ We may assume that even if the guard consisted of the minimum number of soldiers (the smallest unit in Roman legion was contubernium of eight soldiers) the number of attackers should have been greater and the battle would have taken some time.

⁴¹ AEJMEALAEUS 1994:141. But see BROWN (1994:1311) who does not regard this argument convincing.

The soldiers were told to tell this version of what had happened by the chief priests. Could it be that the chief priests did not realize how stupid a suggestion this story actually was? How would the soldiers answer the question “how can you know that if you were sleeping”? This hypothetical question would not have left the soldiers speechless. “We were asleep, the body was stolen, who else could have been but the disciples?” would have provided a sufficient answer. The emphasis in this claim “the disciples stole the body while we were asleep” is not so much on who stole the body but rather on how they did it. Because there were no potential thieves other than the disciples the only challenge they had was to get past the guards. This challenge was countered by giving a reason – we were asleep. When the story is read as it stands, nowhere is there the claim that the soldiers actually saw the disciples stealing the body, only that they had stolen it. I think that this claim as such could be used to describe a scenario where the disciples choked the guard who was awake, while others were sleeping. The claim “while we were sleeping” would still answer the question “how could they steal the body while the tomb was guarded?”. In other words, there was no battle because we (the soldiers) were asleep.

Aejmelaeus’ other argument is even weaker. Is it impossible to see something happen while one is lying on the ground as if one is dead? Unfortunately Matthew does not provide us with a profound medical explanation as to what he means by the expression “like dead”.⁴² What seems likely is that he is mostly interested in depicting the soldiers’ inability to do what soldiers do, i.e. fight. Even if Matthew’s words are taken to mean that they were in such a deep trance that they did not see or hear anything, it is not impossible to understand the expression ἅπαντα τὰ γενόμενα as meaning everything that happened from their point of view.

⁴² It is not unheard of that a person is paralyzed by fear while being fully able to make sensory perceptions.

2.1.6. The Guards Would Have Reported to Pilate, Not to the High Priests

Aejmelaeus argues that it is peculiar that the soldiers went to the chief priests instead of telling their own superiors what had happened.

Pilate gives the *κουστωδία* to the chief priests which is very clearly expressed in the words *Ἔχετε κουστωδίαν*". It was the chief priests who defined the task, commanded the troops and so it is only natural that they were informed about everything connected to that task.⁴³ Furthermore, if the threat of an extreme punishment for failing in their duty was as obvious as many commentators assume, is it not only natural that they would first go to the chief priests with whom they have a better chance of negotiating a way out of the punishment?

2.1.7. The Supernatural Experience Did Not Move the Priests or the Guards

Aejmelaeus argues that the reaction of both the guards and the Jewish leaders to the supernatural event is not credible.⁴⁴ He points out that the chief priests believed the soldiers' message about the resurrection without complaint, but simultaneously were very cynical in labelling the whole thing as a deception.⁴⁵ However, it never becomes clear from Aejmelaeus' argumentation what would work as a credible reaction on the part of the chief priests. Furthermore, he seems to read too much emotional information into the brief text, which certainly is not out to describe the feelings of the soldiers or chief priests, but rather to describe the general flow of events.

Jesus' reputation as an exceptional miracle worker was known to the leaders.⁴⁶ That Jesus was able to perform exorcisms and healings was not

⁴³ So e.g. ALBRIGHT & MANN 1971:359.

⁴⁴ AEJMEALEUS 1993:142.

⁴⁵ So also LUZ (2002:392): "Am unglaublichsten sein, dass die Vertreter des Synedriums in 28,11f den Bericht der Soldaten offenbar durchaus glaubhaft fanden."

⁴⁶ The miracles of Jesus have been studied from varying angles e.g. by THEISSEN 1983, YAMAUCHI 1986, BLACKBURN 1992:549-560, TWELFTREE 1993, EVANS 1993:21-34,

denied by his enemies. Nonetheless they decided to get him killed after labelling him as one empowered by Beelzebul.⁴⁷ Why should they change sides at this point, after not having taken the opportunity to support Jesus before? They could have thought that the “ἅπαντα τὰ γυνόμενα” was simply a continuation of the magical tricks of the crucified impostor. Knowing the appeal this kind of phenomenon would have had on the crowds, the attempt to silence any possible report of it sounds very credible.

Although a modern Christian reader could think that such an extraordinary experience would have forced the soldiers into believing in the resurrection of Jesus and thus become Christians, this way of thinking is painfully anachronistic. The soldiers would have been more likely to accommodate what they had seen to their own religious framework rather than associating it to any “christological system”.⁴⁸ Fear, and even panic, when something that is interpreted as supernatural is faced, are very human reactions and thus make the reaction of the guards credible. As has been pointed out by e.g. Pilch, the Mediterranean people were familiar with experiences nowadays called the Altered States of Consciousness.⁴⁹ In their mindset what happened at the tomb would probably have been only one manifestation of the same unexplainable world of magic as exorcisms and healings.

MEIER 1994:507-1038, MALINA 1999 and TWELFTREE 1999. The general historicity of Jesus’ miracles has been ably demonstrated by EVANS (1993) and every miracle story analyzed by both MEIER (1994:617-1038) and TWELFTREE 1999. The miraculous is present in Mk, Q, M, L and John. The accusation of being in a league with Beelzebul is very likely derived from the phenomena interpreted as miracles by the followers. See STANTON 1994. The operating with the miraculous by the Early Christians is easy to understand as learnt from Jesus himself.

⁴⁷ This is coherent with the term ὁ πλάνοχος used by the chief priests and the Pharisees in the story.

⁴⁸ An insightful comment is given by BOCKMUEHL (2001a:112): “Matthew’s Roman guards, if they were indeed at the tomb and if they saw anything, would not and could not have described this in the apocalyptic language of “resurrection” – be they adherents of the cult of the emperor, of Mithras, or of Isis.”

⁴⁹ See PILCH 2002 and MALINA 1999.

2.1.8. Pilate Would Have Punished the Soldiers for Sleeping

The risk of Pilate punishing the soldiers after hearing of their failings is shown in Matthew's text. The chief priests promise that if the governor hears about their failure the priests will defend the soldiers. Aejmelaeus argues that the soldiers would have risked their lives by claiming to have slept.⁵⁰ Again it must be noted that nothing is actually said about the punishment since it is apparently not a matter of relevance for the author. So, in principle it is possible that the guards were later submitted to fierce punishments. On the other hand, it is not as self-evident as Aejmelaeus suggests that punishment would have been inevitable. If the guards were given a task, defined by the priests to perform, and those same priests told the governor that the guards had done what was required of them, it is fully plausible that they were not punished by Pilate. It was the chief priests who decided whether the task was accomplished or not. Additionally, the argument reads too much into the text since Matthew does not say that the soldiers were not punished. The narrative is hardly inconsistent if it leaves something untold.

2.1.9. The Disciples Were Not Punished for Tomb Raiding although a Serious Crime

Aejmelaeus wonders why the disciples were not punished for stealing Jesus' body.⁵¹ The general impression mediated from the story is that the chief priests tried to suppress the rumour of resurrection. In this respect it is understandable that they tried to avoid publicity which they would have risked by sending troops to arrest the disciples. Even in Acts the chief priests command Peter and John to be silent, which clearly indicates the same policy (4:1–22). Whether these stories in Acts are historical or not is of secondary importance. What is relevant for our problem is that the policy of silence was seen plausible by Luke and probably by the tradents who were responsible for these traditions. The conditional nature of the saying καὶ ἐὰν ἀκουσθῆ τοῦτο ἐπὶ τοῦ ἡγεμόνος implies

⁵⁰ AEJMELAEUS 1994:142.

⁵¹ AEJMELAEUS 1994:142.

that they had chosen the policy of silence. Had they had the intention of getting the disciples punished and thus made a lot of noise about the event, Pilate would certainly have had heard of it.

Even if the chief priests had wanted to arrest the disciples, there would have been some practical challenges. Who would they name as being responsible for the theft? Could they have chanced those accused of the theft having solid alibis for the time of theft? Additionally, finding disciples hiding in Jerusalem, which was full of pilgrims at that time, would have been an enormous task.⁵² That Jesus was found only with the help of a traitor indicates the difficulty of this challenge for any arresting party. Further, a military operation of that scale would have needed both the consent and auxiliary troops from the Romans, which would have ruined the chief priests' case once and for all. Because of the publicity Pilate might have needed to punish the guards who could have told what had really happened, and thus the conspiracy of the chief priests would have been ripped to pieces.

2.2. Matthew's Guard Story and Other Gospels

2.2.1 The Gospel of Peter

Before the silence of the other canonical gospels is handled, it may be useful to offer a brief analysis of the Gospel of Peter (GPet), a document which is "not silent" about the guards. The guards of the tomb are mentioned in GPet, a work dated by the majority of scholars to the second century.⁵³ The guard story in GPet is notoriously different from

⁵² According to JEREMIAS (1958:96) the population of Jerusalem was at least 180 000 during the Easter festival. See however a better calculation in REINHARDT (1995:262) who ends up suggesting a total of one million pilgrims to the three annual festivals.

⁵³ See FOSTER 2007. An exception is MIRECKI (1992:278) who states: "The Gospel of Peter...was a narrative gospel of the synoptic type which circulated in the mid-first century under the authority of the name Peter." So also KOESTER (1980:126-130), who appeals to the manner in which the author of GPet used Scriptural allusions. Much is made of the lack of fulfilment theme in GPet. Crossan is sometimes wrongly claimed to regard the GPet as older than the canonical gospels. So e.g. KARTZOW 2010:8. Actually Crossan argues that GPet is using a source (Cross Gospel) which predates the canonical

Matthew's version, and this has led to a few scholars suggesting that there had been a non-Matthean tradition in use, perhaps together with the Matthean GS.⁵⁴ The alleged absence of verbal similarities has also been seen as implying an independent origin.⁵⁵ Crossan even attempts to provide a falsification criterion for his theory of pre-canonical Cross Gospel, a theory which is strongly based on GPet version of the passion. He challenges those disagreeing with him to explain how GPet version can have been derived from the canonical gospels.⁵⁶ In GPet version the women's visit to the tomb does not interrupt the flow of events as it does in Matthew's gospel. This might be suggested to be a more original detail than the presence of the women at the tomb simultaneously with the guards in the Matthean version.

Before Crossan's argument is analysed, a comparison of the GPet guard narrative to the general tone in the canonical versions of the Easter events is offered. None of the canonical gospels describes the resurrection proper, but GPet does so, and adds to it miraculous and fanciful features not typical for the canonical miracle stories.⁵⁷ While there are parallels with the voice from heaven in the canonical gospels (e.g. Mk 1:11), the speaking cross in a dialogue with the voice from

gospels.

⁵⁴ So e.g. CRAIG 1984, CROSSAN 2007 and BROWN 1994:1301.

⁵⁵ CRAIG (1984:273): "... the gospel of Peter also relates the story of the guard at the tomb, and its account may well be independent of Matthew, since the verbal similarities are practically nil." However, BROWN (1994:1301) argues that the author of GPet knew Matthew's gospel because of the verbal similarities. I remain sceptical when it comes to reconstructing e.g. the vocabulary of the GPet author. The text as it is preserved is all too short for a meaningful statistical analysis.

⁵⁶ CROSSAN (2007:134): "Finally, since I maintain my own independence-and-dependence solution despite its almost universal scholarly rejection, I must ask myself what would change my mind, what would convince me that I am wrong. If anyone can show me how a person who knows the canonical versions either as scribal documents or oral traditions got from them to the present Gospel of Peter, I would withdraw my proposed solution."

⁵⁷ The central "miraculous" or "fanciful" elements in the GPet guard story are: i) A loud voice from heaven is heard, ii) Soldiers see the heavens opened and two radiant males coming down to the tomb, iii) the centurion Petronius and the elders (who were present as well) see three men coming from the tomb (the resurrection itself) the heads of the two reaching unto heaven and the head of the third going even beyond the heavens, iv) a voice from heaven asks: "Have you made proclamation to the fallen-asleep?, v) the cross answers "Yes".

heaven and men with their heads in the clouds are indicative of a different approach to the miraculous. The supernatural events are also witnessed by the Roman soldiers and the Jewish elders, who also confess explicitly to Pilate that they are sinning in circulating a false rumour about the resurrection.

It is apparent that the author of GPet did not feel restricted by the traditions he used, but rather was free to embellish the story with remarkable liberty. While this answer to Crossan's challenge may sound blunt, it seems to me that it is possible to derive the GPet version from the canonical passion story by simply assuming that someone had used a fair amount of imagination and added fanciful elements to the accounts. Since Crossan believes that the things described in GPet did not actually take place, we must in any case assume that someone was able to invent this sort of story. That the canonical passion narrative, especially the Matthean one, created a basis for this version is not so difficult to imagine, given the liberal attitude the author of GPet had towards creating embellished stories. The only contradictory (instead of being apologetically complementary) fact that I am able to find in the story is that the women are not witnesses to the events as is the case in the Matthean version.

Is the difference significant enough to give credence to the independence-hypothesis, however? Probably not. The oral processing of the themes is hard (if not impossible) to reconstruct, and the gaps, which canonical stories leave in the flow of the events, were likely to inspire colourful additions to the narratives. The fact that the women were present at the tomb when the angel appeared in the Matthean story may have been forgotten when "the cloud of witnesses" is presented to the actual resurrection scene. The author of GPet may have used all canonical gospels and their re-oralized versions, and thus "moved" the visit of the women to take place after the guards had left. As the final verdict on the relationship of the guard story in GPet to the Matthean GS the possible existence of a version, not derived from the Matthean story, must be left open. The differences can be, I believe, explained by the chronological gap between the gospels (50-100 years), and the numerous re-tellings, contextualizations and embellishments which also took place. On the other hand, the influence of an independent tradition cannot be

categorically excluded either. As for this study the value of the GPet version is mostly actualised in a later analysis of the apologetic elements in the story compared to those found (or absent) in the Matthean GS.

2.2.2 The Silence of the Other Canonical Gospels

It has been repeatedly pointed out in the scholarly literature that the silence of the other canonical gospels about the guards is a strong argument for the non-historicity of the pericope.⁵⁸ If the story were true, the other evangelists, or at least one of the three, would quite likely have known and written about it. Quite often this argument, the negative use of the criterion of multiple attestation or *argumentum e silencio* (AES), is presented without any further elaboration on the nature of the argument and the logical consequences of its use in other areas. To meet this need we attempt to clarify the logic of the argument and then critically analyze its application to the problem at hand.

On a methodological level two critical notes are often made concerning this sort of an argument. Firstly, the negative use of the criterion of multiple attestation has been criticized in the life-of-Jesus studies.⁵⁹ Numerous facts are generally regarded as historical without any attestation in other relevant sources. Secondly, AES is often considered to be an invalid argument. Although an author does not mention something, it does not logically follow that he must be unaware of it. While these points are to some extent justified, they may be too rough to be applied effectively to the problem currently under study. When a source is silent, it is necessary to ask whether the author would have been interested in mentioning the absent fact. If his silence can be explained by the motives he seems to have, the AES is not valid.⁶⁰ On the

⁵⁸ So e.g. ALLISON 2005:312, BROWN 1994:1311, DAVIES & ALLISON 1997:653, DUNN 2003a:830 and CROSSLEY 2005:179.

⁵⁹ For a list of scholars so arguing see e.g. MCARTHUR 1969:140, STEIN 1980:232, POLKOW 1987:351 and MEIER (1991:175) who refers to single occurrence of the word "abba" (often believed to be an authentic word of Jesus) in the gospels.

⁶⁰ E.g. Mark 3:21 tells that Jesus' family members thought that he was "out of his mind". That Matthew and Luke do not mention this detail is readily understandable because their motive was quite likely to give a smoother picture of Jesus.

other hand, if the product of an author implies that the sort of thing under study would have been of interest and relevance for him or her, it seems to me that the AES is justified.⁶¹ In cases where the existence of motivation cannot be established for or against the possible inclusion of a given fact it is best to leave the question open. On the basis of this complexity I would argue that AES may sometimes be valid but sometimes is not. Appealing to a single occurrence without due attention given to these considerations is thus not a proper argument as such.

In order to evaluate the force of the present argument it is useful to ask whether Mark, Luke or John would have known about the guards if they ever were at the tomb of Jesus. As is often the case in New Testament studies, the student must choose “the more probable one” in many introductory questions in an attempt to solve the problem. In this analysis it would be of great help if the identity of the evangelists could be established. Unfortunately no consensus as to the identity of these three evangelists has been reached. Consequently, the question of the evangelists’ possible knowledge of the guards is analyzed under two different assumptions: i) that Mark was Peter’s assistant⁶² and Luke Paul’s companion⁶³ and ii) that they were anonymous Christians.

⁶¹ This logic is applied e.g. by MILLER (1997:90) who argues for the non-historicity of Mt 27:51-53 as follows: “It is virtually impossible to explain why Paul does not mention this event if it actually happened. In 1 Cor 15:5-8 Paul emphasizes the reality of Jesus’ resurrection by listing those who had experienced the risen Jesus. How could he fail to mention those who had experienced their own resurrections as a result of his?”

⁶² The scholars are divided on this question whose profound complexity is well elucidated by BLACK 1994. To my knowledge the most profound refutation of the Mark-Peter connection is provided by NIEDERWIMMER 1967. His argument that the topographical errors exclude the connection has been followed by many, e.g. THEISSEN 2003:97. However, Niederwimmer has not gone unchallenged, his arguments being countered (among others) by BYRSKOG 2000:272-299. The case is often seen as a battle over Papias’ disputed saying. So e.g. MYLLYKOSKI (2002:26) who argues that there is no evidence whatsoever in the gospel for the Peter-Mark connection. However, BAUCKHAM (2006:155-192) argues the opposite claiming that there is a clear Petrine viewpoint in the gospel.

⁶³ According to BROWN (1997:268) scholars are evenly divided on the question whether Luke, the travelling companion of Paul, was the author of the double work. The strongest argument for the traditional authorship is the existence of the curious we-passages (16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16) which have often been interpreted as author’s own memoirs.

The second question is whether they would have had sufficient motive to tell about the guards even if they had known the story. This question is justified due to the fact that Matthew and Luke did not write everything they knew, as can be reasoned on the basis of Markan material and parts of Q⁶⁴ which were left out from their gospels.⁶⁵ As for Mark, it is difficult to be as exact since his sources are not available to us. However, I find it reasonable to assume that he did not include everything he had ever heard about Jesus in the gospel he wrote. It is sufficient to name only two points in defence of this assumption. Mark emphasizes Jesus as a teacher without actually including much of his teaching material.⁶⁶ I would guess that Mark knew more of Jesus' teachings than he included in his gospel, but for some reason concentrated more on the narrative than on the teaching itself. It is also evident that Mark knew about resurrection appearances, although he only refers to them in passing in 16:7.⁶⁷

Knowledge of the Guards

Mark and Luke would probably have known about the GS if it were based on what had happened on a spring Sabbath day in AD 30. If the story was historical, the most fertile soil for spreading it was quite likely

The most important argument for non-Lucan origin is the way the portrayal of Paul differs from the picture given by his letters (so e.g. WEDDERBURN 2002:78, THEISSEN 2003:108-109). For a good list of arguments against Lucan authorship see e.g. KÜMMEL 1965:102-105. ROBBINS (1978) has written against this theory but has later been countered by numerous scholars, see e.g. BROWN 1997:322-323, PRAEDER 1987, HEMER 1989a:317-319, WITHERINGTON 1998a:480-484 and WEDDERBURN 2002:81-83. See also AUNE 1987:122-124. I also think that HEMER's (1989a) main argument, according to which the exactness of the secondary details in the narrative of Acts defends the assumption that the author travelled at times with Paul, is worth serious consideration. The reception of Hemer's posthumously written book has been very positive and should not be marginalized as "apologetics" as e.g. MATTHEWS (1990) has done. See the positive reviews by JOHNSON 1990, TOUSSAINT 1990, ALEXANDER 1992, FERGUSON 1992, KRAABEL 1992, LOVEDAY 1992 and BAYER 1996. The question of different portrayals of Paul in Acts and the Pauline corpus may be, as PORTER (2001:6) points out, exaggerated. At least the influential set of arguments by HAENCHEN (1971:120-124) fails to convince.

⁶⁴ If they did not use different versions of Q. Even in this case it seems reasonable to assume that they did not use everything they found in the document(s).

⁶⁵ For a handy list of the Markan material left out from Mt and Lk see RICHES 1996a:24.

⁶⁶ About Jesus as a teacher in Mark's gospel see especially FRANCE 1980:101-136.

⁶⁷ Given that the original ending was 16:8 which, as already pointed out, must probably be left open.

those early Christian communities which were harassed by (and/or harassing) Jews. This probably means those communities where the number of Jewish Christians was rather significant.⁶⁸ If Mark was Peter's interpreter and Luke was Paul's travelling companion, it is clear that a strong contact existed between the authors and those Christians mentioned above. Peter preached among the circumcised, and thus certainly would have been aware of the story if it had been incirculation at that time. Similarly, Luke knew Paul, who had had his own share of violent experiences with the Jews as well.⁶⁹

Should the other hypothesis be chosen as to the question of authorship of Mark and Luke, it could perhaps be maintained with little better success that the evangelists (pseudo-Mark and pseudo-Luke) were unaware of the story. It is reasonable to assume that a number of traditions did not reach every Christian, and that the GS might possibly have been one of those. However, it seems to me that the circumstantial evidence, or implications, does not make this hypothesis tenable.⁷⁰ It could perhaps be argued that Matthew got to know about the historical guard story quite late, e.g. from a guard, a priest or a Pharisee. While this option cannot be rejected *prima facie* it does not have much to recommend it. Matthew does not hint that the story is his "exclusive knowledge" because he implies that the women at the tomb saw the guard.

The gospel of John, together with Matthew's gospel, has often been labelled as the most anti-Semitic book in the New Testament. If the gospel is interpreted as a window to the life situation of the author(s), it

⁶⁸ I assume that those Jews who fought against the Christ-believers were mostly in conflict with Jewish Christians.

⁶⁹ Being flogged five times indicates rather significant contact with Synagogue congregations. It is quite likely that he also had some success there, not that he visited there five times only to be beaten every time!

⁷⁰ It may not be justified to assume that a community would have its closed set of traditions without much interactivity with other communities. The early Christian network between communities was probably rather tight. See THOMPSON 1998 and BAUCKHAM 1998a. The nature of the GS is also rather fascinating and concerns the central belief of the Christianity and the sincerity of the leaders. Even if the story were not of primary interest to the theologians of a community it could have been spread as more gossip-like information. Furthermore, the conflicts with the (other) Jews would have created a meaningful *Sitz im Leben* for telling and re-telling the GS.

is no wonder that theories about conflicts between the Johannine community and the Jews abound. This conflict theory has gained a dominant position in Johannine studies since Martyn's influential thesis which connected *birkat ha minim* to the gospel.⁷¹ Within this paradigm it could be asserted that it is in the gospel of John where we would primarily expect to find the story about the guard if had been in circulation at the time of writing. However, the subject is probably more complex.⁷² The majority paradigm of reading the gospel as a fierce reflection against early Rabbinism, the supposed major enemy of the Jewish Christians, has been recently challenged with a weighty set of arguments.⁷³ While I tend to regard for example Raimo Hakola's criticism of the majority paradigm as justified, John 16:2 could still reflect a conflict history between the original readers and the Jewish leaders. Had the readers had no experience of being expelled from the Synagogue and being killed by the Jewish leaders, the explicit link to the contemporary situation with the expression ἵνα ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἡ ὥρα (16:4) would be quite hard to understand. However, if the evangelist and his primary audience had experienced being expelled from the Synagogue or even being killed⁷⁴ by the Jews, it is quite natural to suppose that the rhetoric of the conflict would not have been totally insignificant to them. If this supposition is accepted, it is possible to claim that had it existed the GS would probably have been known by the fourth evangelist. As for the Jewish accusation of the theft, it is interesting, though admittedly of secondary argumentative force, that the most usual locations suggested for the writing of John's gospel are Ephesus and Syria. Justin Martyr is often associated with Ephesus and Matthew with Syria and these two Christians both mention the Jewish accusation in *expressis verbis*. Thus it may be suggested that the accusation was known in Ephesus and Syria.

⁷¹ The influential views on the supposed conflict history by Brown and Martyn are concisely presented in CULPEPPER 1987:281-282.

⁷² For a due warning against too simple approach see e.g. DUNDERBERG 1997:301-304.

⁷³ See especially HAKOLA 2005:41-86 and BONDI 1997.

⁷⁴ BARRETT (1978:485): "It is unlikely that John's words arose merely out of imagination, but the evidence for the death of Christians at the hands of Jews is not extensive. See Acts 7.54-60; (12.2f.); Josephus, *Ant.* XX, 200; Mart. Pol. 13.1; Justin, *Trypho* 110.4; 131.2; 133.6." It is quite striking that no killings are recorded from the period of 70-100 AD when the gospel is usually supposed to have been written.

Secondly, if John knew the gospel of Matthew he was naturally well aware of the existence of the GS.⁷⁵ If this were the case, it demonstrates that the fourth evangelist knew about the guards, but nonetheless for redactional reasons decided to omit the story.⁷⁶ Consequently, the negative use of CMA would be shown to be invalid in the current context. Even if he had not known Matthew's gospel, which is the opinion of many commentators, it is possible that a re-oralized version of the GS became known to the fourth evangelist.⁷⁷ This latter point might possibly be defended with two considerations i) re-oralization probably

⁷⁵ This is, of course, based on the assumption that John wrote after Matthew. Evidence for dating John to 90 – 110 AD is, admittedly, rather scanty. Since Papias is probably writing at the turn of the century (see YARBROUGH (1983) and GUNDRY (1993:1027) for convincing arguments) and he mentions the gospel, it is rather safe to move the *terminus ad quem* to the mid 90s. A not significantly weaker case (may be even better!) than the majority opinion (later than 85 AD) has been brought forth by those dating the fourth gospel to the time before 70 AD. For positive appraisals of the arguments see e.g. MORRIS 1995:25-30, BEASLEY-MURRAY 1999:lxvii-lxviii and GUTHRIE 1990:300-302 and for vigorous defences of the earlier dating ROBINSON 1976:254-311 and CRIBBS 1970. KÜMMEL (1965:175) writes: "Today it is almost common opinion that John was written in the last decade of the first century. However, the only argument he gives for not dating it earlier is the assumed dependence on Luke (which according to Kümmel was written in the 80s). THEISSEN's (2003:147) confidence fails to convince when he uses 11:48 as a sign of knowledge about the fall of Jerusalem. As MORRIS (1995:103) argues, this particular saying is more readily understood in a pre70 context when Jesus was killed and Romans had not yet taken away the holy places. BLOMBERG (1995:41-44) remarks that the arguments of the proponents of an earlier date are arguments from silence, but does not give any good arguments for his own (majority) view either. WITHERINGTON (1995a:27-29) bases his dating (to mid-80s) on Johannine epistles, but does not provide any arguments from the proper Gospel. LINDARS (1972:37) dates the Gospel to 80-90 AD but the only argument is parallelism with Rabbinic texts. Neither does KEENER (2003:142) present much support for his choice of dating the Gospel of John to the mid 90s.

⁷⁶ That John knew Matthew's gospel has recently been argued by LINCOLN (2005:26-39). That John knew Luke is probable as AEJMELAEUS (1996:26-30) convincingly argues. (Although the relationship may also be the other way round). This would fit well into the theory according to which John knew the Synoptic gospels but was somewhat hesitant to use them. The old idea, recently revived by BAUCKHAM (1998b), that John's agenda was to write a complementary gospel, is not totally implausible either.

⁷⁷ Not excluded is the possibility that John knew a pre-Matthean version of the guard story if such a version existed. After analysing the similarities between Matthew's and John's resurrection narratives AEJMELAEUS (1996:34) suggests that John (or the group of writers) may have had a Matthean story, not in written but in re-oralized form, in use.

happened automatically since the gospels were read aloud⁷⁸ and ii) as Bauckham and Thompson have argued, the early Christian network was probably rather tight, and rumours (especially those with polemical aura) may be assumed to have spread quickly.⁷⁹ On the basis of (and partly despite) what has been brought forth above, I regard it as more probable than not that John would have known the GS if it had been based on what had actually happened at the tomb of Jesus.

Thus without claiming any absolute certainty I conclude that at least one of the evangelists, and probably all three of them, would probably have known about the guards if there had been any of them at Jesus' tomb.⁸⁰ The negative use of the CMA is, therefore, justified as far as the knowledge of the GS by the evangelists is concerned.

Motive to Mention the Guards

Mark

What kind of traditions served Mark's purpose in his presentation of the passion and resurrection of Jesus? As the myriad of suggestions for the overall purpose of the second gospel indicates, it may not be easy to define any rigid criterion.⁸¹ Mark is not shy of including embarrassing material in his gospel, which warns us not to jump to the conclusion that a given kind of tradition would not have suited Mark. On the other hand Mark is hardly a haphazard collector of traditions but rather shows literary skills in arranging material, as well as the ability to tell a good story.⁸² In the era of reader-oriented criticisms it could perhaps be stated intuitively that the GS with its explicitness does not match Markan style.

⁷⁸ The point well elucidated by DEWEY 1994, ACHTEMEIER 1990, HURTADO 1990 and STEIN 2003.

⁷⁹ See BAUCKHAM 1998a and THOMPSON 1998.

⁸⁰ This could be countered by referring to the fragmented nature of Early Christianity (or Christianities). If the Q community lived without any idea or interest in Jesus' resurrection, (see e.g. KLOPPENBORG 1990) would one section not live without knowing about the guards at the tomb? Even if there was such a Q community as has been suggested it is probable that they knew about the Easter stories but for some reason ignored and rejected them. See more in 2.3.4.

⁸¹ See GUTHRIE (1990:65-71) who lists 8 different "purposes" for the Gospel.

⁸² See e.g. EDWARDS (1989) for so called "sandwich structure" and DEWEY (2004) for the nature of the story in Mark.

However, the blurry surface of intuition is often backed up by something more tangible, in this case by the following considerations.

First, the viewpoint, as the events flow from the scene of the cross to the fear and trembling at the tomb, is essentially that of the women. This may be significant because the role of the women in the gospel is clearly secondary.⁸³ It is also likely that Mark has used two separate traditions, which can be identified in the lists of names in 15:47 and 16:1, and combined the names mentioned to 15:40.⁸⁴ This may be considered as a rather strong indication of conservative redaction on Mark's part.⁸⁵ This conservativity may explain his commitment to the women's viewpoint in the burial and empty tomb stories. Women were actively involved on the Friday and Sunday, while - in all likelihood - they spent the Sabbath, the Saturday, "the day of the guards", at someone's home. In the Markan storyline when the women arrive at the tomb the angel is already seated on the rolled stone. It is therefore possible, in principle, that the women never saw a single guard at the tomb, even if guards had been posted there.⁸⁶

Secondly, the great challenge for the early Christian apologetics seems to have been to prove from the Scriptures that the Messiah was to die on

⁸³ See MUNRO 1982. This is not to say that it is non-existent. See also DOWD & MALBON 2006.

CROSSAN's (1999:10-12) attempt to see chiasmus in the presentation of female and male followers strikes me as overly forced. While chiasmus as such is, of course, a much-applied literary device I would call for more hesitancy in the vigour it is used in NT studies. It seems to me that a chiastic structure can be found in almost any vivid narrative, but the risk that the chiasmus is in the eye of the beholder is immense. This scepticism is further supported by examples in scholarly literature. See e.g. suggestion for chiastic structure in Mk 2:1-3:6 by DEWEY (1975) followed by MEIER (2004:566) and rejected (correctly I think) by MARCUS (2000:213). Chiastic structure is suggested for Mt 27:55-28:20 by HEIL (1991) but rejected by BROWN (1994:1300). The whole gospel of Mark is interpreted chiastically by SCOTT (1985) but criticized by STEIN (2003:74).

⁸⁴ See especially (BROER 1972:87-135) for a profound presentation of problems and a viable solution. Much in the same tracks are e.g. MARJANEN 1995:507, AEJMELAEUS 1994:18 and MYLLYKOSKI 2002:63,

⁸⁵ So e.g. AEJMELAEUS 1994:6.

⁸⁶ If the pre-synoptic GS (whose existence we now presume hypothetically for a while) did not have women and Mark's version of course had, the question of the time of women's arrival was left in the hands of the evangelist i.e. Matthew.

the cross. This challenge is met by numerous scriptural allusions in the Markan crucifixion narrative. But, while the crucifixion scene is saturated with references to the Old Testament (see e.g. 15:21), which make it possible to interpret it as an apology for the Cross; the tone changes (even dramatically) in the finding of the empty tomb.⁸⁷ There are no scriptural allusions, and the absence of objective male witnesses is, to my mind, incomprehensible within any apologetic interpretational framework. Mark could have put Joseph of Arimathea to witness the resurrection scene or, if he for some unknown reason in the midst of his creative burst hesitated to describe the resurrection *per se*, at least he could have made Joseph find the empty tomb.⁸⁸ The evidential, and thus apologetic, value of a respected Sanhedrinist would certainly be on a very different level to that of few female followers. In consequence, if Mark did not have apologetical interests in the burial and empty tomb scenes, it is readily understandable that an apologetic GS did not find its place in the Markan narrative. Furthermore, Mark may have been written primarily for an audience which was not constantly troubled by the Jewish rumours about the stolen body.⁸⁹

While it cannot be maintained that the GS would definitely have worked against Markan redactional policy, which to me appears rather flexible, it is difficult to find a reason why Mark would have included it in his narrative either. As a result, I tend towards scepticism with regards for the meaningful application of the AES in this particular case.

Luke

⁸⁷ So also ALLISON 2005:320-321.

⁸⁸ The paradox of Mark being simultaneously freely creative, apologetically motivated and still having women as witnesses, with the resurrection undescribed, and a Joseph-figure not used as a witness to the empty tomb is, to me, irresolvable. A point well-made is that of O'COLLINS and KENDALL (1994:239) who wonder: "...if Mark's creativity is impossible to overestimate, why did he bother at all to use any written passion narrative?"

⁸⁹ While I regard BAUCKHAM's (1998) thesis "the gospels for all Christians" as fairly persuasive, it is still reasonable to assume that the evangelist had in mind, consciously or unconsciously, a primary audience whose language and prior knowledge of the story he was reflecting. This is seen e.g. in Mk 7:2-4, in the interpretation of Aramaic words as well as in the reference to Alexander and Rufus (15:21).

Guards play a role in Luke's double work; and particularly in the story of Peter's escape from prison their role is rather significant.⁹⁰ Consequently it can be assumed that Luke did not consciously avoid mentioning the guards, whether Roman or other. The obvious parallels between Jesus' death and that of Stephen's further suggest that the author was able and willing to build parallel scenes in the gospel and Acts. One possible parallel could have been the GS and Peter's escape from prison. In both stories an angel of the Lord overpowers the guard performing a sort of *Befreiungswunder*.⁹¹ On the other hand, the different emphases of Luke's gospel and the book of Acts are sometimes quite striking.⁹² While Luke describes the finding of the empty tomb (Lk 24:1-12) profoundly, he does not mention the empty tomb in the book of Acts at all.⁹³ Neither does he give much space to describing the accusations of the Jewish leaders against the Christians.⁹⁴ The little he does tell concerns the law of Moses, and no counter-argument against the historicity of Jesus' resurrection is ever put forward by the Jewish leaders.⁹⁵ It is possible that by refusing to write of the counter-arguments against Jesus' resurrection Luke wanted to give the impression that nobody could, or even tried to, deny Jesus'

⁹⁰ See e.g. 12:6, 18, 16:27-36 and 28:16.

⁹¹ About the concept see KRATZ 1973.

⁹² NOLLAND 1989:xxxiii

⁹³ This point is also made by ALLISON 2005:306. Even if Acts 2:29 is seen as an implicit reference to the empty tomb, the silence is still quite striking.

⁹⁴ The first clash between the apostles and the Jewish leaders in chapter 4 is indicative of Lucan editorial policy when it comes to describing the leaders' reaction and arguments. Even if Luke had known of the Jewish accusation, it seems to be in line with his redactive tendency not to mention it. As the counter-measures of the Jewish leaders against the apostles are described, it is noteworthy that they do not seem to have any argument against the Christians. The leaders ἐθαύμαζον (v. 13) and οὐδὲν εἶχον ἀντειπεῖν (v. 14). The choice of the Jewish leaders is not to debate or provide an alternative explanation but simply use their authority to silence the apostles (v. 18) καὶ καλέσαντες αὐτοὺς παρήγγειλαν τὸ καθόλου μὴ φθέγγεσθαι μηδὲ διδάσκειν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Ἰησοῦ. It may be of special relevance for our subject that at the beginning of the scene (v. 3) the resurrection of Jesus is explicitly mentioned (καὶ καταγγέλλειν ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ τὴν ἀνάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν). Thus, the question is not only about one particular healing but the very *raison d'être* of the new sect. Finally, since the Lucan agenda (Lk 1:1-4) was to assure the reader of the trustworthiness of what has been taught in Christian communities it is understandable that he is hesitant to name (possibly successful?) counter-arguments.

⁹⁵ The Law of Moses as a theme of criticism is obvious e.g. in Acts 6:11-14, 18:12-13 and 21:21.

resurrection.⁹⁶ This may be supported by Acts 1:3 where Luke uses the word τεκμήριον often translated as “infallible proof”.

While apologetic interest may be seen in Luke’s inclusion of Peter’s visit to the tomb (24:12), as if the women’s witness would not be enough, it is also possible that apologetic demands against the accusation of theft of the body was also met by this very episode. This is nevertheless rather speculative, because if Luke’s readers were Gentile Christians, the GS could have been one of those items omitted which had more to do with the struggles of Jewish Christians.⁹⁷

To sum up, there are themes in Luke-Acts that would readily match up with taking the GS into the narrative. On the other hand some motifs make the possible exclusion of the GS from Luke-Acts understandable. In this kind of situation the *argumentum e silentio* can be questioned and thus the AES may not be justified.

John

It is quite evident that apologetical motives have played a role in John’s composition of the empty tomb story (20:1-18).⁹⁸ The gospel was written ἵνα πιστεύσητε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ and since the resurrection is a central theme in the gospel, it is natural that apologetical concerns are not ignored in the resurrection narratives.⁹⁹ Given that John knew the rumours and had apologetical interests, then

⁹⁶ Similarly also WENHAM (1973:47): “The story of the guard is in some ways of very little importance for the Easter story proper, and so far as the Christians were concerned, the story could have been something of an embarrassment; for, if Matthew’s account is to be trusted, the guards who were posted at the tomb later put out the story that the disciples came and stole the body of Jesus. This was a direct challenge to the Christian explanation of the empty tomb from people who were at the tomb when the body disappeared.”

⁹⁷ EVANS (1990:3): “In all likelihood, Luke’s readers were Gentile Christians. This is seen principally in Luke’s omission of items that would be chiefly of interest to Jews...”

⁹⁸ See especially SCHNACKENBURG 1975:367 and OSBORN 1984:155-157. So also CARSON 1991:637 and MORRIS 1995:735. AEJMELAEUS (1996:55) is obviously right when he doubts the apologetical motives behind the short saying about the gardener. The later Jewish accusation about the gardener is to be seen rather as a reflection of this story than other way round.

⁹⁹ For the centrality of the resurrection theme in the fourth gospel see LINCOLN 1998.

what explanation might there be for his not including the GS in the narrative?

One consideration must be taken into account when a satisfactory answer is sought for this challenging question. The accusation of theft is effectively countered by the reference to the orderly packed clothes in the tomb.¹⁰⁰ The repetitive counter-argument might have been seen as needless by the evangelist. Since the accusation of theft is basically concerned with the sincerity of the disciples, it is quite effective simply to show how the accused leaders are actually surprised by the empty tomb. Additionally, John's tendency towards depicting individuals is harmonious with the preference of this tradition over the GS.¹⁰¹

At the beginning of this chapter I suggested that two conditions should be met in order to justify the AES. First, the silent witness should have, in all likelihood, been aware of a given data if it is historical. Secondly, he or she should be motivated to include the data into the story. At the very least it should not work against the respective redactional policy. With regard to the first point, we have found out that it is reasonable to assume the other evangelists' knowledge of the GS if the story was historical. If the John's gospel is dated after Matthew, it is quite probable that he knew the Matthean version (actual or re-oralized). The first condition for the use of the AES is rather well met. The second condition, however, is not met as convincingly. Rather, a good explanation for their "informed silence" can be provided which, according to my judgment, neutralize the persuasive power of the AES in this particular case.

¹⁰⁰ See especially BROWN 1970:1007-1008. So also BARRETT 1978:563, SCHNACKENBURG 1975:367, KIEFFER 1988:465 and BEASLEY-MURRAY 1987:372.

¹⁰¹ It is indicative that in the four-fold entity of the resurrection stories the individuals (Mary, Peter and Thomas,) play the major roles. This tendency is also seen in 20:2 where the plural form οἱδὲαμεν implies that the tradition used had a group of woman instead of only Mary. Thus John has picked up one important individual from the tradition. See BARRETT 1978:563.

2.2.3. The Guard Story Does Not Fit into the Pattern

One argument against the historicity of the narrative is that the GS is not easily combined with the storyline built by other sources.¹⁰² The first part (27:62-66) and the third (28:11-15) in GS take place in a scene different to what the other gospels describe, and so does not concern us here. The central part of GS (28:2-4) is where the problems arise. Three contradictions are generally brought forth in the literature. The first concerns the time of the women's arrival at the tomb, i.e. whether they saw the angel rolling the stone away or not. The second is the question of how the women thought to enter the tomb if it was guarded. The third can be crystallized into the question "what were the guards doing during 28:5-10?".

Time of Arrival

In the Markan narrative the women arriving at the tomb see a young man seated on the rolled stone. Matthew depicts an angel descending from heaven, quaking the earth and then rolling the stone away. While the scenes are different and attempts to harmonize them into a smooth historical report fail to convince, it is only the timing of the women's arrival that is of concern at this point.¹⁰³ The crucial question is whether the women arrived in time to see the angel "in action", or only after the angel was seated on the stone. In the latter case it is possible to harmonize the stories, given that the women did not think the prostrate soldiers were worth mentioning when they reported what had

¹⁰² For example, according to DUNN (2003a:830): "...the difficulty of integrating their [*the guards*'] presence with the earlier account of the women coming to the tomb is obvious in the sequence 28.2-5 (what were the guard doing during 28.5-10?)". BROWN (1994:1311): "Yet there is a major argument against historicity that is impressive indeed. Not only do the other Gospels not mention the guard at the sepulchre, but the presence of the guard there would make what they narrate about the tomb almost unintelligible."

¹⁰³ There have been numerous attempts to harmonize all the resurrection narratives. See e.g. ARCHER 1983:347-356 and HODGES 1966. Harmonizing is a legitimate procedure for a historian, and should be applied when the sources are compared with each other. (So e.g. BLOMBERG 1987:113-152. See also BOCK 1995.) However, when the harmonizing is motivated by an aprioristic dogmatic judgment or a scholar's view on the inerrancy of the Scripture, we have moved away from the field of historical-critical study of ancient history. Nonetheless, although we do not share these presupposition, the reconstructions built within that paradigm are worth studying.

happened. On the other hand, if the women saw the angel descending and rolling the stone away, the stories do not match up.

Scholars are divided on the question of the time of arrival of the women.¹⁰⁴ It has been suggested that the imperfect ἐκάθητο describing the angel hints that the rolling away of the stone had already taken place prior to the arrival of the women.¹⁰⁵ This line of reasoning presumes that the ἦλθεν... θεωρῆσαι τὸν τάφον did not mean that the women had come but “were on their way”.¹⁰⁶ Those interpreting the passage in such a way that the women actually saw the angel descending argue that the author would not have left the tomb open without an eyewitness seeing it all the time.¹⁰⁷ What I regard as highly suggestive for the latter interpretation is the expression ἦλθεν... θεωρῆσαι τὸν τάφον. The use of the aorist form of the verb ἔρχομαι is to be interpreted in such a way that the women had already arrived at the tomb.¹⁰⁸ Matthew is consistent in his use of this form, and never uses it to mean “to be coming” but rather always to mean “have come”.¹⁰⁹ Matthew seems to use the form πορεύομαι when his intention is to say that someone was going or coming at the same time as something else happened (e.g. 2:9 and 28:11). Thus we can conclude that there is a contradiction between Matthew’s GS and Mark 16:1-8.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ So e.g. DAVIES & ALLISON 1991:665.

¹⁰⁵ MOUNCE 1991:265.

¹⁰⁶ HODGES 1966:304. For those putting this more cautiously but still suggesting the same see e.g. TURNER (2008:680-681) who says that the chronological sequence is unclear and considers the possibility that women did not witness the rolling of the stone. See also BLOMBERG 1992:427.

¹⁰⁷ So e.g. DAVIES & ALLISON 1991:665 and HAGNER 1995:867-868.

¹⁰⁸ As put by WATERS (2005:296): “The term ἦλθεν (aorist indicative of ἔρχομαι) occurs in various forms about twenty-four times in the Gospel of Matthew (e.g., 7:27; 8:29; 9:1; 10:34; 27:57; 28:1). The term always indicates the arrival of a person or event or the termination of a journey.”

¹⁰⁹ In all the 113 cases of Matthew using the verb ἔρχομαι I was unable to find a single equivalent to the proposed “were on their way”.

¹¹⁰ WATERS (2005) argues that verses 2-4 tell what had already happened before the women set to walk to the tomb. However, he does not have any positive arguments for his viewpoint, and must refer to the very thing to be explained i.e. that other Gospels are contradictory to this particular passage. What makes the presence of the women evident is the use of the word φόβος. In verse 4 it is used as follows: “ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ φόβου αὐτοῦ ἐσείσθησαν οἱ τηροῦντες” and in verse 5 the angel addresses the women emphasizing

How to Enter the Tomb?

Brown has argued “evangelists would have had to explain how the women hoped to get in to the tomb if there were a guard placed there precisely to prevent entry¹¹¹”. Brown's argument fails to convince. First, according to Matthew's story the guards were not at the tomb “to prevent entry” but rather “to prevent the theft of the body”. The difference is significant. As Keener points out it is indeed possible that the soldiers would have let the women enter the tomb under their watchful eyes.¹¹² Secondly, the weakest point in Brown's argumentation is that when Matthew's storyline is followed, the women did not know about the guards who were sent to the tomb on the Sabbath. Consequently, they were not worried about the guard since they did not know about them.¹¹³

What Were the Guards Doing while the Angel Was Talking?

Dunn has wondered what the guards were doing during 28:5-10. The answer is simple – they were lying on the ground ὡς νεκροί. Then they crawled up and some of them headed to the chief priests. I cannot find here anything contradictory on the Matthean story level.

There is one significant discrepancy between Matthew's and Mark's empty tomb stories. In Matthew's version the women saw the guards at the tomb and the angel descending from the heaven, while Mark describes a scene where the angel (or however the young man is interpreted) is already sitting on the rolled-away stone when the women arrive. While attempts have been made to harmonize these two stories by interpreting the expression ἦλθεν... θεωρῆσαι τὸν τάφον as “were coming to the tomb”, the aorist form and verb itself imply that in Matthew's narrative the women are already at the tomb when the angel descends.

the difference to the reaction of the guards “Μὴ φοβεῖσθε ὑμεῖς”. The impression is that what the angel means is “they, the soldiers, are afraid as you saw, but you should not be afraid”.

¹¹¹ BROWN 1994:1311.

¹¹² KEENER 1999:697.

¹¹³ Cf. WENHAM 1973:28.

2.3. Anachronisms in the Matthean Guard Story

2.3.1. Introduction

The anachronism is in essence similar to the criterion of implausibility, with chronological emphasis of course. It means that a given data cannot be credibly located in the life of Jesus or, more generally, in the situation described in any text, but rather reflects a later situation. In Jesus studies this later situation means either the pre-gospel phase (*Sitz im Leben der Urgemeinde*) or the situation of the evangelists.

In order to apply this criterion successfully it is essential to reconstruct the basic outline of the characteristics of each period. It may be concluded “beyond reasonable doubt” that Jesus’ public career took place sometime between 25-33 AD.¹¹⁴ Further, we know that he was a Galilean, who was crucified in Jerusalem. Because of this basic information it is possible to focus scholarly efforts on finding out as much as possible about this period, and location. However, the hermeneutical spiral of judging something as plausible or implausible in the life of Jesus may turn out to be vicious at times.

We are on much thinner ice when attempting to reconstruct Matthew’s life situation. First, it is very difficult to define the exact date of the gospel. It is reasonable enough to assume that it was written after the gospel of Mark, since the existence of a literary relationship is hard to deny. However, the majority view of dating it to the 80s or 90s is conjectural since we do not know when Mark’s gospel was written and when Matthew got his copy of it, or how long it took after that for the gospel to be written.¹¹⁵ Secondly, we do not know who wrote it. There

¹¹⁴ See e.g. HOEHNER 1992:118-122.

¹¹⁵ When was the gospel according to Matthew written? The suggestion of the 80s or the 90s presented e.g. in such major commentaries and introductions as KÜMMEL 1965, DAVIES & ALLISON 1988 and LUZ 2002 enjoys a broad following and the lion’s share of Matthean studies are done within this paradigm. However, this view has been challenged by a few notorious voices like BLOMBERG 1992, GUNDRY 1994, HAGNER 1993, KEENER 1999, EVANS 2001, NOLLAND 2005 and FRANCE 2007. For a rather comprehensive survey of different dating solutions see DAVIES & ALLISON 1988:127-128. Since the question is not without importance in the present study it may be useful to

elucidate the arguments used in the scholarly discussion.

The **first argument**, which actually is rather an assumption than an argument proper, is that the reflected *Sitz-im-Leben* in the gospel fits to the 80-100 A.D. This is arguably seen in the harsh way the Pharisees are treated in the gospel and according to the assumption that the Pharisees were leading post-70 Judaism.

i) Our knowledge about the Jewish history both in Palestine and elsewhere is rather scanty in 60-100 A.D. Rabbinic sources are collected from circa year 200 A.D. onwards and edited many times. We should have an independent description of the situations in the writing locale both from the 60s and 80s to be able to evaluate which better fits to the background reflected in the gospel more objectively. ii) While we know that the destruction of the temple and simultaneous fall of the Sadducean hegemony greatly influenced the political life in Judea, it is another question how much the Diaspora communities were finally touched by it. E.g. NEUSNER (1975:34) points out: "...especially for the masses of Diaspora Jews who never saw the Temple to begin with, but served God through synagogue worship alone, the year 70 cannot be said to have marked an important change." If Matthew's gospel was written in Syria it should be asked whether the local synagogue leaders suddenly changed their identity from something else to that of the Pharisees after year 70. I am afraid that such a conclusion would be rather conjectural. iii) It is not at all as clear as is often claimed that proto-rabbinic Judaism in the decades after year 70 was identified as Pharisaic although it certainly had many Pharisaic and quasi-pharisaic features. The explicitly named Pharisees are rather hard to find in the Rabbinic literature. GRABBE (2000:123) points out: "It is usually thought that Yohanan was a Pharisee, but his characteristics according to the earliest traditions do not fit well what we know of pre-70 Pharisaism." According to NEUSNER (1975:58): "...at best, one may say he *might* have been a Pharisee". Eliezer ben Hyrcanus was probably a Pharisee but BOYARIN (1998:586) suggests that he was also a Christian! Should this suggestion be accepted, the whole post70 conflict scene would radically change. Even reading *perusim* and *saddukim* in Rabbinic literature as straightforward references to the Pharisees and Sadducees is not without problems. See GRABBE 2000:197 and RIVKIN 1970. A closer look to the question only confirms our hesitation. iv) There is rather harsh criticism against the Pharisees in Mark's gospel which is not reflective of the evangelist's community's contemporary fight against the Pharisees. Thus there is possible a pre-70 *Sitz-im-Leben* for anti-Pharisaic material.

The **second argument** concerns verse 22:7 where a king in the parable burns the city of those who rejected his invitation. This has been seen as a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. About the destruction see GUELICH 1992.

i) The burning of a city was very common in ancient warfare and the metaphor may very well be derived e.g. from the oral memories of the burning of Sepphoris in 6 BCE. ii) In the parable the messengers are sent to the "not-worthy" after the burning which would mean that the Gentile mission began only after 70 A.D., which is, of course, contradictory to what is told in chapter 28. While e.g. DAVIES & ALLISON (1988:131-132) point out that not every detail must be coherent with actual history, While e.g. DAVIES &

are some educated guesses, including the identification of the author with a Jewish-Christian scribe, but his personal history, character, connections to other Christians etc. are, for example, unknown. Thirdly, even the location of the writing is unknown. Syria has been proposed by the majority of commentaries known to me, but evidence for this is rather flimsy. Thus it is rather difficult to conclude that a given data fits better to Matthew's surroundings than to that of Jesus.

If the gospel of Matthew is dated to 75-100 AD, the value of Acts and the Pauline epistles in reconstructing the general life-situation and sociological dynamics of Christian communities of Matthew's time is

ALLISON (1988:131-132) point out that not every detail must be coherent with actual history, I would suppose that at least one detail would be, in addition to such a general procedure as the burning of a city. For more poignant criticism against this interpretation see especially GUNDRY 1994:599-600. About the imagery concerning Jerusalem' destruction see further DODD 1968:69-83, REICKE 1970:121-134 and MATTILL 1978.

The **third argument** is that Mark wrote his gospel c. 70 A.D. and it must have taken some 10 or 20 years to spread and be used by Matthew.

i) The exact dating of Mark's gospel is difficult, and many scholars opt for mid 60s. ii) Josephus wrote *Bellum Judaicum* in less than 8 years; the book being some ten times longer than the gospel of Matthew. Using simple mathematics and the same writing pace it would have taken about 10 months to finish Matthew's gospel. As for the copies of Mark it consists of 62 pages in Greek New Testament (Nestle-Aland 27th). If one page is copied in 30 minutes the whole gospel takes some 31 hours of effective copying. Spreading the gospel does not necessarily take decades. It takes 10-20 days to travel from Rome to Antioch. Even one year would be enough to spread the gospel in every major Christian community around *Mare Nostrum*. See also THOMPSON 1998 and ALEXANDER 1998.

Those arguing for pre-70 date have brought forward two arguments in particular: Firstly, the eschatological scenery in chapter 24 does not seem to match to what is known about actual history of the fall of Jerusalem (See more e.g. in GUNDRY 1994:602-604 and NOLLAND 2005:14-16). Secondly, the way the temple cult is handled in the gospel is more readily understandable if the temple service was still operational (see 5:23-24, 17:24-27, 23:16-21). E.g. SIM (1998:36) has argued against this conclusion and referred to the author's "historicizing" interest. What I find especially difficult to understand is such a seemingly minute detail since the question concerning the paying of the temple tax would be of minor interest in the mid 80s when the whole practise was no longer even in the active memory. And if the criticism of the Pharisees in 23:16-21 is (as e.g. Sim fervently argues) focused on the post-70 Pharisees, why then are they accused of something that they cannot do any more i.e. swear by the altar of the temple? See NOLLAND 2005:16-17. About reactions to the destruction of the temple in Diaspora see e.g. GOODMAN 1999.

somewhat diminished. Additionally no compensating sources are readily found. The gap between the world of Acts and the Epistles and Matthew spans 20-50 years, and includes the destruction of Jerusalem, the death of most of the members of the twelve, as well as the possible decline of the influence of Palestinian Christianity in general etc. This would make comparison between the sources rather difficult. If the gospel is dated earlier, for example to the 60s, comparison is more meaningful.

Faced with this myriad of uncertainties, caution is needed when it comes to dividing the post-Easter period to pre-70 and post-70 *Sitz im Leben*. While this division may have some relevance when e.g. the traditions about the temple institution¹¹⁶ are studied, the axiomatic conclusions about the total change in the world of Judaism in general should be critically reanalyzed. However, as the comparison of Jesus' self-identification in Mark's and John's gospels demonstrates, the division of the gospel material into pre-Easter and post-Easter layers is well-founded.¹¹⁷ When elaborating on this question it is useful to take an example of anachronism from the gospel of Matthew.

In the very last pericope of the gospel the risen Jesus utters the famous Great Commission commanding the disciples to baptize new converts with the trinitarian formula – εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος. I) The role of baptism is next to non-existent in the synoptic gospels and the fourth evangelist mentions that Jesus did not baptize himself (Jn 4:2). This means that the situation where this saying was uttered should more or less establish a new institution or add

¹¹⁶ It is curious that e.g. SIM (1998) reads Matthew's gospel as a sociological mirror to the community's *Sitz im Leben* but then labels the present viewpoint to the temple institution as historicizing and memory. This approach risks picking up only those elements which suit the interpreter's purposes as sociologically reactive, while leaving non-suitable material as non-reactive. With this method it is possible to build a community of any kind. For a more balanced approach to the question of communities behind the gospels see KAZEN 2005. A strong antithetical stand against the whole idea of community-dependence of the gospels is taken by BAUCKHAM 1998a and BURRIDGE 1998. They are criticized e.g. by MARCUS 2000:25-28, SIM 2001 and MITCHELL 2005. A profound, and to my mind convincing, elaboration of the question is written by BIRD 2006.

¹¹⁷ For a good introduction to question of the pre-Easter "tone" see especially LEMCIO 1991.

a new meaning to it.¹¹⁸ II) Against this background it is odd that the practise in the early church was to baptize new converts ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (e.g. Acts 2:38).¹¹⁹ Why was the Matthean Jesus' formula not followed? III) Would the names of Father and the Holy Spirit have been forgotten if they had been mentioned by Jesus? On these grounds we can conclude that the saying is - in all likelihood -anachronistic.¹²⁰

Thus, it is reasonable to presume that Matthew's gospel includes anachronisms. While this statement may sound blunt in the face of a long scholarly tradition of reading the whole document as an anachronistic theological book, it must be noted that sometimes the judgment is made only because a *Sitz im Leben* for a given data can be imagined in the post-Easter history of the Jesus movement. In order to meet the criterion of "chronological implausibility" i.e. to be seen as an anachronism the data must be shown to be significantly more explainable in the post-Easter context than in pre-Easter one. Consequently, we analyze three alleged anachronisms in the Matthean GS within this framework. The question of the centrality of a given anachronism in relation to the general historicity is not touched upon here. We limit our task in this phase only to find out whether the arguments for anachronism are valid as such. The three alleged anachronisms in the GS are as follows:

1. The denigrating title ὁ πλάνοσ refers to the claim of Jesus to be the Messiah although he never made such a claim.¹²¹ Furthermore, ὁ πλάνοσ fits well to the *Sitz im Leben* of the post-70 struggle between Judaism and Christianity.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Whether the words were uttered at the baptism is a question of its own (See the discussion in NOLLAND 2005:1267-1269). However, I find it reasonable to suppose that when the exhortation to be baptised was given, this formula was explicitly uttered.

¹¹⁹ See also Acts 8:16, 10:48, 19:5, Rom 6:3 and Gal 3:27.

¹²⁰ So also e.g. FRANCE 2007:1117-1118, GUNDRY 1994:596, CARSON 1984:598 and HAGNER 1995:888. BLOMBERG (1992:432) leaves the question open. KEENER (1999:717) refers to Paul's use of trinitarian language and reasons that this means that the saying could originate from the risen Jesus. This does not convince since Paul is not using it in a baptismal context. Compare with MOUNCE 1991:277. THOMAS (1986) rejects the possibility of Matthean redaction and post-Easter origin of the pericope *a priori*.

¹²¹ FULLER 1971:72.

¹²² FULLER 1971:72 and BROWN 1994:1290.

2. In the whole Passion story the Pharisees are mentioned only here, indicating that the story was created in the post-70 era.¹²³
3. It is presumed in the story (Mt 27:63) that the chief priests and the Pharisees knew about Jesus' resurrection prediction, which he never uttered.¹²⁴ This argument can be divided into three elements: a) Why did the chief priests believe "more" than the disciples? b) How could the chief priests have known about the predictions even if they had been told to the disciples and c) Did Jesus actually predict his resurrection?

2.3.2. Jesus Never Claimed to Be the Messiah

Fuller has argued that the word ἐκεῖνος ὁ πλάνοϛ in verse 63 must refer to the alleged claim of Jesus to be the Messiah.¹⁰ However, since Jesus never claimed to be "the Messiah", but was proclaimed as such by the Christian community, the verse is anachronistic and thus not historical. Another argument for anachronism is formulated by Brown who claims that the title πλάνοϛ does not fit into the *Sitz im Leben Jesu* but to the post-70 situation where this categorization of Jesus by the Jews became common.

I find Fuller's argument wanting for several reasons. First, while it is true that in many scholarly Jesus reconstructions Jesus appears essentially as a non-messianic figure, this hardly justifies the "just-so-nature" of Fuller's comment.¹²⁵ Secondly, from the opponents' point of view there is

¹²³ E.g. LUZ 2002:392.

¹²⁴ FULLER 1971:72, BROER 1972:63–64, AEJMELAEUS 1994:139, DUNN 2003a:830, HARE 1993:323 and PERRIN 1977:49.

¹²⁵ The non-existence of any consensus view on this question is implied in the comment of CROSSAN (1997:46): "I'm not even certain a majority of New Testament scholars say Jesus claimed he was Messiah." The discussion concerning Jesus' possible messianic self-identity has been intense (see e.g. BACK 2006:2-16). It is a well-known fact in Jesus studies that scholarly "definitions" of Jesus are endless. See WITHERINGTON (1995b) for an illuminative array of alternatives. The activity of Jesus undoubtedly included many elements, which can legitimately be picked up and used to describe his ministry. For those see e.g. BORG 1994. What makes me somewhat sceptical as to the plausibility of strongly non-messianic reconstructions of Jesus' self-identity can be crystallized as follows:

hardly any difference between the explicit claim of Jesus or the messianic associations he aroused. The effect on people is what defines ὁ πλάνοϛ¹²⁶ and thus the identity given by the followers and others sympathetic to the figure is to be regarded as decisive.¹²⁷ Thirdly, the whole logic in Fuller's argument is hard to follow. Why would the term ὁ πλάνοϛ require a messianic claim in the first place? In the LXX version of Jeremiah (23:13) Samaritan false prophets lead the people astray

The early Christians seemed to accept high Christology without much dispute. Paul shows no sign of being forced to defend e.g. his way to interchange between JWHW and Jesus (e.g. Phil 2:10). About the meaning of "christopraxy" to the question see KAZEN 2008.

This obvious consensus is easy to understand if Jesus gave the original impact i.e. he somehow acted and taught in a way not contradictory to high Christology. FREYNE (2009:287): "From this brief survey it is clear that the early Christian claims about messianic status of Jesus were highly contentious, and we can see signs of later polemics influencing the Gospel accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus in Galilee. Yet, especially in view of the early emergence of *Christos* as a name for Jesus, we are entitled to inquire whether or not such claims might plausibly reflect his earthly career, and, if so, which aspects were most likely to resonate with distinctively Galilean hopes?"

Some scholars present evidence for Jesus' high view of himself but then for some reason refuse to draw (what seem to me to be) logical conclusions. So e.g. CHARLESWORTH (1988:136): "Jesus was indeed conscious of a mission; but that does not clarify or indicate his consciousness of who he was, or anything to be identified *prima facie* as a self-consciousness. We must be critically honest as historians. We should not be afraid to contemplate that Jesus may well have been uncertain about who he really was – he may have left that clarification totally up to God." DUNN (2003a:762) opts for a rather vague idea of Jesus defining himself as a by-product of his proclamation and as an eschatological agent in the coming kingdom. With due respect to CHARLESWORTH'S (1988:136) and DUNN'S (2003a:762) calls for being critically honest historians and for operating on a responsible historical level I find much appeal in the studies pointing to more clearly defined self-understanding of Jesus. As put by HURTADO (2005:104), in his review of Dunn's book: "If Jesus so steadfastly ducked messianic claims, how then was he executed on the charge of claiming to be a Messiah?" I have already referred to the step from historical Jesus to the early (high) Christology which cannot possibly be too great. General presentations from different angles have been provided e.g. by DE JONGE 1991, BOCKMUEHL 1994 and VAN BRUGGEN 1999. I find the works of BACK 2006 and BOCK 2009:249-281 especially persuasive.

¹²⁶ In LXX version of Jer 32:23 the verb πλανᾶω is used in this sense and the substantive πλάνοϛ correspondingly.

¹²⁷ For arguments for the authenticity of Peter's saying Σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστός in Mark 8:29 see EVANS 2001:9-10. About the ideas Jesus provoked concerning his "identity" see DUNN 2003a:615:704.

(ἐπλάνησαν) and are thus impostors by definition.¹²⁸ No messianic association whatsoever is required.

It seems likely to me that the term ὁ πλάνοϛ was actively used by Jesus' opponents in the pre-Easter conflicts. This may be argued on the following grounds:

1. Jesus performed miracles and exorcisms.
2. Jesus was regarded as a prophet.¹²⁹
3. One important reason for this was Jesus' deeds, which were interpreted as miracles.¹³⁰
4. His religious opponents did not choose to deny that the miraculous happened, but instead they questioned the source of Jesus' empowerment.¹³¹ (See e.g. Mt 10:25, 12:24, Mk 3:22, Lk 11:15, Mt 12:27, Lk 11:18 and Jn 7:20, 8:48).
5. Within the Judaistic framework the most meaningful negative category for someone who was performing miracles and raising general speculations of being a prophet was the concept "false prophet". (See e.g. Deut. 13:2-4)

¹²⁸ The same is clearly seen in Deut 13:6 where a false prophet leads the people astray.

¹²⁹ See e.g. PHIPPS 1977:26-29, HAWTHORNE 1992:640-641 and WITHERINGTON 1999:246-292.

¹³⁰ KOSKENNIEMI (2005) has demonstrated that the miracles of the prophets were remembered and popular in the Jewish literature from the Second Temple period, especially those of Elijah and Elisha. This shows that there was "a demand for miraculous" thus providing remarkable religious and political power for a miracle-worker. EVE (2002) has challenged the older assumption, especially promoted by VERMES (1973), that there were scores of miracle-workers and exorcists in the first century Palestine. Actually, on the base of the literature, Jesus seems to be quite exceptional in this respect. The existence of potentiality for Elijah interpretation is also hinted by HORSLEY (1985:440-441) who states: "That is, although in the present, reworked form of gospel traditions it is impossible to discern the particular outlines of the original Jewish expectation, the fact that the "Elijah" paradigm was available for the followers of Jesus to speculate about indicates that there was some expectation of Elijah's return (e.g., Matt 11:14). The early Christians would certainly not have "borrowed" the concept from the Pharisees at a late stage of the development of gospel traditions." See also BARNETT 1981.

¹³¹ See especially STANTON 2004:127-161.

6. A false prophet was associated with demon possession, blasphemy, magic and foreign gods.¹³² The term *πλάνοϛ* is used by Josephus when he describes pseudo-prophets who allured people with promises of great signs.¹³³
7. A false prophet was, by definition, someone who led Israel astray. One of the basic words to describe this in LXX is *πλανάω* from which the title *ὁ πλάνοϛ* is derived.¹³⁴ Hence it is evident that the word was known and used in the 20s and 30s as well as in post-70 Judaism. Thus we may conclude that *ὁ πλάνοϛ* is essentially synonymous to a false prophet.
8. In 2 Cor 6:8 Paul uses the word *πλάνοϛ*, which implies that the word was in use in the 50s. If Christians were depicted with that word before 70 A.D., is it impossible that Jesus was as well?

Thus we conclude that there are no grounds for seeing the use of the term *ἐκεῖνοϛ ὁ πλάνοϛ* as anachronistic in Matthew's gospel.

2.3.3. The Presence of the Pharisees in the Passion Story is Anachronistic

The presence of the Pharisees in verse 27:62 is curious since they were not participants in the episodes leading up to Jesus' death in Jerusalem. This has been interpreted as a sign of a post-70 situation where Matthew was allegedly fighting against contemporary Pharisaic rabbis. Aejmelaeus argues that the reason for their inclusion here is "Matthew's obvious desire to compromise as much as possible the Pharisees."¹³⁵

If Matthew wanted to denigrate the Pharisees as much as possible, it is curious that he did not mention them, for example, in the scene where the blood of Jesus was presumably asked to fall on the Jews (27:25). Against Aejmelaeus' proposal is also the fact that the Pharisees are no

¹³² See STANTON 2004:135ff.

¹³³ See *Jos. War.* 2.13.4. and *Ant.*, 20.8.6. For a good list of religious leaders of the time recruiting people see DULING 2002:154-157.

¹³⁴ The verb *πλανάω* occurs 164 times in LXX and is used e.g. in Deuteronomy to describe the effect of a false prophet on the people.

¹³⁵ AEJMELAEUS 1994:139.

longer mentioned once the rumour proper is launched (28:11-15). The sudden occurrence of the Pharisees demands another explanation; one of the more meaningful ones being a link to 12:40 where the Pharisees actually heard Jesus predicting his resurrection.

Numerous uncertainties cast a shadow on the widespread hypothesis of exclusively post-70 *Sitz im Leben* of anti-Pharisaic material.

First, threading sociological reactivity too quickly into the text is not wise. When we read the Gospel of Luke it is possible to find harsh anti-Pharisaic rhetoric and an almost exclusively negative portrayal of this Jewish party. However, in Acts the tone is quite different, with the Pharisees receiving remarkably milder treatment. Should we reconstruct the *Sitz im Leben* of Luke on the basis of the attitude behind the gospel or Acts?¹³⁶

Secondly, it is probable that Jesus clashed with the Pharisees as every Gospel explicitly relates.¹³⁷ Mark describes numerous situations where Jesus attacked and was attacked by the Pharisees. It is obvious that Mark reflects the pre-70 situation, thus showing the existing *Sitz im Leben* for anti-Pharisaic material at the time prior to the fall of Jerusalem.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ There are 15 contexts where the Pharisees are "present" in Luke's gospel. The description of the Pharisees is negative in 9 cases (5:27-32, 6:1-5, 6:6-11, 7:24-35, 7:36-50, 11:37-53, 12:1-3, 15:1-7, 16:14-18. In 5:27-32 Mark's neutral depiction is edited to clearly more negative one.), in 3 cases it is slightly negative (14:1-6, 18:9-14, 19:28-40). In two cases the description is rather neutral or neutral (5:33-39, 17:20-21) and only in one case is it clearly positive (13:31-35). It seems rather secure to state that Luke's picture of the Pharisees is negative. However, the tone is different in Acts. Gamaliel the Pharisee defends the Christ-believers (5:34), Saul is not represented as a Pharisee when he persecutes the church (8-9), in 23:6 he identifies with the Pharisees who take a positive stance (from the Christian point of view) in the respective conflict and the Pharisaic identification is repeated in 26:5. In 15:5 it is mentioned that there was a Pharisaic party among the Christ-believers and while they lost their case in the Jerusalem council (according to Luke), they are not attacked or labelled as outsiders. Thus I agree with CARROLL (1988:606) who concludes: "While the relationship between Jesus and Pharisees is punctuated by conflict in Luke, Acts portrays this Jewish group as sympathetic toward nascent Christianity."

¹³⁷ So e.g. MEIER 2001:332-340.

¹³⁸ Even if Mark had written his gospel in the early 70s it is likely that his information mostly originates before that time. Since 7:2-4 shows that the Pharisees are not a

Curiously enough Mark must present the Pharisees to his audience in 7:1-4, thus making it evident that his primary audience did not struggle with the contemporary Pharisees. Since Paul was a Pharisee when he persecuted the Christians, we can be positive about one *Sitz im Leben* for antagonism against the Pharisees – the time before Paul's conversion.

It may come as a surprise for those used to taking the post-70 conflict between the pharisaically identified rabbis and the Christians for granted, that the evidence for it is actually rather flimsy. What the non-biblical sources from the end of the first century and some time later indicate us about the relationship between the Jews and Christians is that there was indifference, occasional unorganized clashes and peaceful coexistence.¹³⁹ Much scholarly ink has been spilled over the question whether *birkath-ha-minim* was directed against the Jewish Christians or not.¹⁴⁰ While those critical of the curse being originally against the Christians have argued their case well,¹⁴¹ we may -for the sake of

contemporary problem for the audience it is safe to assume that the origin of the traditions with the Pharisees is the time before 70 AD.

¹³⁹ CONZELMANN (1982:235-342) lists practically all Christian references to the Jews until the time of Origen. The indifference reflected in the number and also to some extent in the nature of these references is indicative. See also BOYARIN 2001, KATZ 1984, COHEN 1984, LIEU 1994 and BOWLIN 2000. SETZER (1994:182) argues that though Jewish reactions to Christianity were negative they took place mostly in the verbal sphere. CONSTANTELOS (1978) concludes that Greek fathers were relatively positive or neutral in their attitudes towards the Jews. MEYERS (1988) provides an insightful archaeological perspective on the history of the coexistence of the Jews and Christians. JOHNSON (1989) points to the harsh language of the ancient authors when criticizing other groups. The lack of the corresponding outbursts in the second century documents is to my mind most indicative of relatively peaceful coexistence.

¹⁴⁰ See VAN DER HORST (1994) and LEWIS (1999-2000) for a good survey of scholarship on the *Birkat ha minim*. About the definition of "min" see also JANOWITZ 1998.

¹⁴¹ SETZER (1994:91) makes an interesting point: "How would a Christian know that the ambiguous term min really referred to a believer in Jesus." FINKEL(1981:238-239) concludes: "Minim, however, are not synonymous with Jewish Christians. If such was the case, why the repetition of Nazarenes and minim in the later edition? Minim signifies heretics, who were associated in the first place with schismatics, separatists, rejecters of Torah, and dualistic Gnostics but not Jewish Christians." See also KIMELMAN 1981, GOODMAN 1996, BOYARIN 2001, INSTONE-BREWER 2003a and SCHÄFER 2003:140. Against these see e.g. HORBURY 1982 and 1998:309-312, and DAVIES 1988:275-277. The role of the old idea of originally anti-Christian *birkat-ha-minim* is harbored by many significant scholars who do not seem to take this critical scholarship into account. See e.g. BROWN 1993:46 and LUZ 1992:406.

argument - assume that the term *minim* included Christians already from the mid-80s, when the curse was probably made. There is still much road to go to claim that what led to this curse was exclusively a post-70 matter. As for the *aposynagogos*, it is to be noted that Paul tells of five floggings by the Jews, very likely having taken place in the synagogue, which reflects the attitude toward the Christian Jews in Diaspora Synagogues in the 50s and before.

Thirdly, a comparison of Matthew and Mark shows that the first repeatedly cites the latter's texts where the Pharisees are present. As a matter of fact, Matthew adds the Pharisees into a tradition quite rarely, thus showing that the presence of the Pharisees as such in a pericope cannot be taken as a sign of the evangelist's creativity.

2.3.4. Did Jesus Actually Predict His Resurrection?

For many scholars it is obvious that the historical Jesus never talked about his own personal resurrection.¹⁴² Consequently Mark's three resurrection predictions (8:31, 9:31 and 10:34) are seen as the evangelist's redactional activity, or as non-historical community creations and thus *ex nullo verbo Jesu*. This argument is important because the very motive for setting the guard at the tomb is at stake. Consequently, we will go into some detail on the subject in the respective analysis.

The application of the criteria of authenticity to the problem currently under study is useful.¹⁴³ While the criteria are not to be regarded as

¹⁴² See e.g. AEJMELAEUS (1994:139) and FULLER (1971:72) who express this standpoint very strongly. Neither of them, however, considers it necessary to provide any arguments for the view. This significantly diminishes the value of their works since, to cite MCKINNIS (1976:81-82) concerning e.g. 10:32-34: "...certainly, now it is rather inadequate merely to assert that Mark composed it or that he did not compose it with little discussion of the details of the passage."

¹⁴³ The following abbreviations are used in what follows: CIMP = criterion of implausibility, CI = criterion of incoherence, CD = criterion of dissimilarity, CPHE = criterion of plausibility of historical effects, CMA = criterion of multiple attestation, CPE = criterion of Palestinian environment and CEMB = criterion of embarrassment. The criteria of authenticity have been introduced and commented in numerous works. See e.g. HOOKER 1970-71, CALVERT 1972, MCELENEY 1972, CATHCPOLE 1977:174-178,

conclusive (but then, what is in the historical sciences?) they clarify the methodological approach and hopefully create an easy-to-follow structure for the reasoning process. Since our primary goal in this phase is to evaluate the arguments against the historicity of the guard story, it is natural also to explore so called negative criteria.¹⁴⁴ This means that the burden of proof is on those claiming non-historicity of the story given that the common solution to the burden-of-proof problem is followed – the burden of proof is on anyone who claims something. To prove that Mt 27:63 meets the negative criteria of authenticity requires that the Jesus' resurrection predictions are shown to be inauthentic. On the other hand, the possible failure in this task does not result in the conclusion that Mt 27:63 is historical.

In what follows we first apply two criteria of inauthenticity to Markan resurrection predictions. These are then analyzed using the criteria of authenticity. What we are trying to establish is not the historicity or non-historicity of the *ipsissima verba Jesu* but the *ipsissima vox*, i.e. whether Jesus somehow explicitly said that he would be raised from the dead before the final and general resurrection.

The Inauthenticity of Jesus' Resurrection Predictions

We will first apply *the criterion of implausibility* (CIMP) to the resurrection predictions. How would the CIMP be met?¹⁴⁵ The clearest way would be to demonstrate that a Jew could not have uttered the words "I will rise from death after three days". This could be done by showing that the idea of a resurrected individual was i) unknown in the Palestinian environment and ii) so much against the prevalent world-view that

STEIN 1980, POLKOW 1987, BORING 1988, MEIER 1991:167-195, EVANS 1993, HOLMÉN 1999, TUCKETT 2001, THEISSEN&WINTER 2002, AUVINEN 2003:16-21, PORTER 2004, OLLILAINEN 2008:115-124 and HOLMÉN 2008. Some critical insights are provided e.g. by HOLLANDER 2000:354, DUNN 2003:81-83 and EVE 2005.

¹⁴⁴ The negative criteria are not often included to the (endless) lists of criteria. Such standard presentations as MEIER 1991:165-197, POLKOW 1987, MCELENEY 1972, MCARTHUR 1969, PERRIN 1969, BORING 1988, TUCKETT 2001 do not mention them at all. CALVERT (1972:209) rejects the use of the negative criteria. But see STEIN (1980:248-250) and HOLMÉN (2001a:35) who elaborate also these criteria.

¹⁴⁵ HOLMÉN (2001a:35): "*The criterion of implausibility* comprises all possible instances where a Jesus tradition contains features that cannot plausibly be pictured within the Palestinian environment of this time.

neither Jesus nor the chief priests and the Pharisees could have presented such an idea.

The first condition is at least partially met since it can be pointed out that no resurrected Messiah is known from that time in Palestine.¹⁴⁶ If Jesus came up with this idea by himself and without any antecedent to it, and this seems to be a quite reasonable assumption, the innovativeness required from Jesus is remarkable.

On the other hand, the belief in Jesus' resurrection, originated from Palestine of the 30s AD.¹⁴⁷ Thus it was possible that such a belief was born in the same ideological environment where Jesus lived. On much the same methodological standards as applied to assuming the authenticity of the Beelzebul accusation and the baptism of Jesus by John, the historicity of the Herodian interpretation of Jesus as *John the Baptist redivivus* (Mk 6:16 and par) may be taken as quite probable.¹⁴⁸ It is not easy to find a meaningful motive for either the early Christians or the

¹⁴⁶ CRAIG (1995:160): "Jewish belief always concerned a general resurrection of the people, not the resurrection of an isolated individual. Whether it was the righteous, or all of Israel, or the entire human race, the resurrection in Jewish thinking always referred to the general resurrection of the dead...Once again, in light of Jewish religious mentality, the disciples after the burial of Jesus would have waited with longing for that day when Jesus, along with all the righteous of Israel, would be raised by God to glory."

¹⁴⁷ I take this as a solid fact of history since in 1Cor 15:3-5 the twelve are mentioned, indicating that they played an important role when the resurrection belief was being formulated. The twelve lived in the closest possible ideological environment with Jesus. An idea plausible for them probably was plausible, or at least not totally implausible, to Jesus of Nazareth.

¹⁴⁸ See however MEIER (1994:226): "Mark' report of how Herod Antipas personally explained the miracles of Jesus can hardly be other than a redactional creation of Mark. How would Mark have entrée to the private thoughts of Antipas on the miracles of Jesus?" Meier's argument is incomprehensible. It is not Mark but the originator of the tradition whose whereabouts are relevant here! Jesus disciples certainly knew and remembered how people reacted to Jesus during their years together. A king's thought of a popular religious figure who lived and acted in his very kingdom is hardly "a private thought". Furthermore, it is indicated in Mk 6:14 that people in general coined the idea of John *redivivus* (if the text critical problem between ἔλεγον and ἔλεγε is resolved as in NA27th.) and then Herod says (so much for a private thought!) the same. Meier's other arguments are mostly based on the supposed dichotomy of redactional arrangement of material and their traditionality.

evangelist to have created such an accusation out of thin air.¹⁴⁹ Further, a post-Easter opponent of Christianity would hardly call Jesus of Nazareth “resurrected John”, thus creating a need for the Christians to answer this accusation. There are no typical signs of Markan redaction in the periscope, thus implying of the use of an earlier tradition.¹⁵⁰ It is also probable that the other two popular interpretations of Jesus – Ἡλίας and εἷς τῶν προφητῶν were historical.¹⁵¹ While in principle nothing hinders an author (or a tradent) from including one invented and two historical things in the same periscope, it is likely that he did not set out to invent popular interpretation, but rather just remembers them.

Herod’s curious saying shows that the idea of a resurrected individual was not totally unheard of in the first century. He, and at least some ordinary folks, cherished a notion that a prophet-like figure could rise from the dead. This may not have been a coherent theological reflection based on the Jewish belief on the general resurrection, however, and thus similarities with the later belief in Jesus’ resurrection should not be overemphasized.¹⁵² It would also be questionable to claim that the chief priests or the Pharisees would have believed in the same kind of

¹⁴⁹ As a matter of fact KRAEMER (2006) has even suggested that the whole episode is created to explain away the accusation that Jesus is John the Baptist *redivivus*. While the embarrassing nature of the label is correctly caught by Kraemer, his overall hypothesis that Mark would have been out to suppress this rumour is far-fetched. A better explanation is that given by MOLONEY (2002:659): “Mark uses his traditions concerning the death of John the Baptist for at least two reasons. First, John the Baptist is the messenger of God (see 1:2-3), the one who announces Jesus’ coming (vv. 7-8); he has an unswerving commitment to his God-given mission to preach a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (1:4), and it has cost him his life (6:17-29). Second, his life and death have close parallels with the life and death of Jesus, and so the memory of him has much to say about the following of Jesus.”

¹⁵⁰ ACHTEMEIER (1970:269): “There are no typical Markan phrases indicating literary activity, such as we have observed in the preceding verses, and where such is the case, it is better not to assume Markan redaction.”

¹⁵¹ Elijah was the most probable associative point for a miracle-worker. See KOSKENNIEMI 2005. That Jesus was regarded as a prophet by some is probably as close to a fact “beyond reasonable doubt” as we ever get in the historical Jesus studies. See e.g. KAZEN 2008:595.

¹⁵² I agree with DAVIES & ALLISON (1991:468) who state: “But rather than detecting behind this strange conviction an eschatological belief about a dying and rising prophet we prefer to think more simply of “a very ill-informed piece of popular superstition”. So also MOLONEY 2001:657.

phenomenon. However, the fact that Herod uttered such an idea implies that - in all likelihood - the chief priests and the Pharisees were aware that such notions could arise among the people. While these considerations diminish the value of CIMP, it is still noteworthy that John *redivivus* is clearly different from the eschatological connotations of Jesus' resurrection. The exact conceptual distance between the *redivivus* idea and the resurrection proper is, however, hard to establish.

Are the resurrection predictions inconsistent with genuinely Jesuanic sayings and facts and thus meet *the criterion of incoherence*¹⁵³ (CI)? Since there is no indication of Jesus' association with the Sadducean non-resurrection philosophy in any saying, it is necessary to search for points of contradiction and tensions (or lack of them) in Jesus' life in general. The exhaustive variety of Jesus reconstructions does not make the task at hand an easy one.¹⁵⁴ There are scholarly reconstructions of Jesus which never say a word about his death or make even a statement about his own uniqueness. On the other hand, within some reconstructions even the resurrection predictions *in verbatim* readily find their way to the historical Jesus.

As for the general coherence/incoherence of the Markan predictions, it may be necessary to state clearly what is considered here as a historically probable reconstruction concerning Jesus' understanding of his

¹⁵³ HOLMÈN (2001a:35): "The *criterion of incoherence*, the negative of the criterion of coherence, states that traditions that seem to be inconsistent with those already established as genuinely Jesuanic, are likely to be inauthentic."

¹⁵⁴ See e.g. WITHERINGTON (1995b), BORG (1994) and WILLITS (2005) for samples of different scholars' views and compare the very different emphases in EVANS (2005b) and HANSEN (2006). THEISSEN & MERZ (2001), though not focusing on research history provide a good (bias rather strongly on German scholarship) introduction to the questions under discussion. The impression is well caught by POWELL (2009:121-122): "And people who are interested in the historical Jesus may recall that it was also a time when Bible scholars could blackball Jesus by dropping little marbles into bowls; when headlines could scream, "Scholars Decide: Jesus Did Not Teach the Lord's Prayer!"; when John Dominic Crossan could announce that the postcrucifixion body of Jesus was devoured by wild dogs. Do you remember those days? Jane Schaberg called Jesus a (literal) bastard; Meier called him "a marginal Jew"; Leif Vaage said he was "a party animal"; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza characterized him as a feminist prophet of the goddess Sophia; Crossan described him as "a Galilean hippie in a world of Augustan yuppies." See also WILLITS 2005.

immediate future before and during his last journey to Jerusalem. There are rather good grounds to believe that Jesus expected a violent death and interpreted it theologically. While dissenting voices are not hard to find, the arguments of Dunn, for example, are quite persuasive.¹⁵⁵ What is more questionable, and currently at stake, is whether Jesus regarded his coming resurrection as something that was to take place before the general resurrection, and whether he ever made that explicitly known to his disciples. Two arguments can be posed for the essential incoherence of the Markan resurrection predictions: i) the later behaviour of the disciples is inconsistent with the claim that Jesus had predicted his resurrection and ii) the predictive prophecy is supernatural and thus impossible by definition.¹⁵⁶

The behaviour of the disciples, that they escape from Gethsemane and do not seem to expect the resurrection, is not in keeping with the behaviour that would be expected from someone who firmly believed in the Messiah, the son of God, who had just thrice predicted his suffering, death and subsequent resurrection. The echoes transmitted by the Emmaus pericope and the story of doubting Thomas do not suggest even a hint of cautious expectation of the resurrection of Jesus, as could be readily assumed if Jesus had said it as clearly as is claimed in Mark's gospel. It may also be claimed that a rather minor hint at the resurrection would have sufficed to trigger the belief if it had been preconceptualized by Jesus himself. In this light e.g. the "stubborn" misunderstanding of Mary (John 20:11-15) is not easy to understand.

On the other hand, it may be argued that the reaction is psychologically plausible. The reaction of Peter (Mk 8:32) indicates that the idea of voluntary suffering may not have been attractive to him, an attitude which was apparently shared by the disciple using the sword against the arresting party.¹⁵⁷ It is also quite plausible that the disciples could have

¹⁵⁵ DUNN 2003a:805-824. See also GREEN 2001:96-101.

¹⁵⁶ While this statement could be classified under the CIMP I rather use it here in order to save CIMP for the culture-related details.

¹⁵⁷ The case of the disciple being anonymous due to the intention to protect him in the early Jerusalem is argued by THEISSEN 1991:184-189 and elaborated by BAUCKHAM 2006:193:201. This can be seen as a hint of embarrassing nature of this episode for the early Christians.

refused to modify their more glorious ideas of Jesus and his mission on the basis of these passion and resurrection predictions. This interpretation is quite similar to the Markan redactive addition οἱ δὲ ἠγνόουν τὸ ῥῆμα καὶ ἐφοβοῦντο αὐτὸν ἐπερωτῆσαι (9:32). In this interpretative model it may further be assumed that in Gethsemane the instinct of survival overpowered the reluctantly heard words of Jesus and resulted in their escape. It is indeed a well-known psychological phenomenon that under acute stress cognitive abilities are severely impaired. Consequently, in this decisive moment, it is perhaps not so surprising that the disciples chose to obey their basic instincts rather than building a “behavioural model” coherent with Jesus predictions. Furthermore, it is rather difficult to imagine how the disciples would have acted if they had heard and believed Jesus’ predictions. While the action in Gethsemane is not incoherent with the historicity of the resurrection predictions, the later reluctance to believe in Jesus’ resurrection is harder to grasp if it had been clearly “predicted” by Jesus.

We present the second argument for the incoherence as formulated by Cole in his evaluation of the chance of prophecy in the passion predictions:

This is of course a great stumbling-block to liberal scholars, who find it hard to admit that Jesus foresaw His own death, still less that he prophesied it three times in detail.¹⁵⁸

I find the philosophical speculations concerning the ability to foresee the future somewhat irrelevant for this question. No supernatural knowledge is needed to assume that one can die as a result of one’s activities and message. Jesus knew the fate of John the Baptist, and may have reasoned that a similar death was waiting for him as well. While the question as to whether Jesus was raised from the death is outside the scope of historical study, the question of whether he said that he would is not.¹⁵⁹ In numerous Jesus reconstructions it is believed he spoke about

¹⁵⁸ COLE 1989:204

¹⁵⁹ AEJMELAEUS (1996:340) concludes: “Historical-critical study of NT texts does not lead one to such conclusions which would shatter the Christian faith in the risen and exalted Christ.” With all respect to this theological statement it may be asked whether historical-critical study of NT texts lead one to such a conclusion that predictive prophecy

the *parousia* of the son of man. In the same fashion he could have talked about the resurrection of the son of man. The “supernatural” knowledge required in both cases is more or less the same.

To prove the point within the theory of redactive creation of Mt 27:63, a demonstration of inauthenticity of Markan resurrection predictions (Mk 8:31, 9:31 and 10:33-34) is required. Of course the scholarly world is sharply divided on the question of general historical trustworthiness of Mark’s gospel.¹⁶⁰ For those observing history through the text, such a strongly emphasized climax must be based on history, and for those regarding theological plots as antithetical to historical information the strong theological weight of the sayings is a sure sign of non-historicity.

Aejmelaeus states with confidence:

The problems deepen when we move into the field of historicity. The resurrection predictions, put in the mouth of Jesus in the gospels, are redactional in the sense that they are formed by the author of the oldest gospel (Mk). There is not a slightest chance of them representing an old, save authentic, tradition.¹⁶¹

However, it seems to me that the majority of scholars see a pre- Markan tradition behind these sayings. Thus one would expect some elaboration and comment, for example on Strecker’s detailed argumentation, for the existence of a pre-Markan prediction tradition.¹⁶²

is impossible. With this remark I am not defending the reality of a predictive prophecy but only trying to point out that if a scholar believes (like many do) that Jesus was risen (supernaturally) from the death it is no more much of an issue that he told it before.

¹⁶⁰ As we move from e.g. from Bockmuehl, Wright, Riesner and Evans to Sanders, Meier, Dunn and Theissen and then to Bultmann, Perrin, Marxen, Crossan, Funk, Hoover and Mack we find that strikingly different reconstructions of Jesus are decisively dependent on the general attitude toward the role of the historical in the gospels.

¹⁶¹ AEJMELAEUS (1993:142): “The problems deepen when we move into the field of historicity. The resurrection predictions, put in the mouth of Jesus in the gospels, are redactional in the sense that they are formed by the author of the oldest gospel (Mk). There is not a slightest chance of them representing an old, save authentic, tradition. [transl. mine]

¹⁶² See STRECKER 1968.

In 8:31 Mark uses the word ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι without any further explanation, which suggests that his audience was familiar with the tradition.¹⁶³ The word is used only twice by Mark; the other occurrence is found in the parable of the vineyard and the tenants (12:1-12). While in 9:31 and 10:33 a technical term παραδίδωμι¹⁶⁴ is applied (cf. 1Cor 11:23), the corresponding idea is expressed with the term ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι, which in all likelihood is derived from LXX reading of Ps 117:22. I tend to think that if Mark had created the saying he would have been consistent in using only one of these terms. Since he uses παραδίδωμι twice he was hardly irritated by the repetition of the word.

Although numerous scholars have argued that 10:32–34 is a Markan creation based on the two previous passion predictions, this viewpoint has been challenged.¹⁶⁵ McKinnis has demonstrated persuasively that 10:33–34 is -to a great extent- traditional.¹⁶⁶ It is difficult to understand the regularity of the poetic prediction as merely accidental. McKinnis suggests that the tradition has been some sort of hymn or chant. What is highly suggestive of the use of the pre-Markan tradition here, is the non-occurrence of this kind of structure elsewhere in Mark's Gospel.¹⁶⁷ Indicative of the pre-Markan origin of the poem is also the Jewish perspective as demonstrated by the use of the expression τοῖς ἔθνεσιν.¹⁶⁸ Since the intended primary audience for Mark's Gospel seems to have been Gentile Christians (cf. 7:2-4) a more natural way to relate the course of events would have been to replace τοῖς ἔθνεσιν with a reference to the soldiers, Pilate (cf. 15:10) or with something else that the readers did not directly identify themselves with.¹⁶⁹ Finally, the tradition is not likely

¹⁶³ PROCTOR 2003:405.

¹⁶⁴ MCKINNIS (1976:89) suggests that παραδίδωμι is Mark's own addition which is probable.

¹⁶⁵ HARE (1990:201-202): "The third passion prediction is so circumstantial in its anticipation of the Markan passion narrative that it is difficult to believe that it was ever circulated independently."

¹⁶⁶ MCKINNIS 1976.

¹⁶⁷ So e.g. NINEHAM 1968:278.

¹⁶⁸ See MCKINNIS 1976:91.

¹⁶⁹ Against this HARE (1990:202): "Tödt's proposal that it must be pre-Markan because of its antigentile bias is unconvincing; even the progentile Acts does not attempt to deny the complicity of the Gentiles in the death of the Christ (4:25-28)." However, the very passage Hare refers to is not Lucan redaction but traditional language (Psalm) 2:1-4!" The

to have been invented on the bases of the passion narrative due to the discrepancies between the two.¹⁷⁰

It seems safe to conclude that Mark relied significantly on tradition(s) when composing what is generally known as Mark's three passion predictions.¹⁷¹ But, being pre-Markan is not identical to being authentic. What remains to be done is to evaluate the possible authenticity of these prediction sayings.

The Authenticity of Jesus' Resurrection Predictions

When *the criterion of dissimilarity* (CD) is applied it is useful to pay attention to the degree of embarrassment in the tradition under study. Consequently, the criterion can be divided into four classes on the basis of the nature of "dissimilarity".

1. The first category includes those facts that are not found in the theology or the life of the early communities but are readily explained as later additions or creations. The evidential power is very weak.
2. The second category includes theologically neutral facts, which are not embarrassing or counter-productive to the communities/leading individuals, but which, nonetheless, fail to support ideas likely to have been of importance for the early Christian communities. The evidential power is good.
3. An embarrassing fact, which is tolerated or redacted only slightly. The embarrassment judgment is implicit i.e. the fact is regarded

problem in Hare's argumentation is a blurred distinction between what is "tolerated" and "created" in the text by the original author. It is clear that every evangelist accepted on some level everything they wrote. However, if this would justify the conclusion that they have created everything whole redaction critical enterprise would be futile. Hare should not use "what progenitor Luke tolerates in the tradition" to prove that progenitor Mark has created corresponding idea.

¹⁷⁰ Contra DONAHUE 2002:266. See BAYER 1986:172.

¹⁷¹ In agreement with PROCTOR (2003:401): "Source and tradition critical work on Mark 8:31, 9:31, and 10:33-34 has conclusively demonstrated the evangelist's considerable degree of reliance on church tradition for each of Jesus' passion predictions." So also e.g. HOOKER 1991:226. For more profound elaboration of the question with some additional arguments see STRECKER 1968:429-433.

as embarrassing on the basis of a scholar's reconstruction of early Christianity. The evidential power is strong.

4. An embarrassing fact, which has been redacted or omitted by other evangelists. The embarrassment judgment is explicit, i.e. the fact is regarded as embarrassing in an early Christian document. The evidential power is very strong.

It quickly becomes evident that the application of this criterion in its four different grades is greatly dependent on the reconstruction of early Christianity and its history. By modifying this reconstruction it is possible to explain away the embarrassment and dissimilarity. As a result it may be necessary to take a stand in the most crucial isagogical questions before the criteria are used.¹⁷² The CD does not stand alone in front of these challenges. Both the criterion of multiple attestation (CMA) and that of Palestinian environment (CPE) are - to a remarkable extent - dependent on this reconstruction. By means of these two criteria we are hopefully able to reach the period of oral transmission of traditions, dated roughly to the first two or three decades of Christian history. The criticism against the CMA and CPE is well-known, and essentially crystallized in the fact that an early Christian could have invented a given tradition in Palestine e.g. 35 AD.¹⁷³ To be old is not necessarily identical to being authentic. In what follows I will make an attempt to introduce the broad lines of the reconstruction applied here.

First, the way Luke and Matthew used Mark and Q shows that Jesus-traditions were not transmitted in a strictly literal fashion without theologically and stylistically motivated alterations. The remarkable theological *Bearbeitung* of traditions in the fourth Gospel is also indicative of the existence of this liberty. On the other hand, the fact that Mt and Lk are so dependent on sources speaks against any theory built on substantial free creativity of Jesus traditions. It is to be noted that even

¹⁷² An illustrative example of the decisive differences on this level is the gap between different introductions to the New Testament. While such standard introductions as KÜMMEL (1965), GUTHRIE (1990) and BROWN (1997) are relatively close to each other, at least in the recognition of arguments, others, like MACK (1995), are based on so different methodology and arguments that meaningful common ground for discussion is hard to find.

¹⁷³ For elucidating examples of this criticism see e.g. EVE 2005 and MILLER 1991.

the fourth evangelist, often thought of having rejected historical interests altogether, has anchored his book to traditions.¹⁷⁴

Secondly, many relevant themes, acute in the contemporary communities, are found to be lacking in the gospels, which demonstrates that the tradition formation was not necessarily sociologically reactive to any significant extent.¹⁷⁵ In much a similar fashion the significant number of embarrassing details speaks for the existence of conservative elements in the transmission/creation of traditions.¹⁷⁶

Thirdly, I find it useful to divide the period of oral transmission into two subperiods. The first is the period of the existence and ministry of “the twelve” in the early Christian communities. During this period the centre of Christian movement was in Jerusalem.¹⁷⁷ The second chronological and/or sociological period occurs at the time between the presence of authoritative eyewitnesses and the writing of the gospels.¹⁷⁸ This work concentrates on the first period because that is the time which is relevant for the question “was the tradition created in early communities in Palestine?”

When the current approach is located in the spectrum of scholarly variety it is the reconstruction of the so-called Scandinavian school and

¹⁷⁴ Useful introduction to this question is DODD 1963. My argument here is based on rather similar judgment as that of DUNN 2003a:165-167. See also MOLONEY 2001, KEENER 2007 and CHARLESWORTH 2010. BLOMBERG (2002) has recently argued for historical trustworthiness of basically whole Gospel. Should his thesis be accepted our argument would become only stronger.

¹⁷⁵ See WRIGHT 1992:418-427, STEIN 1980:226-227 and EVANS 2008:213-214.

¹⁷⁶ This line of reasoning has been often countered with narrative critical theories and with theories of early Christian disputes.

¹⁷⁷ The central role of Jerusalem is disputed for example by SMITH 2005. However, the ground of his case is the dichotomy between the theological and the historical which I find problematic.

¹⁷⁸ The exact length of this distance is hard to define. I find it probable that the gospels were written in the period between 60-90 AD. CASEY (1999:260) argues for a date c. 40 AD for Mark’s gospel. Since I am not able to produce any substantial argument against his case I must leave the question open. If Mark was written so early, or under the significant influence of Peter, the distance is rather short (but still existent!). On the other hand, if the gospels are written “Mk c. 70, Mt and Lk in the 80s and John in the 90s” the length of the period is significantly longer both chronologically and sociologically.

Dunn-Bailey-Wright model of the *informal controlled* transmission of traditions, which is the closest to mine.¹⁷⁹ The role of the twelve,¹⁸⁰ and

¹⁷⁹ It is necessary in practically all studies concerning gospels to choose the basic approach to the question how the stories of Jesus have been developed, created, modified, transmitted etc. Even if one did not rigidly stick to one particular model it is informative to tell explicitly where his or her sympathies lie. Throughout this study I criticize the old German form critical paradigm which promotes the idea of *informal uncontrolled* tradition handling. There are currently two influential competitive paradigms, in addition to the still much-harboured form critical one, which will be shortly introduced in what follows:

The Scandinavian school derives its basic tenets from Old Testament studies and were brought into the New Testament studies through RIESENFELD (1970) and especially by his pupil GERHARDSSON (e.g. 1961, 1986, 2001, 2005). About the origins of the Scandinavian school see WIDENGREN 1963:44. The essential points of the approach are i) the analogy for Early Christian tradition handling taken from the Rabbinic literature and the praxis reflected there and ii) the emphasis on the role of Jerusalem leaders (esp. the twelve) in guarding the development of the tradition handling. The first analogy received furious criticism e.g. from SMITH (1963) and NEUSNER (1966:392). There were also more sympathetic but critical appraisals like that of WIDENGREN (1963) and sympathetic with some corrective viewpoints were those of FITZMYER (1962) and DAVIDS (1980). Concerning Gerhardsson's later works see MEYER 1988, ELLIS 2000, INSTONE-BREWER 2003. It is noteworthy that NEUSNER (1998:xxv-xlvi) later changed his viewpoint and confirmed Gerhardsson's analogy with the rabbinic praxis. The most poignant criticism against Gerhardsson's theory concerns the differences in Synoptic descriptions of the same events and sayings. However, FITZMYER (1962:454) who states: "But if there was so much methodical delivery and controlled transmission, how can one account for the variations between the different parallel traditions in the Synoptics? First, care must be used to make sure that one is dealing with variations of one and the same basic saying, and not with sayings of Jesus delivered in more than one version. Secondly, most of the gospel material is haggadic, which is often transmitted with a somewhat wider margin of variation in wording than halakhic material. Thirdly, certain adaptations arose at an early stage, when the material was being gathered, but others are due to translation—not only on one definite occasion, but in a process which was protracted and complicated. Lastly, the principles of redaction used by the different Evangelist-editors must be reckoned with."

Important contributions to the tradition historical theorizing within the Scandinavian approach have been RIESNER's (1980, 1984) and BYRSKOG's (1994, 2000) studies. The latter emphasized the importance of critical appraisal of eyewitness testimony which was further developed by BAUCKHAM 2003 and 2006. It is hardly exaggeration to state that Byrskog and Bauckham have brought the tradition historical discussion to a new level, challenging decades of scholarship in their basic premises. (See e.g. TUCKETT 2008:385) There has been a rather broad positive reception of Bauckham's study with minor critical notes. See e.g. ANDERSON 2007, BIRD 2007, KELBER 2007, KRUGER 2007, WICKER

that of Peter in particular, are important in this model.¹⁸¹ Their authority and status as eyewitnesses are clearly indicated in the Pauline letters (see

2007, QUARLES 2007, BYRSKOG 2008, EVANS 2008, HENSELL 2008, MARSHALL 2008, TAYLOR 2008, PERRY 2008, ROBINSON 2008 and SCHRÖTER 2008. It may be useful to summarise the main arguments of some of those most critical towards Bauckham. WEEDEN (2008) bases his criticism on (to my mind) unsustainable premises including dating Acts to 120-125 A.D. and presuming a non-documented inner structure in Early Christianity. PILCH (2008) is carried away with his overemphasis on the collective nature of Mediterranean society. Anyway they used to give personal names to people! TUCKETT (2008) is critical, but unable to any substantial and clear counter-argument. VAAGE (2009) refuses to even touch the arguments but attempts to reject B's book as "apologetics". PATTERSON (2008) categorizes (correctly) Bauckham for the same approach with Gerhardsson but does not quite catch the essence of the latter's argumentation. As for CATHCPOLE's (2008) and PATTERSON's (2008) criticism see BAUCKHAM 2008.

Another model is often called *informal controlled tradition*, which means that while many details of the stories and sayings were modified and changed, the core of the story remained essentially the same during the re-telling. While the idea is not particularly new in New Testament studies, the approach as it now stands was launched by BAILEY's (1995) anthropological analogies from the village cultures of modern Middle-East. His suggestion has been accepted and further developed e.g. by WRIGHT 1996:133-136 and DUNN 2003a:173-254. See also DUNN 2003b. The "Jesus remembered" theory of Dunn and its "cousin", Bailey's model, have inspired much discussion. As put by PAINTER (2004:426): "For some time now works on oral transmission and communication have been appearing sporadically. Dunn's work could be the forerunner, or perhaps the catalyst, for a more pervasive and systematic movement." So also HARRISON 2006:170. Dunn has received his share of criticism. As the closest representative of old form criticism WEEDEN (2009) has attacked the tenets of Bailey's theory. See also DUNN's (2004b, 2009) replies. However, the general openness of scholarly community to Dunn's ideas as far as the old form critical axioms are criticized is noteworthy. See e.g. MORGAN 2004, WEGENER 2004 and STRANGE 2006. Sharing the same scepticism toward "the old", the "Scandinavians" have nevertheless criticized Dunn's e.g. for forgetting the role of eyewitnesses. (See BYRSKOG 2004, HOLMBERG 2004, GERHARDSSON 2005 and DUNN 2004a).

A good and to my mind convincing critical synthesis of the abovementioned paradigms is provided by BIRD (2005) who demonstrates the existence of both models in the Early Christian tradition handling. What I consider most important future step is the profound psychological analysis of eyewitnessing as a perceptual and interpretational process. See REDMAN 2010 for insightful handling of the issue.

¹⁸⁰ For the historicity of the twelve see MEIER 2001:125-197. See also CHARLESWORTH (1988:136-138) who explicates why he changed the judgment on the historicity of the twelve.

¹⁸¹ See GERHARDSSON (1961:193-323) who argues convincingly for the existence of "the

e.g. 1Cor 9:1-5, 15:3-11 and Gal 1:11-19, 2:1-10).¹⁸² The free creation of Jesus traditions would have risked breaking the hierarchical authority structure of early Christianity during the “dynasty of the twelve”.¹⁸³ What is argued here should not be seen as a defence for a wooden literalism, although this is often done, in a somewhat caricaturizing fashion, when the Scandinavian approach is critically evaluated. Differences between eyewitness memories and interpretations certainly found their ways to the traditions told (and re-told) in the communities.¹⁸⁴ Moreover, the teachings (including Jesus traditions) were re-told in the absence of eyewitnesses already during the first period. One important factor in explaining the variety of similar traditions, which might not have received sufficient attention in scholarly discussions, is the personal differences in the ways the individual members of the twelve told the traditions/memories. If the early Christian teachers¹⁸⁵ (non-apostolic) repeatedly heard different versions of the same story from the twelve, this probably resulted in some freedom in their own retelling of the same stories. What is slightly problematic in the application of Bailey’s model in the communities of the first period is that it is difficult to imagine “collective correction” when one of the twelve was speaking.¹⁸⁶ If Bartholomew, for example, had told the story of healing the centurion’s son differently to Andrew, who would have dared raise his voice to correct him? On the other hand,

collegium of the twelve in Jerusalem”. This part of his dissertation has, to my mind, not received the attention it deserves in later reactions to his work.

¹⁸² Thus the identity of the leaders (eyewitnesses to Jesus) was among the very first thing a new believer learnt when he or she converted to Christianity.

¹⁸³ Not even Paul seems to be able to create sayings as indicated in 1Cor 7:12. That Paul is using Jesus traditions without naming them as such has been interpreted in different ways. My proposal is that the Jesus traditions Paul assumed that his churches knew derived mostly from Jerusalem (and especially from Peter, see Gal 1:18). He does not have to criticise any alleged tradition which would speak against his theology since at that time these had not been invented. See DUNN (1998:182-195) for an overview of Paul and Jesus traditions.

¹⁸⁴ What I find especially relevant, and unfortunately often ignored, in BYRSKOG (2000) and BAUCKHAM (2006) is the due attention paid to the subjectivity of an eyewitness perception and its consequent interpretation within existent frameworks.

¹⁸⁵ See DUNN 2003a:176-177.

¹⁸⁶ It must be pointed out that Bailey does not state that his model is exclusive but operative together with other two (formal controlled and informal uncontrolled). See BAILEY 1995.

in the long run, these different tellings could have created variant forms for the traditions based on the same episodes, and thus inspired the differences now found in the gospels.

On the basis of what has been argued above, I presume that when a given fact meets the CPE and/or the CMA, and it is reasonable to locate its origin to the first period, its authenticity must be evaluated in relation to the influence of the twelve in early Christianity. The procedure hereby applied is to first use the criteria not keenly associated to our periodization (indicated by the use of “the first period” and “the second period” in what follows). After this the CMA and the CPE are applied. Should the tradition meet these criteria, an attempt will then be made to evaluate it in relation to the influence of the twelve. In this procedure the CD is divided into two categories (1-2 and 3-4, in the division introduced above), the latter referred to as *the criterion of embarrassment* (CE). This division is due to the essential role of the periodization in the use of the CE.

The CD¹⁸⁷ can be applied to the form of the time definition. The pre-Pauline confession formula (1 Cor 15:3-7¹⁸⁸) was obviously used in practically all sections of early Christianity, until the mid 50s at least.¹⁸⁹ In this formula it is said that Jesus was raised from the dead τῆ ἡμέρᾳ τῆ τρίτῃ. This also seems to have been a standard expression later, since both Matthew and Luke change Markan μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας to τῆ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ.¹⁹⁰ Consequently, it could be expected that an early Christian tradent created a saying where the confessional expression was used,

¹⁸⁷ I use this longer form thus fully agreeing with e.g. CHARLESWORTH (1988:6), HOLMÈN (1999) and TUCKETT (2001:133) who point out that the criterion in the form “dissimilarity to Judaism” is not valid.

¹⁸⁸ I think that MOFFITT’s (2008) case for regarding 3b-7 (except 6b) is convincing.

¹⁸⁹ For Paul this was something that was transmitted ἐν πρώτοις i.e. of primary importance. Further, in verse 11 he emphasizes that all authority figures in the Christian movement, (listed), preach according to this tradition. For a good survey of the role of Jesus’ resurrection in different strands of early Christianity see LEMCIO 1988 and 1990.

¹⁹⁰ Although it has been strongly argued that the expression “after three days” does not fit into the timetable embedded in the narrative I remain unconvinced. See e.g. FRANCE (2007:490-491) for arguments for the rather close thematic interchangeability of these terms. Consequently I am sceptical against referring to the alleged discrepancy between this time expression and the passion narrative as meeting the criterion of dissimilarity.

particularly if the motive for creating the saying was derived from the resurrection belief expressed in confessional, and to some extent standardized, language.¹⁹¹ Further, the use of the verb ἀνίστημι instead of ἐγείρω may refer to a pre-Easter origin of the resurrection prediction.¹⁹² While the latter argument, based on the verbs, is not totally convincing, the curious expression μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας meets the above-mentioned second category of the CD relatively well.¹⁹³

The criterion of plausibility of historical effects (CPHE)¹⁹⁴ is, on a logical level, similar to the criterion of execution, which can be formulated as something that explains why Jesus was executed.¹⁹⁵ The idea is that well-attested facts, in particular, need an explanation, and if another fact helps to explain them, this explanatory fact can make a good claim for authenticity. It could be pointed out that the explanatory fact under scrutiny must be i) mentioned in the documents¹⁹⁶ and ii) its absence must make the occurrence of the explained fact significantly harder to understand.¹⁹⁷

The origin of the belief in Jesus' resurrection is a challenging fact to explain. This is particularly true, if only the appearances of Jesus, without any pre-Easter conceptualization or the finding of the empty tomb of Jesus, are seen to suffice as an explanation.¹⁹⁸ An appearance of a dead person was not an unknown phenomenon in first century Palestine,

¹⁹¹ "To some extent standardized" results in the combination of the poetic structure (four ὅτι - clauses and chiasmic εἶτα, ἔπειτα, ἔπειτα, εἶτα -structure) and Pauline additions. I assume that this was the *modus operandi* with the confessional forms at that time.

¹⁹² GUNDRY (1993:430): "Were Mark or someone before him fabricating the predictions out of the narrative or out of earlier tradition that fed into it, we would expect him to use the verb that is going to appear in the narrative."

¹⁹³ So also DAVIES & ALLISON 1991:654-657.

¹⁹⁴ See THEISSEN & WINTER (2002:159-161) for a discussion on this criterion.

¹⁹⁵ While this criterion is closely reminiscent of *the criterion of coherence* in the latter case the connection is not causal.

¹⁹⁶ This against the possibility that it would be claimed that Jesus attempted to kill Pilate, which would certainly have helped to understand why he was crucified.

¹⁹⁷ Otherwise it could be countered with a remark that the fact was created on the basis of other explanatory (though weaker) facts.

¹⁹⁸ For the school of thought (e.g. Bultmann, Marxen, Lüdemann, Crossan, Collins and Miller) who sees the empty tomb story as a later addition, this is how the belief originated.

or in almost any other culture at that time.¹⁹⁹ Even in the post-Easter synoptic tradition the appearances of Elisha and Moses were not seen as evidence of the resurrection (Mk 9:2-10), and in Acts (12:15) Rhoades believes that ὁ ἄγγελός of the executed Peter knocking at the door, hardly means that the apostle is resurrected. As this “appearances only” hypothesis often goes together with the idea of non-messianic self-identity of Jesus, it is necessary to evaluate the coherence of this approach in relation to its explanatory power. Would a group of Galilean peasants and fishermen who had followed a prophet-figure or Cynic sage conclude that he is resurrected solely on the basis of an unexpected vision? To me this seems unlikely.²⁰⁰

That the disciples had experiences which they interpreted as appearances of the risen Jesus has been quite generally regarded as a historical fact. One possible source of the resurrection interpretation is the words uttered by Jesus in the vision. It is not unreasonable to assume that whatever these experiences consisted of ontologically, the recipient of the vision also experienced verbal communication.²⁰¹ So we may, at least hypothetically, assume that in the vision Jesus said something close to “I am raised from the dead”. If this is accepted, it might be maintained that this kind of a projected vision is more likely to have occurred when the recipient had heard individual resurrection conceptualized beforehand.²⁰² The finding of the empty tomb certainly makes the birth of the belief more plausible, although the allegation of theft (by the disciples, a gardener, a sanhedrinist, the Romans etc.) would still remain

¹⁹⁹ A point well presented by BOCKMUEHL 2001a:111-114. For a survey of the recent studies and applications of the Altered States of Consciousness in Biblical studies see e.g. PILCH 2002. An outstanding treatment of this “mysterious” subject is provided by ALLISON 2005:269-299.

²⁰⁰ More about this in Chapter 6.

²⁰¹ In the studies of WIEBE (1997) and GUSTAFSSON & HILLERDAHL (1974) Christ-visions often included verbal communication.

²⁰² Quite many scholars do not shy from considering seriously supernatural interpretations within scientific research paradigm. See e.g. MEIER 1994:509-534, BROWN 1994:1310 and TWELFTREE 1999:52. If the visionary figure of the risen Jesus is interpreted as an other-worldly character it could be claimed that his foreknowledge of the resurrection would not be the greatest of surprises. However, the supernatural interpretation would make other interpretative model as probable as the one currently being proposed.]

unresolved.²⁰³ If Jesus had spoken of his personal resurrection, then the origin of the belief in it would be, I would claim, more readily explainable than in the scenario where these sayings are seen as post-Easter creations.²⁰⁴ As a conclusion I suggest that the hypothesis of the appearances as an explanation, without the empty tomb or the pre-Easter conceptualization of the individual resurrection by Jesus, should be questioned, particularly if it is connected with the idea of what we could call the low theological self-identity of Jesus. However, if the finding of the empty tomb is historical and the appearances were experienced against this background, the CPHE is possibly not met in a satisfactory manner. The difference between this and the situation where the resurrection is conceptualized beforehand is, in this case, existent but not substantial.

Due to the wide use of *the criterion of multiple attestation* (CMA), it is needless to repeat the basic idea here.²⁰⁵ There are numerous thematic similarities to the vindication theme in the gospels which can be regarded as indications of the pre-Easter origin of the idea that Jesus believed in his post-mortem vindication.²⁰⁶ However, I find the Q-

²⁰³ E.g. WRIGHT (2003) argues throughout his book that the empty tomb is *sine qua non* for the birth of the belief in Jesus' resurrection. While this seems reasonable it must not be confused with a sufficient reason to produce this belief. The theft hypothesis has recently been defended by CARRIER 2005.

²⁰⁴ This would also solve "Bultmann school's" paradox, making it possible to explain the resurrection belief without the existence of the empty tomb. If Jesus had predicted his resurrection a vision could be interpreted as a confirmation of it. Without taking any stand in the ontological questions of these appearances, it is reasonable to assume that the visions included something verbal as well. Had Jesus spoken of the resurrection it is possible to claim that the subconsciousness of the disciples produced visions where the resurrection theme was explicitly present.

²⁰⁵ The conditional nature of this criterion is ably presented by HOLMÈN 2001a:32-34. For another treatise which have something, beyond the sheer repetition of what others have already said, to give see e.g. STEIN 1980:229-233.

²⁰⁶ After an exhaustive study for the authenticity of the passion and resurrection predictions BAYER (1986:221) concludes: "We have found that the following sayings which implicitly refer to Jesus' vindication can be traced to a Palestinian Jewish-Christian milieu, transmitted through various pre-Synoptic strands of tradition: The eschatological prospect (Mk 14:25/Lk 22:(16.)18); The lament over Jerusalem (Lk 13:34f); the metaphor of baptism (Mk 10:38f, Lk 12:50), The metaphor of cup (Mk 10:38, Mk 14:36); the metaphor of the hour (Mk 14:35, 41b, Lk 22:53); The stone metaphor (Mk 12:10); the sign of Jonah (Lk 11:29f, Mt 12:40; cf Lk 13:32)."

tradition about the sign of Jonah to be the closest possible candidate for another independent attestation of the Markan resurrection predictions.

The sheer number of interpretations for the enigmatic saying about the sign of Jonah (Matt 12:40, 16:1-2a, Mk 8, Lk 11:29) has made many scholars hesitate in providing any suggestion of their own.²⁰⁷ Most scholars argue that the original Q-version did not include this explanatory saying, although it has also been pointed out that Luke's omission of it is not unexplainable.²⁰⁸ Although due heed is to be paid to the possibility of the Lucan omission, it seems more probable to me that Matthew has explained the content of enigmatic saying by inserting this additional verse.²⁰⁹

The decisive question for us is whether Matthew merely clarified the already existing meaning of the saying, or whether he gave a new meaning which differed from the original interpretation. Thus, what did the sign of Jonah mean for the Q-editor? In what follows we evaluate two informed criticisms against the Matthean interpretation. Tuckett states:

But this interpretation is also unconvincing, First, the non-Christian parallels which are often adduced (3 Macc 6:8; PRE1:10 are always cited) are scarcely very extensive. Further PRE [Pirque R. El.] is a ninth-century text and hence can only be used here with caution. Kloppenborg has also shown that other Jewish texts fastened on Jonah's preaching to the Ninevites as the key part of the story. (Formation, 133.) In any case, there is no evidence connecting the Ninevites with the story of the fish. Both 3 Maccabees and PRE refer to the attitude of the sailors to the miracle of Jonah's rescue. Thus if the "sign of Jonah" is primarily a reference to Jonah as one rescued from death, it remains unexplained how Jonah was a sign "to the Ninevites".²¹⁰

As for the first argument, Chow has shown that "the rewritten Jonah" always included the miraculous rescue from death, and certainly the non-Christian material for this is extensive enough to make the Matthean

²⁰⁷ So e.g. NOLLAND 2005:510-511. For a good list of different interpretations see GIBSON 2004:2-3, or more systematically categorised division in SMITH 1992:755.

²⁰⁸ The possibility admitted e.g. by FRANCE 2007:490 and DAVIES & ALLISON 1991:357.

²⁰⁹ See a good discussion in BAYER 1986:120-121.

²¹⁰ TUCKETT 1996:264.

interpretation meaningful, perhaps even probable.²¹¹ The connotation of a resurrection or resuscitation was also made by Jewish interpreters in the first century, or slightly earlier, which further supports the Matthean interpretation.²¹² Tuckett's main argument, that there is no connection between the Ninevites and the story of fish, may be too dependent on the original version of the story. It was common for later Jewish interpreters to read themes and emphases not actually found in the original version into the story.²¹³ Consequently, it could be answered that Jonah was a sign "to the Ninevites" because it was assumed that the Ninevites knew the rescue story. Certainly it is more natural to imagine that Jonah himself told his audience about his extraordinary experiences to, rather than the sailors coming to know about the miraculous rescue in another way. Still, in *Pirque R. El.* even the sailors knew about it, which goes against the logic of the narrative.²¹⁴

After listing to good arguments for the correctness of the Matthean interpretation, Chow rejects it on the following grounds.²¹⁵

The greatest difficulty with this interpretation is the fact that the resurrection of Jesus is not found in the proclamation of Q. The Son of Man and the resurrection of Jesus are never connected. The problem is a crucial one and argues against the proposition that in Q the sign of the Son of Man refers to the death and resurrection of Jesus.²¹⁶

²¹¹ After surveying... CHOW (1995:42): "Deliberating on the story of Jonah, Jewish writers in the first century and earlier tend to focus on Jonah's miraculous saving from the belly of the fish. None of the material discussed above ignores this aspect."

²¹² CHOW (1995:43): "Together with the story of Jonah in the belly of the fish and its legendary elaborations, the identification of Jonah as the son of the widow raised up from death by Elijah (The Lives of the Prophets 10:6; Mird. Ps. 26:7; Gen. Rab. 98.11; Pirque R. El. 33) certainly has the effect of fostering the impression that Jonah is a figure of resurrection."

²¹³ CHOW (1995:26): "The diverse characterization of the prophet suggests that the Book of Jonah as a whole can also be interpreted differently, depending on one's interest and the selection of features from the story." See also his examples on page 25.

²¹⁴ BAYER 1986:136-137. Although Pirquet R. El. is late the point here is that in Jewish tradition it was possible to twist the logic of the original narrative.

²¹⁵ CHOW 1995:162-163.

²¹⁶ CHOW 1995:162.

When this reasoning is analyzed on a methodological level it quickly becomes evident that the logic cannot be applied in such a straightforward fashion. If something cannot be found in a document because it is not found elsewhere in the document, we should reject every fact with only a single occurrence. Although Chow does not reveal it explicitly, this line of reasoning assumes what remains to be demonstrated i.e. that Q-editor consciously avoided any mention of Jesus' resurrection.²¹⁷ If this were not the case it could be pointed out that

²¹⁷ Here it is possible only to comment briefly on the hypothesis that Q represents a type of Jesus movement without any theology of his resurrection. According to KLOPPENBORG (2000:378) Jesus' post-mortem vindication was conceptualised by death-assumption-judgment rather than resurrection in Q source. For general criticism of Kloppenborg's presentation as a whole see e.g. INGOLFSLAND 2003 and CASEY 2002:22-31. I find it useful to categorize the claim with four assumptions: 1) There has been a Q source, 2) Almost the whole Q source can be reconstructed from Matthew and Luke and thus e.g. the absence of the passion narrative confirmed, 3) There was another type of Jesus' post-mortem vindication than the resurrection operative among Q editor(s) and the respective community. 4) It is possible to draw conclusions on a community's theology on the basis of the reconstructed Q source.

The **first assumption** is that there has been a Q source. The assumption has much to recommend itself. The existence of Q source is defended e.g. by STEIN 1987, TUCKETT 1996:1-40, KLOPPENBORG 2000:11-54 and 2003. The criticism against Q hypothesis varies from total denial (e.g. WENHAM 1992, LINNEMANN 1996 and GOODACRE 2002) to an idea of a loose collection of traditions (HENGEL 2000:169-207 and in many ways DUNN (2000), who confirms his belief in Q, but introduces a paradigm which makes the traditional Q hypothesis somewhat questionable). See also an insightful article by WATSON (2009) for a methodological clarification of the discussion.

The **second assumption** is that we can reconstruct the whole document or at least a significant part of it. See KLOPPENBORG 2000:91-101. Since Matthew and Luke have utilized almost the whole of Mark's gospel, it is by no means impossible that this applies to Q as well. However, this assumption is not without problems. Kloppenborg alludes to multi-layered feature of the sapiential literature when defending his theory of different Q layers. This makes the argument for finding practically the whole Q document on purely literal and textual means in Matthew's and Luke's gospels problematic. It is logical to assume that each edition formed some kind of a literary entity. How do we know that what is now found as a final edition is not actually only the tracks of one editorial phase? See also CASEY 2003:16. What is more the exact wording of Q document is usually unknown, and thus must be reconstructed with the help of redaction critical theories about Matthew's and Luke's editorial policies. TUCKETT (1996:96) defines the basic method for establishing the use of Q as follows: "In conclusion, therefore, we may say that Q probably contained all the material common to Matthew and Luke which was not

derived from Mark." By this definition Q contained some parts of the Passion narrative. In Lk 22:64 and Mt 26:68 both reads "τίς ἐστὶν ὁ παῖσας σε" while Mk 14:65 lacks this particular saying. To count this minor agreement as a later interpolation (see e.g. KIILUNEN 2002:184-188) finds no support in manuscript evidence. (DAVIES & ALLISON 1997:536 leaves the question open, BROWN (1994:579) calls the interpolation theory "desperate" and sees an oral tradition behind the agreement. Kloppenborg (2000) applies Ockham's razor in defending the Q source as a single document. If there were common oral traditions in use of both Matthew and Luke, however, the stiffness in reconstructing Q and commenting "absences" would lose some of its credibility. See also STEIN 1992b.

The **third assumption** is that another type of a post-mortem vindication for Jesus, instead of the resurrection, is referred to in the Q source. KLOPPENBORG (2000:378) states: "It must be admitted that there is practically nothing to go on when discussing Q's view of the "resurrection" of Jesus. Q 13:35b is virtually the only clue we have, beyond the general conviction that Q must have imagined some sort of vindication of its hero." But, to derive the death-assumption-judgment vindication (instead of the resurrection belief) from Q 13:35b is rather conjectural. Jesus-Elijah typology and, without any explicit reference to the latter's assumption in the source, strikes me as overly speculative, especially since Kloppenborg does not see any resurrection typology in the Sign of Jonah. With same amount of imagination it is possible to find numerous implicit references to the resurrection in Q source, as e.g. WRIGHT (2000) demonstrates. See also MEADORS 1995:307-308. It is also indicative of the slimness of the evidence for assumption theology in Q that a proponent of the assumption idea, SMITH (2003:129) states: "The best evidence for the use of assumption theology as an expression of Jesus' post-mortem vindication comes from the end of the Gospel of Mark." Now, even in the gospel of Mark the evidence turns out to be weak. It seems to be very difficult to point to any passage where an assumption interpretation would exclude a resurrection interpretation. His (p. 129-130) arguments: 1) missing body, 2) the reference to the women's search for Jesus, 3) motif of the testimony of the witness confirming the disappearance and 4) the appearance as a way of confirming that an assumption has taken place are curious since everyone of them can be found in every canonical gospel where the resurrection interpretation is indisputable. What Smith should be able to point out is that there are features, which fit only (or remarkably) better to the assumption framework than to that of the resurrection. However, Smith's attempt to conceptualise assumption and resurrection fails. He (p. 133) states: "Resurrection as an individual mode of post-mortem vindication, whether or not the body itself is thought of as being revived, involves an appearance of the resurrected person, rather than the disappearance of the body." Cases where an individual is resurrected are very few in the ancient literature, so we do not have too many texts to reconstruct the details of resurrection idea. In those cases we have (Mk, Mt, Lk and John) the body is revived in resurrection. Curiously enough, in a book review of WRIGHT (2003), SMITH (2005) does not produce a single case against one of Wright's main theses i.e. that the resurrection without the revival of the body is oxymoron and found nowhere in ancient literature. I remain unconvinced by most attempts to read either Jesus'

Q does tell about Jesus' resurrection – in this very passage!²¹⁸ Meadors argues that Q actually presupposes Jesus' resurrection since it logically functions as a bridge between the earthly Jesus and the parousia of the Son of Man (e.g. Q17:22, 24, 30).²¹⁹

Since I am not convinced by the criticism offered by these two scholars concerning the Matthean interpretation of the sign of Jonah in Q11:29, it is necessary to comment briefly on their respective interpretations. The distinctive features in the Jonah story are his rescue from the belly of a fish, and the repentance and the consequent saving of the Ninevites. The preaching of repentance is such a common theme in the OT that it strikes me as odd that Jonah would be taken as *typos* for “only” a preaching son

resurrection or assumption idea from the reconstructed Q document. The most viable candidate of these is the sign of Jonah as an implication of Jesus' resurrection.

The **fourth assumption** is that on the basis of the assumed silence of Q about the resurrection, we can reason that Paul has it wrong or that he exaggerates when writing (1Cor 15:11): “εἶτε οὖν ἐγὼ εἶτε ἐκεῖνοι, οὕτως κηρύσσομεν καὶ οὕτως ἐπιστεύσατε.” As HOLMÉN (2001b) has carefully argued, the sociological reactivity of Q sayings is not to be automatically assumed. This makes it difficult to choose those pericopes which describe community from those which do not or which do it in a negative way i.e. traditions created e.g. to correct the situation. The same point is made after a balanced and informed treatise of the redaction criticism of Q by TUCKETT (1996:82): “But it does not seem unreasonable to assume too that it was thought to have relevance for a Christian group who needed to be addressed by it, so that their existing views might undergo some change.” See also DUNN 2003a:150-152. For other critical voices against uncritical sociological reading of the gospels see e.g. HOLMBERG 1990, WRIGHT 1992:418-427, THEISSEN 1991:1-22, BARTON 1998, BIRD 2005b and BYRSKOG 2007. (‘A useful viewpoint from the methodological point of view is also BARCLAY 1987. To build a community behind every variant theological emphasis is the most questionable way to approach the documents. Take for example the Christian community in Corinth in the mid 50s. The theological and practical differences within the community were enormous, and still they formed one recognizable community who performed religious rites together. Ironically enough, in this community those denying the resurrection and those building their very faith on it, apparently worshipped together. Finally, both Matthew and Luke have included the Q document into their gospels, which I interpret as a sign of a positive attitude towards the document and its producers. Both authors had access to Q document but it did not represent their whole theology, why should we suppose that it represented someone else's whole theology?’

²¹⁸ So e.g. WRIGHT 2000 and LICONA 2010:56.

²¹⁹ MEADORS 1995:308.

of man, as suggested e.g. by Tuckett.²²⁰ I find Tuckett's point logical as for the message of the whole context i.e. to show that the present generation is more stubborn than the Ninevites. However, his explanation may confuse the sign + preaching + reaction entity with the sign as such. The word σημεῖον seems to have a legitimating meaning in the present context (see Q11:16).²²¹ Jesus was preaching and he was questioned as to whether his preaching was lawful. To answer that with "I do not legitimate my preaching expect with one σημεῖον – by preaching" does not sound plausible. Chow argues that the sign of Jonah is judgment and destruction and the sign of the son of man his *parousia*.²²² What makes this interpretation improbable is that it would not have been hard to find better a candidate than Jonah as a *typos* for judgment and destruction. Secondly, one of "the great distinctives" in the story of Jonah is that ultimately there was actually no judgment or destruction.

With all respect to these alternative interpretations we conclude that the most probable understanding of Q11:29 is that Jesus referred cryptically to his resurrection.²²³ Should this be the case, the criterion of multiple attestation can be applied to Jesus' resurrection predictions. Because of the serious alternatives to this interpretation it is not reasonable to push this argument too far. However, since Markan predictions probably had somewhat independent tradition histories, at least on the immediate pre-Markan level, we may rather confidently assume that the first period is reached by the CMA. This conclusion is supported by the CPE, which is reasonably well-met by the traditions behind the Markan passion predictions (see above).²²⁴ As a result of the application of CMA and CPE

²²⁰ TUCKETT (1996:264-265): "Thus for Q, Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites in the sense that he preached and they responded in time to avoid the catastrophe of divine judgment which threatened them."

²²¹ In the reconstruction of Q by ROBINSON et al. (2002:108) 11:16, 29:30 are seen as an entity.

²²² CHOW 1995:164-165.

²²³ So also e.g. WRIGHT 2003:433, BAYER 1986:141-142, SMITH 1992:755, EVANS 1990:188 and "to that direction" SCHNACKENBURG (2002:118) who writes: "The "sign of Jonah" is almost certainly not Jonah's preaching unto repentance (Jonah 3), although it is often so interpreted. Rather, it is Jonah's person (genitive of apposition), or, more precisely, his rescue from death by God."

²²⁴ So also DAVIES & ALLISON 1991:655. For the arguments see BAYER 1986:161-162 and 169-173.

to the resurrection predictions (8:31, 9:31, 10:34) I propose that it is more probable than not that the resurrection prediction including the expression *μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας* originates from the first period (i.e. from the time of the twelve).

How likely it is that an early Christian invented the resurrection prediction during the first period? We have already seen that the CD suggests that the saying is not a post-Easter creation. The context of the sayings in Mark suggests that it was a saying primarily directed towards the twelve. It is likely that Mk 8:31-33 was an entity already on the pre-Markan level. The *Retro satana* saying (8:33) surely raises the question as to why such a harsh rebuke, *ὕπαγε ὀπίσω μου Σατανᾶ*, was given to Peter. That Peter rebuked Jesus, still leaves the interesting question open – what did he say to Jesus?

I find it reasonable to assume that no one in early Christianity other than Peter, the leader *ἐν πρώτοις* mentioned e.g. in the common confession formula (1Cor 15:3-7), would have originated this tradition. It would have been an act of uttermost bravery from the originator's part to invent this sort of tradition.²²⁵ From the point of view of the CEMB it may be of some relevance that the whole saying emphasizes the failure of the disciples to understand Jesus. I find two reasonable ways of explaining these phenomena. First, it may be reasoned that the saying was created by an individual or a group hostile to Peter (and the twelve). Second, it may be explained as originating from Peter (and/or the twelve) in which case the problem of "insulting the leader" is then avoided.²²⁶ Since the first option is problematic in the light of the documents we have,²²⁷ and the position of Peter in the early Christian movement in the first period is firmly attested, I prefer the latter option. This choice made, it is possible

²²⁵ The difference between the tone here and in Gal 2:11-14 is very clear. Now, if Paul as a nominated apostle (Gal 2:7) was using much more reverential language when talking *about* his quarrel with Peter, I find it improbable that someone else would invent the *retro satana* saying.

²²⁶ This same division is imbedded in the reasoning of DAVIES & ALLISON 1991:657.

²²⁷ For a convincing rebuttal of seeing the negative Peter traditions as a result of later conflicts see BAUCKHAM 2006:177-179.

to regard the saying as meeting the CEMB in its milder form (level 3 of CD above).

Authentic or Not – Weighting the Options

Did Jesus somehow conceptualize his resurrection so that the chief priests' motivation to request a guard at the tomb of Jesus is plausible? We have approached this question by applying the criteria of authenticity and inauthenticity. In the following table I attempt to explicate how persuasive each criterion assessed is.

(Table 1)

Criterion	Degree of historical persuasiveness as regards to Jesus' resurrection predictions.²²⁸
CIMP	2 (against)
CI	3 (against)
CD	3
CPHE	2
CMA	2
CPE	3
CEMB	3

The results, as is often the case in these sorts of studies, are complex since relatively good arguments can be posed for both views. Furthermore, the final verdict is bound to be dependent on numerous choices on the isagogical level. The CEMB in particular, while perhaps being the most persuasive of all criteria, is vulnerable to modification by isagogical presuppositions. If the role of the twelve in early Christianity in 30-60 AD is accepted, as we have proposed, I suggest that CEMB should be regarded as the weightiest of the above mentioned criteria. This would mean that the persuasiveness of the argument analyzed here, i.e. that Mt 27:63 cannot be historical due to the nonhistoricity of Jesus' resurrection predictions, should be re-evaluated. Even if our isagogics were to be rejected and CEMB thus "neutralized", the CD cautions us not to return a verdict of nonhistoricity too quickly. In this case I suggest that the

²²⁸ 1 rather weak, 2 average, 3 good, 4 excellent. See also LICONA 2010 and HOWARD 1977.

question of historicity is moved to the category of *non liquet*; a category used by John P. Meier to indicate hesitation in giving any verdict on historicity.²²⁹ For our study as a whole this means that the question of historicity of the Matthean guard story cannot be decided solely on the base of arguments for non-historicity.

²²⁹ See MEIER (1994:617-1038) where this verdict is used in the analysis of miracle stories.

3.0. A Source and Redaction Critical Analysis of the Matthean Guard Story

3.1. Introduction

There are – in practice- two basic theories concerning the use of a possible source in Matthew’s GS (27:62-66, 28:11-15) although there is some variation within both approaches.²³⁰ In what follows I briefly present these theories, and then analyze the arguments used to defend them. Our task in this part of the study is to find out whether Matthew has used a tradition when writing the GS, and should this turn out to be the case, to reconstruct the basic outline of the source narrative. As for the origin of the GS we are potentially able to demonstrate that the origin of the story is Matthew’s creative mind. This will be the case if the arguments for the first theory are found solid and those for the second view wanting.

The first theory is that the whole story is a Matthean creation. This conclusion is drawn e.g. by Ingo Broer, an author of one of the most detailed analyses of the narrative.²³¹ As put by Broer:

Die wortstatistischen und stilistischen Argumente weisen deutlich auch für diesen zweiten Teil der Geschichte auf Mt als Verfasser hin.²³²

According to the second theory the GS in Matthew’s gospel is based on an earlier source i.e. the story was in circulation before Matthew. The evangelist has used this story beside Mark’s gospel to write his version of the final events in Jesus’ life.²³³ As Gundry writes:

²³⁰ E.g. GNILKA (1988:486) divides the theories into two.

²³¹ Much in the same manner LUZ 2002:587. According to AEJMELAEUS’ (1994:159) the traces of the evangelist’s hand are so evident that the GS has hardly existed as a coherent whole before Matthew’s presentation. It is rather difficult to define what this “not a coherent whole” actually meant.

²³² BROER 1972:77-78.

²³³ So e.g. GNILKA 1988:486, SCHWEITZER 1989:341, SCHNACKENBURG 2002:292, BROWN 1994, and naturally those who are open to the possibility of a historical basis of the story (See earlier). It may be difficult to get all those scholars, who regard the

After all my theologizing of Matthew's redaction, it may seem inconsistent of me to propose a historicizing defense of the story concerning the guards at Jesus' tomb (Matt 27:62-66; 28:11-15). But in that story we find a number of words, most of them central to it, that elsewhere Matthew shows no special interest in.²³⁴

The logic in the first theory is that if a narrative is saturated with so-called Mattheanisms, i.e. expressions typical for Matthew elsewhere, it is likely to have been created by him, at least to a great extent. When the GS was formed from numerous fragments it took much effort and labour to modify a coherent narrative out of them and this process should have resulted in clear and visible traces of Mattheanisms in the final story. The second theory is based on alleged non-Mattheanisms in the GS and on the idea that if an author uses different vocabulary and expressions in the story than were used elsewhere it is legitimate to assume that an earlier source has been used.

As we move on to analyze these theories we proceed as follows. First we cast a look at the word-statistical method which is used e.g. by Aejmelaeus and Broer. After establishing a meaningful word-statistical procedure to define Mattheanisms, we test this tool in an effort to separate source-based and redactional parts from each other. Secondly we study the suggested Matthean words and expressions by analysing their "Matthean" nature and use in the evangelist's editing process. Thirdly we study words and expressions, which have been suggested to be non-Matthean, and are thus indicative of a pre-Matthean source.

evangelist as an apostle (Matthew or another first generation figure), to fit into the categories applied here. GUNDRY (1994:609-622) regards the apostle Matthew as the evangelist but still believes that he has used a tradition. For the apostle's authorship argues also KEENER 1999:38-41, CARSON 1984:17-19 and MOUNCE 1991:1-2. However, it seems to me that the apostle Matthew would not have used sources as extensively as the first evangelist or adapted his own "conversion story" from Mark. Thus I do not handle this possibility here.

²³⁴ GUNDRY 1994:xxi.

3.2. Mattheanisms as an Argument for the Origin of the Guard Story

3.2.1. Word-statistics

Aejmelaeus, Broer and Luz all lean heavily on the word-statistical argument, which is based on the frequency of words and expressions in the story which are considered to be Matthean.²³⁵ In order to use this sort of an argument, a definition should be given for statistically consistent use of the term “Mattheanisms” as well as provision of an approximative saturation point for the number of Mattheanisms in a created and a source-based narrative respectively. The question of the applicability of the word-statistics is legitimate, and numerous factors must be taken into consideration when it is used.²³⁶ A word is an interactive part of a larger whole, and thus cannot be treated as an independent unit. For this reason it may be useful in this kind of an enterprise to put more emphasis on expressions where peculiarity of the language is easier to establish. However, with these considerations in mind, the word-statistical study does have merits and may work as a helpful tool with a supportive function in redaction and source critical analyses.²³⁷

When a given expression occurs repeatedly in the gospel of Matthew but is absent in other Synoptic gospels, it may be meaningful to consider it a

²³⁵ For a standard work in word-statistical studies of Synoptic gospels see MORGENTHALER 1982.

²³⁶ For a few sceptical viewpoints on a general level see e.g. SYREENI & LUOMANEN 1997:202-203.

²³⁷ The method has been used quite convincingly by MARTIN (1964/65, 1987) and FARRIS (1981) to make a difference between material based on a Semitic source, and the text originally written in Greek. See also WRIGHT (1985) for confirmative (and in some details corrective) evidences of Martin’s method. A healthy reminder of the subjective side of statistical reasoning when applied to source critical problems is the discussion about the extent of Q source. See e.g. CARLSTON & NORLIN 1971, 1999, O’ROURKE 1974 and MATTILA 1994, 2004. The problem in the statistical Q research is that we do not have a verified example how Matthew and Luke would have written independently about the same sort of a phenomenon. Thus it becomes very difficult to decide whether agreement in words is indicative of a common source or not. It is also beneficial to read how O’ROURKE (1973) effectively demonstrates the influential fallacies made on the basis of statistical linguistics in the study of the Pastoral letters.

redactive contribution from the author. Gundry lists 95 words and phrases which can be defined as “characteristic” for Matthew.²³⁸ These expressions are found at least four times in the gospel and are not found at all in Mk or Lk, or are found twice as often in Mt as in Mk and Lk together. These 95 words, with a total occurrence of 1183 times, cover approximately 6% of the whole of the gospel of Matthew (some 18305 words).²³⁹ From a statistical point of view Gundry’s list can be accepted as a rough but satisfactory starting point.²⁴⁰

The meaningfulness of using this list as a tool in redaction critical analysis of Matthew can be tested by comparing the gospel as a whole to i) a clearly source-derived passage and ii) to passages from the Matthean Sondergut. If the method works some statistically significant differences should be found.

Mark’s five-part conflict story is repeated in Matthew’s gospel; the sequence remains the same even though Matthew has split the whole into two parts. It is reasonable to assume that Matthew has used Mark alone as a source in all five pericopes. When word-frequencies in the conflict pericopes are compared to Matthew’s text in general using Chi-

²³⁸ GUNDRY 1994:1-5, 674-682. See also DAVIES & ALLISON 1988:75-76. See also the list by CARSLTON (no date) where Chi-Square test is used to analyze the statistical significance of the words. His list consists of 46 words.

http://www.mindspring.com/~scarlson/hypotyposeis/2004_04_11_arch.html#108220983470032148. Visited 14.07.2008.

²³⁹ Of course different text critical solutions change the exact number. However, this variation is hardly significant in our calculations.

²⁴⁰ There is a statistical problem in some suggestions for the list of words allegedly demonstrating Matthean redaction. As FRIEDRICH (1985:33) states: “Die absolute Zahl des Vorkommens eines Wortes innerhalb eines Evangeliums ist in keiner Weise aussagekräftig”. For example LUZ (2002:420-421) gives a list of the Matthean words which are practically as common in other texts as in Matthew’s. So also DAVIES & ALLISON 1988:74-79. It is also problematic that Acts is not taken consideration when word frequencies are explored. This is especially relevant when analysing the GS because the story is situated in a similar environment to that in the beginning of Acts. Furthermore the author of Luke’s Gospel and Acts is almost universally considered to be the same. If a word occurs twice as often in Acts as in Matthew’s gospel it is not legitimate to conclude that the word is a Mattheanism, even if it does not occur frequently in Mk and Lk. The case in point could be e.g. the word *κελεύω* which is found 7 times in Mt and 19 times in Acts.

square test, the difference turns out to be very significant.²⁴¹ There are remarkably fewer Matthean words in the five-part conflict story (consisting of some 550 words) than in Matthew's gospel in general.

Nine passages were selected from Matthean Sondergut, and a corresponding analysis was performed on these texts. While the total share of Matthean words in the gospel is 6.5%, it is 6.2% in these nine passages altogether. Consequently we can suggest that there is no difference whatsoever between the so-called Matthean Sondergut and the rest of the gospel. However, it is still possible that Matthew used a source in some Sondergut pericopes and created others. In what follows we study whether this suggestion finds any support in statistical analysis. The following chart demonstrates the number of special Matthean words in each pericope in relation to the total number of words.

²⁴¹Chi-square with Yates correction equals 18.483 with 1 degrees of freedom. The two-tailed P value is less than 0.0001, and is considered to be very statistically significant. (Mt 9:1-8, taken from Mk 2:1-12) 3 of 126 words 2,5%. (Mt 9:9-13, taken from Mk 2:13-17) 2 of 93 words 2%. (Mt 9:14-17, taken from Mk 2:18-22) 1 of 105 words 1%. Spicae Sabbato vulsae (Mt 12:1-8, taken from Mk 2:23-28) 0 of 135 words) and (Mt 12:9-14, taken from Mk 3:1-6) 3 of 90 words 3%.

(Table 2)

Passage	Number of Mattheanisms	Total number of words	Mattheanisms total %
1:18-25 Nativity story	5	146	3%
5:17-37 Sermon on the Mount 1	21	445	5%
6:1-18 Sermon on the Mount 2	18	191	9%
7:12-23 Sermon on the Mount 3	8	211	4%
9:27-34 The cure of two blind man	4	114	4%
25:1-13 The parable of ten virgins	20	171	12%
25:31-46 The Last Judgment	10	280	4%
27:3-10 The death of Judas	8	91	9%
28:16-20 Apparition of Jesus in Galilee	4	81	5%
27:62-66, 28:11-15 The Guard story	13	159	8%

When analyzed using the Chi-square test, only the parable of the ten virgins turns out to be significantly different (statistically) from the rest of Matthew's gospel.²⁴² However, this significance is due to the exceptionally numerous repetitions of Matthean expressions. The words $\mu\omega\rho\acute{o}s$, $\phi\rho\acute{o}\nu\iota\mu\omicron>s$, $\pi\alpha\rho\theta\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron>s$ and $\lambda\alpha\mu\pi\acute{\alpha}s$ would not be found in Gundry's list if this parable were to be omitted. Consequently the number of Mattheanisms would drop to five cases if Matthew used a source which included these words.²⁴³ As a conclusion we may state that none of these longer Sondergut texts can be demonstrated to be different from the general text of the gospel.

When a corresponding comparison is performed between the GS and the rest of the gospel, no statistically significant difference is found.²⁴⁴ Thus,

²⁴² Chi squared equals 5.639 with 1 degrees of freedom. The two-tailed P value equals 0.0176. The association is considered to be statistically significant.

²⁴³ Due to this phenomenon the percentage of Matthean words in a given pericope is sometimes lower if the pericope is not included when the list of special Matthean words is decided. When analyzing the GS I have taken this into consideration and mentioned the difference whenever it has any relevance to the questions under study.

²⁴⁴ Chi-square with Yates correction equals 0,003 with 1 degrees of freedom. The two-tailed P value equals 0,9593 which means that the difference is not significant.

when typical Matthean words are used as a criterion there are no statistical grounds to regard the GS as anything but normal Matthean text. Since the majority of Matthew's pericopes are based on a source, as can be readily shown by comparing the three Synoptic gospels, it is noteworthy that the GS does not differ from the "strongly source-based general narrative of Matthew". Within the word-statistical approach the following reasoning is defensible.

- Argument 1: Matthew's text is mostly based on a source.
- Argument 2: The GS is word-statistically as Matthean as Matthew's text in general.
- Conclusion: The GS is probably based on a source.

It has already become evident that the application of a crude statistical method to a narrative is not without problems. While certain applications, like the use of repeatedly occurring particles, may be justified, it is difficult to submit relatively rarely found words (e.g. those with fewer than ten occurrences) to any statistical analysis. In the face of this reality, it may be useful to apply a slightly "softer" method and compare the GS to another short special narrative.

As seen in the list above, it is the story of the death of Judas, which has the second greatest number of special Matthean words. The incidence of these is also slightly higher than in the GS. To follow the logic, if the GS is a creation then the story of the death of Judas must also be. What is more, the latter is loaded with typical Matthean structures and themes.²⁴⁵ Should the word-statistical argument for the Matthean origin of the GS hold, this story had to be labelled as a Matthean creation as well. However, on the basis of Acts 1:15-20 we know that there was a pre-Matthean story about Judas' tragic end. As Gundry states:

Because of Matthew's special diction, parallelism, heavy use of OT phraseology, and the absence of parallels in the other gospels, we might have thought that the story of Judas's end is a wholesale creation by Matthew himself. But the very different version of Judas's end in Acts

²⁴⁵ See e.g. NOLLAND 2005:1148-1158 and DAVIES & ALLISON 1997:557-577.

1:15-20, one with signs of an early date (see esp. the Aramaic in Acts 1:19), favours that Matthew is working with historical tradition.²⁴⁶

What has been presented above effectively falsifies the arguments of Broer and Aejmelaeus as far as they are based on any kind of quantitative analysis of word-frequencies. Since rough statistical mathematics may be too crude a tool when a narrative is analyzed, a more case-sensitive procedure is attempted by studying Matthew's use of certain words in his editorial work. From a statistical point of view a text can include an insignificant number of Matthean expressions but the nature of these expressions may still indicate Matthean origin of the story.

In what follows we go through the six basic words suggested by Aejmelaeus to be special Matthean expressions, and then analyze Broer's and Luz's additional (and numerous!) suggestions for the same category. Aejmelaeus' list is based on relative occurrences and thus should be given primacy over the more subjective list of Broer and Luz. The procedure here can be roughly crystallized into two questions: i) is the word or expression to be regarded as Matthean and ii) does the use of the word or expression elsewhere indicate free creativity or use of a source?

3.2.2. Analysis of Matthean Words

Aejmelaeus suggests that the words τάφος, συνάγω, κελεύω, κλέπτω, συμβούλιόν, ἀργύριον, ἡγεμών can be seen as Mattheanisms in the GS. In what follows I analyze each word as it "behaves" in Matthew's editorial work, and determine whether it is meaningful to draw any conclusions about the possible existence of a traditional pre-Matthean story on the base of these words.

τάφος

The word τάφος is not used in other Synoptic gospels but six times in Matthew's gospel. The first evangelist also uses a synonym μνημεῖον

²⁴⁶ GUNDRY 1994:553.

(six times as well). It may be indicative of the author's redactional policy that both words are used in 23:29 when the form of parallelismus membrorum is applied:

ὅτι οἰκοδομεῖτε τοὺς **τάφους** τῶν προφητῶν
καὶ κοσμεῖτε τὰ **μνημεῖα** τῶν δικαίων

It is quite evident that the semantic ranges of these words are no different in the mind of the author, but are used to create stylistic variation to the text. When Matthew uses the word τάφος in 28:1 he is only changing the word used in Mk 16:2 (μνημεῖον). Consequently we cannot reason on the basis of the used of τάφος that Matthew is not following an independently coherent source.

συνάγω

The word συνάγω is used 24 times in Matthew's gospel and has been seen as a reference to the Synagogue of the author's day e.g. by Gundry.²⁴⁷ However, this assumption is not without problems. The word συνάγω is used quite generally elsewhere in the gospels (6 in Mk, 7 in Lk, 8 in Jn and 12 in Acts).

It is used only seven times in the meaning that could refer to the synagogue as an institution, and the verb is used in a very positive fashion numerous times, which further weakens the plausibility of Gundry's interpretation. In Mk 7:1 and Jn 11:47 the verb is used about the Pharisees and the scribes and in Lk 22:66 about the elders of the people, the chief priests and the scribes. In the book of Acts the enemies of the Christians gather together in 4:6 and 4:26-27 where the link with the LXX version of Psalm 2 is explicit. Thus it is possible that a source included the word συνάγω in the negative meaning of the word.

Outside the GS the phenomenon of "gathered enemies" occurs five times in Mt, one of them being in Matthean special material (2:4). In other cases the story is paralleled in Mk.²⁴⁸ This suggests that while the expression is typical for Matthew, it is not sign of his creative power, but rather only

²⁴⁷ So e.g. GUNDRY 1994:583.

²⁴⁸ Mt 22:34 – Mk 12:28-34, Mt 22:41 – Mk 12:35-37, Mt 26:3 – Mk 14:1, Mt 26:57 – Mk 14:53

his way of telling the story. A case in point is Mt 26:57 and Mk 14:53 where Matthew uses συνάγω instead of Mark's συνέρχομαι. The basic flow of the story is not significantly changed with these practically interchangeable synonyms. The use of the verb συνάγω may or may not reflect a word-play with the word synagogue, but this viewpoint does not have much impact on the question of the use and nature of the tradition in the GS. However, what I find curious is that in Mt 15:1 the evangelist uses the word συνέρχομαι, when Mark has the very word συνάγω in his parallel version. The minute question of obeying the Law would fit rather well to the imagined Sitz im Leben of anti-synagogue propaganda, and had the connotation to the Synagogue been intentional in the use of the word συνάγω, it would be only natural to find it in Matthew's version as well.

κελεύω

Although it is possible to regard the word κελεύω as Matthean, when comparison is made to the Synoptic Gospels the risk of the whole approach becomes evident when its frequent occurrence in the book of Acts is taken into consideration. The word is found more than twice as often in Acts (19) as it is in Matthew's gospel (7). Furthermore, when the five cases of Matthew's use of the word are analyzed, the evidential value of the assumedly Matthean nature of the word can also be questioned.

In Mt 14:9 and in 14:28 Matthew has changed Markan (6:27 and 6:39) verb ἐπιτάσσω to κελεύω, while he has followed Mark rather closely on a narrative level.²⁴⁹ This demonstrates that the word κελεύω cannot be regarded as evidence for Matthean creativity. Mt 8:18 is a Matthean addition to a story which is found in rather a similar form in both Mark and Matthew. While the immediate context of the verb κελεύω is - in this case - very likely, Matthew's creation, this relates only to the introduction; the story proper is firmly based on a source. However, this shows that Matthew uses this word when creating detail for his story. In

²⁴⁹ Some manuscripts include the word κελεύω in Mt 15:35 the parallel in Mk using the word παραγγέλλω.

Mt 18:25 the word occurs in the Matthean Sondergut but the story is quite probably based on an earlier source.²⁵⁰

We can conclude that Matthew may use the word κελεύω when he creates material and when he modifies an existing story. Consequently, when the possible use of a source and its nature are studied, no meaningful conclusions are to be made one way or another on the basis of this word.

κλέπτω

The word κλέπτω is found three times in Matthew's gospel outside of GS. In two cases it is found in a saying with rather a close parallel in Luke's gospel (Mt 6:19-20/Lk 12:33-34). Luke's κλέπτης οὐκ ἐγγίζει is paralleled in Matthew with the saying κλέπται διορύσσουσιν καὶ κλέπτουσιν. It has been suggested that the original Q-version already included the verb κλέπτω.²⁵¹ Should this be the case, it is evident that the use of κλέπτω in this context is explained by its occurrence in Q, since the double occurrence of the verb here is probably due to Matthew's stylistic way of constructing the saying using antithetical repetition "do not do...but do" as is clearly demonstrated when the structure of the saying is analyzed:

μη̄ θησαυρίζετε ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς
 ὅπου σῆς καὶ βρῶσις ἀφανίζει καὶ
 ὅπου κλέπται διορύσσουσιν καὶ
 κλέπτουσιν

θησαυρίζετε δὲ ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐν οὐρανῷ
 ὅπου οὔτε σῆς οὔτε βρῶσις ἀφανίζει καὶ
 ὅπου κλέπται οὐ διορύσσουσιν
 οὐδὲ κλέπτουσιν

²⁵⁰ So e.g. DAVIES & ALLISON (1988:123): "Despite its being preserved only in Matthew, 18:23-35 is almost universally reckoned an authentic parable of Jesus." Otherwise GUNDRY (1994:371-375), whose case rests on an assumed dependence of Matthew on Luke. Against VERMES' (1993:106) suggestion that the Gentile court implies of inauthenticity see especially KEENER 1999:457.

²⁵¹ So ROBINSON et al. 2002:120.

In the third case the use of the word is based on Mark's version, where some of the Ten Commandments are cited (Mt 19:18/Mk 10:19). Thus we can conclude that the word κλέπτω is not really a Matthean term and cannot be used definitively as evidence of Matthean creativity.

συμβούλιον

The word συμβούλιον is not a strong candidate for special Matthean vocabulary since the word is found two times in Mark and once in Acts. However, the expression συμβούλιον λαμβάνω is quite obviously a Matthean formulation. It is found four times outside GS but nowhere else in the gospels. In two cases Matthew (Mt 12:41 and 27:1) has changed Mark's expressions συμβούλιον ἐδίδουν (Mk 3:6) and συμβούλιον ποιήσαντες (Mk 15:1) to the form συμβούλιον λαμβάνω. In one case this expression is used as an additional opening phrase to a story which is clearly traditional (Mt 22:15:22/Mk 12:13-17). In the one remaining case (Mt 27:7) the word is found in the story of Judas' death, which is also based on an earlier tradition. Thus no evidence for Matthean creativity can be derived from the use of the word συμβούλιον λαμβάνω. It may be Matthew's way of slightly modifying other corresponding expressions. Nonetheless, the expression is clearly Matthean, and thus can be regarded as redactional when it occurs.

ἀργύριον

The word ἀργύριον occurs seven times in Matthew's gospel outside GS, once in Mark, four times in Lk and five times in Acts. In two cases (Mt 25:18 and 25:27) the word ἀργύριον is used in a Lucan parallel (Lk 19:15 and 19:23) and once (Mt 26:15) in a Markan parallel (Mk 14:11). What may be of some importance is that all the four remaining cases (outside GS) are in the story of Judas' death (27:3-10). The theme of 30 silver coins is familiar from LXX version of Zach 11:12-13, and the use of the word may reflect Matthew's tendency to see the fulfilment of the Prophets in Jesus' life. The whole pericope is intermingled with Zacharias' terminology and themes, which further strengthens the interpretation mentioned above.²⁵² It is also noteworthy that the story of Judas' death is surely not Matthew's invention. To sum up we can conclude that the use

²⁵² See NOLLAND 2005:1148-1158.

of the word ἀργύριον cannot be seen as an indication of GS being Matthew's creation nor of being in a unified story form prior to Matthew.

ἡγεμῶν

The word ἡγεμῶν occurs eight times in Matthew's gospel outside GS; once in Mark, twice in Luke and seven times in Acts. As the frequent occurrence in Acts indicates, it is not reasonable to conclude that a story is a Matthean creation because of its use of ἡγεμῶν. This viewpoint is supported by the detailed analysis of each occurrence. In Mt 2:6 the word comes from LXX quotation of Mic 5:1, and in Mat 10:18 the word comes from Mark 13:9. Most occurrences are concentrated in chapter 27, where it is mostly used instead of the name Pilate. (Mt 27:2/Mk 15:1, Mt 27:11/Mk 15:2, Mt 27:14/Mk 15:5, Mt 27:15/Mk 15:6, Mt 27:21/Mk 15:21, Mt 27:27/Mk 15:16). Thus the word ἡγεμῶν is not indicative of the non-existence of a source, and consequently cannot be seen as evidence for Matthean liberties.

Ingo Broer has argued that a number of other words are indicative of Matthew's redactional touch. Such words are κύριος, ἐγείρω, λαός, ποιέω, διδάσκω, κοιμάομαι, πείθω, φημί and πορεύομαι.

The word κύριος is very common throughout the whole New Testament (it is absent only from 1 and 2 John). However, it is only rarely used to mean a human master and it is written even more rarely in the vocative form κύριε. This is the case in Acts 16:30, which shows that e.g. Broer's judgment "häufig redaktionell" is not sound. The word may or may not have been in a source Matthew used. Broer states that ἐγείρω is Matthew's "lieblingswort". Since Broer appeals to word statistics it is reasonable to check the claim on statistical grounds. When the total length of Mk and Mt is taken into account it appears that there is no statistically significant difference between the two gospels as to the frequency of the verb ἐγείρω.²⁵³ Furthermore, the word occurs in 17 NT books more than 100 times. The point is not whether a given expression is "lieblingswort", but whether other authors use it frequently. The word

²⁵³ The verb ἐγείρω occurs 33 times in Mt and 18 times in Mk. When the number of pages is taken into account the Chi squared equals 0.460 with 1 degree of freedom, and is not considered to be statistically significant.

λαός occurs 36 times in Lk, 47 in Acts and "only" 15 times in Matthew. Thus, there is no meaningful reason to regard it redaction on word statistical or stylistical grounds. According to Broer ποιέω is "Mt viel benutzten Worten²⁵⁴", but it is in very active use in every other gospel and Acts as well (Mt 73, Mk 47, Lk 81, Jn 97, Act 66).

There are two serious errors in Broer's reasoning when regarding the word διδάσκω as Matthean. First, the word is by no means special for Matthew, and occurs more often in Mk and Lk than in Mt. Secondly this is the only case in the whole gospel where the word is used in its present meaning. Elsewhere it always refers to religious teaching, but in this instance alone it means "as they were told to do". Against Broer we may suggest that this expression is actually non-Matthean, and rather suggests the use of a source than otherwise. The word κοιμάομαι occurs twice in Mt, once in Lk, 3 times in Acts and 2 times in Jn, and cannot be regarded as a special Matthean expression. The word πείθω occurs 3 times in Mt, once in Mk, 4 times in Lk and 17 times in Acts, and similarly cannot be regarded as a special Matthean expression. The word φημί occurs 15 times in Mt and 26 in Acts and so it cannot be regarded as a special Matthean expression either. The same applies to the word πορεύομαι, which occurs 29 times in Mt, 47 times in Lk and 38 times in Acts, and thus, cannot be regarded as a special Matthean expression.

None of these nine suggested Mattheanisms were found to have any evidential value as for the possible Matthean origin of the GS.

Luz has added following words to his suggested list of Matthean words: δὲ, ὅστις, μιμνήσκομαι, πλάνος, πλάνη, ἔτι, εἰμί, πορεύομαι, ἔρχομαι, πόλις, ἀρχιερεύς, τὰ γενόμενα, πρεσβύτερος, λέγω, μαθητής, ἀκούω and οὗτος.²⁵⁵

The verb μιμνήσκομαι occurs in this form only in the GS Mt 27:63. The lemma occurs 3 times in Mt, 6 in Lk, 2 in Acts and 3 in Jn, which shows that it cannot be taken as a Matthean characteristic. Luz's list of suggestions includes a number of words which are frequently used by

²⁵⁴ BROER 1972:76.

²⁵⁵ LUZ 2002:320, 420-421.

Luke. The word πόλις is found 36 times in Lk and 41 times in Acts. πρεσβύτερος is found 5 times in Lk and 18 in Acts, as well as being mentioned some 13 times in Mt. The participle τὰ γινόμενα is found three times both in Mt and Lk. The conjunction δὲ, demonstrative οὗτος, adverb ἔτι and relative pronoun ὅστις are typical for Luke as well as for Matthew.

The verb ἀκούω occurs in this particular form only in the GS (Mt 28:14) and Revelation (3 times). The verb itself occurs evenly in all gospels as well as in the book of Acts. The ἀρχιερεύς is present frequently in every gospel. The verbs λέγω, εἰμί, ἔρχομαι are so common in Koine Greek that it is questionable to use them as indicators of an author's contribution. The words πλάνος and πλάνη occur only in GS in the gospels, and thus cannot be taken as Matthean expressions. The word μαθητής is found 42 times in Mk and 71 times in Mt.²⁵⁶ Sometimes Matthew uses the word because it is found in the source he uses, and sometimes it is a redactional addition to the text. Matthew has an obvious tendency to add the word to his source as seen e.g. in the comparison of Mk 6:7 and Mt 10:1. Mark uses the expression προσκαλεῖται τοὺς δώδεκα and Matthew adds προσκαλεσάμενος τοὺς δώδεκα μαθητὰς. While the word μαθητής is the most Matthean of those suggested by Luz, (if the common suggestions with Broer are excluded), it still fails to convince as evidence of Matthean creativity. It may be one of those cases where the word has been taken directly from a source.

3.2.3. Analysis of Other Matthean Expressions

In addition to the single words Broer lists eight expressions which he considers to be Matthean creations.²⁵⁷

1. ἠγγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν

²⁵⁶ Chi squared equals 0.442 with 1 degree of freedom. The two-tailed P value equals 0.5061 and thus is not to be considered as statistically significant.

²⁵⁷ BROER 1972:75.

The form, as far as the preposition is concerned, is Matthean since it occurs only in Mt (14:2, 27:64, 28:7). Matthew has changed the preposition ἐκ to ἀπό. When it comes to the question of the source it may very well be that the source did read ἐκ νεκρῶν (as in Lk 9:7, Jn 2:22 and Rm 6:4) and Matthew changed only the preposition. However, we may be quite positive that Matthew has changed the preposition.

2. καὶ ἔσται ἡ ἔσχατη πλάνη χείρων τῆς πρώτης

As has often been pointed out there is a similar saying in Mt 12:45 καὶ γίνεται τὰ ἔσχατα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκείνου χείρονα τῶν πρώτων and consequently many scholars have voted for Matthew's editorial touch in Mt 27:64. The expression is in all likelihood derived from Q 11:26 and thus originally non-Matthean. It is difficult to decide which is more likely; that Matthew has formed it on the bases of Q-saying, or that an unknown tradent has used a proverbial expression.

3. συνήχθησαν... λέγοντες

The form συνήχθησαν is found four times in Mt, once in Mk and twice in Acts. It is also the very form used in LXX Psalm 2:2. The participle λέγοντες after συνήχθησαν is used only in the GS and has already been pointed out, the word λέγω is not a special Matthean word.

4. εἶπεν ἔτι ζῶν MSF

The curious expression ἔτι ζῶν is not found elsewhere in the NT. What is more, the participle form of ζάω is found only in Mt 27:63. The adverb ἔτι is found eight times in Mt, five times in Mk and seventeen in Luke, and thus gives no support for regarding the word as a special Matthean word. Because of the rare structure of this expression it is reasonable to speak about a non-Matthean expression which, against Broer, does not recommend itself as a Matthean redaction.

5. ἐλθόντες ἔκλεψαν

The aorist participle form ἐλθόντες occurs eleven times in Mt, eight times outside the GS, three times in Mk, and in John and four times in Acts. In four cases (2:11, 18:31, 20:9, 20:10) the form occurs in the Matthean Sondergut, and it is impossible to determine whether the evangelist has taken the word from a source or added it himself. What remains is to focus on the remaining four cases where Matthew's

passages have parallels in the gospel of Mark. In 9:10 Matthew cites Mark 2:15 *in verbatim* with the exception of the addition of the word ἐλθόντες to the citation. This is sufficient demonstration that the word is a part of Matthew's redactive arsenal. However, this is an expression which Matthew adds to his source without any factual modification of the earlier story. This phenomenon goes against Broer's conclusion that Matthew's stylistic features speak for its Matthean origin. The other three cases where redactive analysis is possible are in harmony with principle mentioned above. In 14:12 Matthew follows Mark (6:29) but a mention of the disciples of John coming to inform Jesus καὶ ἐλθόντες ἀπήγγειλαν τῷ Ἰησοῦ is added. In 16:5 the word ἐλθόντες works as a short introductory addition to the Markan (8:14) version. In 27:33 Matthew has changed the Markan (15:22) καὶ φέρουσιν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸν Γολγοθᾶν to the form καὶ ἐλθόντες εἰς τόπον λεγόμενον Γολγοθᾶ. The basic flow of the story remains the same.

As a conclusion it can be suggested that the source could have read only ἔκλειψαν and Matthew added his favourial expression ἐλθόντες. The same conclusion may apply to the other occurrences of ἐλθόντες in the GS as well.

6. δὲ πορευθέντες ἠσφαλίσαντο τὸν τάφον σφραγίσαντες

The aorist passive participle πορευθέντες is used seven times each by Matthew and Luke. While it is added three times to Mark's text, it is to be regarded as a rather similar redactional feature as the word ἐλθόντες i.e. without any *de facto* alternating effect on the story in the source. It must be also pointed out that πορευθέντες has been added to the source as often by Luke as by Matthew.²⁵⁸ Consequently it becomes difficult to decide whether this word can be regarded as Matthew's style.

7. ἰδοὺ + gen.abs.

As pointed out by numerous scholars this structure is typical for Matthew and is found very rarely elsewhere in the gospels. ἰδοὺ alone occurs 62 times in Matthew's gospel; 34 times it is an addition to a source

²⁵⁸ Matthew 2:8 special material, 9:13 addition, 11:4 Q-based, 21:6 addition, 22:15 addition, 27:66 special material, 28:19 special material. Luke 7:22 Q-based, 9:12 addition, 9:13 addition, 9:52 special material, 13:32 special material, 17:14 special material, 22:8 addition.

and 9 times it is found in Matthean special material.²⁵⁹ Many scholars have pointed out – on good grounds- that the particle ἰδοὺ together with genitive absolute is a very Matthean expression. It is found eleven times in Matthew’s gospel and only once in Luke. The expression is especially frequent in the Nativity narrative (Mt 1:20, 2:1, 2:13, 2:19).²⁶⁰ In Mt 9:10 ἰδοὺ + abs.gen is an addition to Mk 2:15, in Mt 9:18 to Mk 5:22 and in Mt 17:5 to Mk 9:7. In the latter case, Luke, (9:34) in his parallel has also changed Mark’s expression to the genitive absolute ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ λέγοντος ἐγένετο νεφέλη. This makes the stylistical motivation for using gen. abs. plausible, thus leaving only ἰδοὺ as Matthean redaction. Needless to say, this particle hardly implies considerable factual modification of a source. In 9:32 ἰδοὺ + abs.gen is an introductory addition to Q11:14, intensifying the narrative by connecting it more tightly to the context. In Mt 26:47 the use of gen. abs. is dependent on Mk 14:43 where the same form is used. It is interesting that Luke adds the particle ἰδοὺ to Mark’s version dropping off the Markan εὐθὺς in the same way as Matthew.

We can summarize the redactive nature and function of this expression by noting that 28:11 is most probably Matthew’s construction. However, it has not resulted in any significant factual alterations of the source elsewhere, and cannot be taken as evidence of Matthean creativity.

8. κουστωδίας ἐλθόντες εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἀπήγγειλαν τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσιν ἅπαντα τὰ γενόμενα

The expression in Mt 27:65 is structurally similar to the one in Mt 8:33. However, some of the similarities are also shared with the Markan version, thus leaving only the participle ἐλθόντες and πάντα as special Matthean additional words (see table 3 below). Again it is highly questionable to build a stylistical argument to “weisen deutlich auch für diesen zweiten Teil der Geschichte auf Mt als Verfasser hin“. The factual

²⁵⁹ HAGNER 1993:18. The particle alone occurs 57 times in Luke.

²⁶⁰ DAVIES & ALLISON (1988:206): “A redactional origin is nevertheless uncertain here [1:20] as at 2:13 and 19. For the word and its Semitic equivalents were traditionally associated with angelic appearances or theophanies, and so could have been in Matthew’s source.” Davies and Allison (1988:206) provide a good number of examples from Jewish literature.

alteration of the source (5:14) is minimal, and thus it is legitimate to suppose that the expression in Mt 28:11 may be modification of a very similar source text.

(Table 3)

Mt 28	Mt 8:33	Mk 5:14
ἐλθόντες	ἄπελθόντες	--
εἰς τὴν πόλιν	εἰς τὴν πόλιν	εἰς τὴν πόλιν
ἀπήγγειλαν	ἀπήγγειλαν	ἀπήγγειλαν
ἅπαντα τὰ γενόμενα	πάντα καὶ τὰ τῶν δαμονιζομένων	τὸ γεγονός

3.2.4. Conclusion: Matthean Words and Expressions in the Guard Story

We have found that only a small part of the suggested Matthean characteristic words and expressions (τάφος, συνάγω, συμβούλιον λαμβάνω, ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν, ἐλθόντες, ἰδοὺ + gen.abs, ἅπαντα τὰ γενόμενα) can convincingly be demonstrated to indicate Matthean redaction. Thus we must conclude that the actual number of Matthean words and expressions in the GS is remarkably lower than what is assumed in e.g. Ingo Broer's way of arguing the creative origin of the story. Another proponent of the theory of total creation, Ulrich Luz' suggestions for Mattheanisms were also found unconvincing. While Aejmelaeus' list is more conservative and defensible than these two scholars', it cannot not be accepted in its entirety. This forces us to reject the arguments for Matthean origin of the GS as based on the number of Matthean words and expressions as they are presented in the studies of Broer, Luz and Aejmelaeus.

It has also been demonstrated that Matthean redactional expressions do not imply creativity, but are regularly added to a source which is otherwise followed rather conservatively. Redactive words are thus not signs of creativity if the concept is understood as referring to Matthew inventing a pericope *de novo*. This second notion is more important than the first and confirms our negative judgment of the abovementioned arguments for Matthean origin of the GS.

3.3. Non-Mattheanims as an Argument for the Pre-Matthean Origin of the Guard Story

3.3.1. Analysis

According to Gundry the following words indicate that a pre-Matthean source has been used: ἐπαύριον, ἀσφαλίζω, κουστωδία, σφραγίζω, ἱκανός, στρατιώτης and διαφημίζω.²⁶¹ Nolland adds the word τάφος to this list. Aejmelaeus accepts some of Gundry's suggestions adding only the word πλάνος.²⁶² Gnilka adds πλάνος/πλάνη and παρασκευή to Gundry's list but does not include ἱκανός, στρατιώτης and διαφημίζω.²⁶³ In what follows we analyze the persuasiveness of each suggestion.

1. ἐπαύριον

Matthew uses the form αὔριον elsewhere two times (6:30, 34) which makes the use of this form noteworthy. Broer's attempt to explain this hapax legomena away does not convince. It does not change the argument that Q 12:28 already had αὔριον since it shows that Matthew is happy to have this form and does not see any reason to change it.²⁶⁴ Further, as Broer admits, the second occurrence is in Matthean Sondergut and could, perhaps, be more likely to be found in the form ἐπαύριον. However, since there are only a total of three occurrences, it may be safer to leave the question of the possible use of the source open.

2. ἀσφαλίζω

The word occurs three times in the GS and only once elsewhere in the NT (Acts 16:24). In 19:20 Matthew uses more or less a synonymous φυλάσσω, which could be seen as a weak indication of the use of a tradition. Because we only have one context to compare it is again safer to leave the question of source open.

²⁶¹ GUNDRY 1994:xxi.

²⁶² AEJMELEAEUS 1994:146-147.

²⁶³ GNILKA 1988:486. The same list is given by CRAIG 1984:273.

²⁶⁴ BROER 1972:69.

3. κουστωδία

The word occurs only in the GS and three times altogether. Matthew has used the alternative τηροῦντες in 27:54 and 28:4 and στρατιώτης in 8:9, 27:27 and 28:12. It is clearly a *hapax legomena*, but can be quite well explained by the special situation. Other expressions like τηροῦντες and στρατιώτης are less suitable for the context since it is clearly a unit, which the author determines to describe with the expression. These two above-mentioned synonyms describe soldiers not their unit. Thus we conclude that the word κουστωδία is not a sufficient indication of the use of a source.

4. σφραγίζω

The word occurs only once in Matthew's gospel (Mt 27:66) and twice in John (1 in Rm, 1 in 2Cor, 2 in Eph, 8 in Rev). The use elsewhere in the NT shows that rather frequently there are situations where the word can be used. However, it may be claimed that these situations are strongly coloured with post-Easter theology, and this explains their absence from the Synoptic gospels.²⁶⁵ Thus we conclude that it is possible that the word σφραγίζω does not indicate the use of a source.

5. ἱκανός

Matthew uses this word two times in the sense of "worth something" and in 28:12 as "much". Nolland suggests that this change of meaning implies of the existence of a source.²⁶⁶ However, both meanings are found in e.g. Luke-Acts where the word occurs 27 times, and this argument would be too shaky as such. Nolland's argument can be defended however, by taking Matthew's ordinary way of saying "much of something" into account. The expression "much of something" occurs numerous times in Mt, and the word πολὺς is frequently used. Against this background I find it quite probable that the word ἱκανός is derived from a pre-Matthean source.

6. στρατιώτης

²⁶⁵ As LEMCIO (1991) has quite persuasively shown the general atmosphere in the Synoptic narratives is pre-Easter. In Matthew's gospel this difference is strikingly seen when Mt 28:16-20 is compared to the gospel as whole. See more about this in LEMCIO 1991:51-57.

²⁶⁶ NOLLAND 2005:1256.

Soldiers are mentioned three times using the word στρατιώτης in Mt. Elsewhere the word occurs quite frequently. The role of soldiers is rather insignificant in the Synoptic gospels, which makes any firm conclusion concerning the word's traditional origin conjectural. This is also supported by the fact that Luke uses the word twice in his gospel and 13 times in the Book of Acts. Rare use in a gospel does not mean that the word is unfamiliar to the author. Further, outside the GS, Matthew uses the word in 8:9 and 27:27, which suggests that the word belongs to his standard vocabulary, and thus cannot be regarded as a sign of a pre-Matthean source.

7. πλάνος and πλάνη

The word πλάνος does not occur elsewhere in Matthew's gospel. There would be a natural place for it in the Matthean passion narrative where accusations against Jesus are presented.²⁶⁷ Even at Pilate's palace (Mt 27:11-26) the accusations are not made explicit. To mention a derogatory name does not seem to fit into Matthew's general editorial paradigm, because it seems he applies their "correct" titles in an ironic manner (see 27:11-13, 27:29, 27:39-44). The idea of agitating the people, which is semantically close to the word πλάνος, is not prevalent in the case of Matthew, in the same way as it is for example in the Gospel of Luke (23:5²⁶⁸, 14²⁶⁹). Since there are places where one would expect to find the word if it originated from Matthew's redactional arsenal, it is legitimate to suggest that the word indicates the use of a pre-Matthean source. πλάνη is probably related to the word πλάνος either on the traditional level or redactional. In the gospels it is found only here (27:64).

8. τάφος

As already suggested in the previous chapter the word τάφος may be Matthew's choice for stylistic variation, and thus cannot be seen as an evidence of a pre-Matthean source.

9. παρασκευή

²⁶⁷ See also NOLLAND 2005:1236.

²⁶⁸ ἀνασεΐει τὸν λαόν.

²⁶⁹ ὡς ἀποστρέφοντα τὸν λαόν.

The word occurs only here in Matthew's gospel. It has been suggested that Matthew did not use the word in 27:57, which parallels Mk 15:42 where the word is used, because he wanted to reserve it for 27:62. I find it more probable that the reason Matthew does not use the word in 27:57 was his preference to avoid double time expressions (see also 8:16/Mk 1:32). From the two expressions available in the source he chose ὀψίας δὲ γενομένης, which he uses six times in his gospel.²⁷⁰ Both Matthew and Mark use the expression only once, and in a different context. I do not find it as evident as Broer that Matthew owes the use of the word to Mark, since the contexts are slightly different.²⁷¹ Surely it is possible that he chose it because the source telling about the GS included μετὰ τὴν παρασκευὴν and he wanted to avoid repetition.²⁷² As for the existence of a pre-Matthean source I do not regard the occurrence of the word παρασκευὴ as having any evidential power.

To sum up we can conclude that most cases of *hapax legomena* indicating the use of a source are not persuasive. Out of nine suggested words two (ἰκανός and πλάνος) turned out to have a good claim of traditional origin.

3.3.2. Analysis of the Non-Matthean Expressions

In what follows we analyze four expressions, which have been proposed as good candidates for the source language. The non-Matthean style is often significantly easier to establish with expressions than with single words. If an author regularly uses a given structure or a grammatical form and then suddenly changes his style in the pericope under study, we have a good change of being right in assuming the existence of an earlier source.

²⁷⁰ Used in 8:16, 14:15, 14:23, 20:8, 26:20 and 27:57. The expression is written once (16:2) without the conjunction δὲ.

²⁷¹ It is methodologically problematic to state that an author A has taken a given word from an author B if i) both use the word only once, ii) they use it in different contexts, iii) both know the language well enough to have it in their active vocabulary.

²⁷² I would apply here what BROER (1972:69) has written about hapax legomena: „Ein einmalig vorkommendes Wort kann sowohl auf Tradition wie auf Redaktion durch den Evangelisten beruhen.“

1. ἐκεῖνος ὁ πλάνοσ

The word ἐκεῖνος occurs 48 times in Matthew's gospel outside the GS, and in 46 cases it is linked to the word before or after it. ἐκεῖνος is before the noun nine times and is found after it 37 times. However, what is important and hard to dismiss as sheer coincidence, is that all these nine cases of ἐκεῖνος preceding the noun are time expressions.²⁷³ It is highly suggestive that in 37 out of 38 cases when the time expression is not in question the noun precedes the word ἐκεῖνος.²⁷⁴ The only exception to this is in the GS (27:63). Thus it is legitimate to assume that the exceptional word order in the expression ἐκεῖνος ὁ πλάνοσ derives from a source.²⁷⁵

2. ἔτι ζῶν

The present participle form of the verb ζάω occurs only here in Matthew's gospel, which also supports the idea that we have source language at hand. With the exception of one fixed expression ἔτι αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος + ἰδοῦ (12:46, 17:5 and 26:47) Matthew does not use the participle after ἔτι. The same applies to Mark, who uses ἔτι αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος (5:35, 14:43) twice, but no other ἔτι+participle structure. It seems to me that what we have here is an idiomatic expression. It is to be noted that the grammatical structure of an idiom does not necessarily mean that this structure is applied in other expressions. A good example of a writer who uses the ἔτι+participle structure in a non-idiomatic fashion is Luke. He uses it three times with the verb λαλέω (8:49, 22:47, 22:60), once with προσέρχομαι (9:42) three times with εἰμί (14:32, 24:6, 24:44), once with ἀπιστέω (24:41) and once with ἀπέχω (15:20).²⁷⁶ All these considered, we have rather solid reasons to regard this expression as traditional.

This expression is strange since it states the obvious. In the Matthean story-line the death of Jesus is described in detailed fashion, and no

²⁷³ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ (7:22, 22:23, 24:19 (plural)), ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ (11:25, 12:1, 14:1), ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ (10:19, 26:55) and ἀπ' ἐκείνης τῆς ἡμέρας (24:19).

²⁷⁴ Thus e.g. DAVIES & ALLISON (1997:645) are wrong in labelling the word as a typical Matthean feature.

²⁷⁵ So also with same arguments as those presented here NOLLAND 2005:1236-1237.

²⁷⁶ LUZ (2002:390) has argued that ἔτι with participle is stylistical characteristic of Matthew. As shown here it is more typical for Luke, not Matthew. See also Acts 9:1, 18:18.

reader would need that information (in addition to the blunt assumption that dead people do not talk). It is tempting to think that the tautology here is due to a phenomenon known as editorial fatigue.²⁷⁷ The expression ἔτι ζῶν in its traditional context was perhaps part of a framework, which has not been handed down to the readers of Matthew. According to this hypothesis the original source had a reasonable motivation for the expression. When Matthew edited it he (due to fatigue?) did not fully realise that the expression did not make sense in his edited version. While fully admitting the speculative nature of this hypothesis I still find it the most plausible explanation for the occurrence of the curious expression ἔτι ζῶν in Mt 27:64.

3. ἐποίησαν ὡς ἐδιδάχθησαν

The use of the word διδάσκω in this sense is not typical for Matthew. The word διδάσκω is used 14 times in Mt and always (except here in 28:15) religious teaching is meant. Thus this appears as quite a non-Matthean way of using the word. There are similar situations, where a group is doing what someone tells them to do in 21:16 and 26:19, where the verb συντάσσω is used instead of διδάσκω.²⁷⁸ Taking these two factors into consideration we could expect that Matthew would have used the word συντάσσω in 28:15 had he created the story by himself. The expression ἐποίησαν ὡς ἐδιδάχθησαν indicates the use of a pre-Matthean source.

4. μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἐγείρομαι

On the basis of the old confessional citation in 1 Cor 15:3-8 we may assume that the form ἐγήγερται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ was more or less a fixed way of talking about Jesus' resurrection in early Christian communities.²⁷⁹ This is further confirmed by Matthew's alteration of

²⁷⁷ See e.g. GOODACRE 1998. While I agree with Goodacre about the existence of the phenomenon I am not fully convinced about the way he uses it to disprove the Q hypothesis. My major criticism against his case is that the Lk-Mt fatigue can equally well be Mt-Q fatigue.

²⁷⁸ 26:19 καὶ ἐποίησαν οἱ μαθηταὶ ὡς συνέταξεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἠτοίμασαν τὸ πάσχα.

21:16 πορευθέντες δὲ οἱ μαθηταὶ καὶ ποιήσαντες καθὼς συνέταξεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς.

²⁷⁹ The language is clearly non-Pauline and thus confirms what Paul writes that it is something he had received as well as transmitted to the Corinthians. In verse 1 Cor 15:11

Mark's expression *μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας* to the confessional form *τῆ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ*.²⁸⁰ Matthew does this three times, which indicates that it was not just an occasional stylistical alteration, but rather a conscious editorial choice. However, in Mt 27:63 he used *μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἐγείρομαι* which strikes against this editorial policy and does not match the vocabulary of Mark's predictions exactly, since the verb used is *ἐγείρω* instead of *ἀνίστημι*.²⁸¹ If Matthew, for some reason, had taken the saying from Mark's passion predictions, it remains to be explained why he has changed the verb but left the preposition unchanged. In 16:21, 17:23 and, 20:15 he systematically changed them both.

Why then does Matthew not change the expression here in 27:63? If he is not ready to use the preposition *μετὰ* in the resurrection expression elsewhere, what makes him so tolerant of it here? Even if a satisfactory answer to this challenging question were not found, the phenomenon described above is still puzzling. On a methodological level in historical sciences it is often assumed that an author can tolerate something while he would never invent it. The criteria of embarrassment and dissimilarity, much used in the historical Jesus studies, are based precisely on this methodological assumption. That an author has included something in his or her text means, to state the obvious, that he or she can tolerate it. For a student of the gospels and Jesus' life this creates a challenge. It is often possible to turn, with a little extra labour perhaps, the motive for tolerance into a motive for inventing. But in a book where most of the material is derived from sources we may assume that additions and changes are made intentionally with some purpose behind them. This creates a framework where tolerance and invention can, however vaguely, be separated into two different categories. On these bases it can be argued that *μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἐγείρομαι* in Mt

Paul writes: "εἴτε οὖν ἐγὼ εἶτε ἐκεῖνοι οὕτως κηρύσσομεν καὶ οὕτως ἐπιστεύσατε" The word *ἐκεῖνοι* must refer to the individuals mentioned earlier, which means that all the most important authority figures in the early Christianity proclaimed the same confession. About the confession see especially MOFFITT 2008.

²⁸⁰ So does also Luke see e.g. 9:22, 18:33, 24:7, 24:46.

²⁸¹ Since Matthew uses the verb *ἀνίστημι* three times (12:41, 17:9, 20:19) in the sense of "to rise from the dead", we can assume that he would rather change the preposition than the verb "to be risen".

27:63 is a tolerated expression from the pre-Matthean guard story.²⁸² Had Matthew invented the story a phrase with τῆ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ would be expected.

It has been suggested, however, that this curious tolerance of the preposition μετὰ here is due to Matthew's idea of connecting the prediction of resurrection in 12:40 to this particular saying. To cite Gundry:

Why the μετὰ here, but the temporal dative (so also Luke 9:22; 18:33) where Mark has μετὰ? The reason is that Matthew's Jesus spoke to the Jewish leaders about staying in the realm of the dead three days and three nights. But Jesus rose on the third day. Though the peculiarity of the Jews' method of reckoning time eliminates a necessary contradiction, Matthew suits the two different ways of phrasing the matter to the audience of Pharisees on the one hand (27:63 with 12:40) and to the historical event on the other hand (16:21; 17:23; 20:19).²⁸³

Matthew may have seen a connection between 12:38-42 and the GS, though this is not as self-evident as is sometimes assumed.²⁸⁴ If there was an intentional link between these two episodes it may have taken place

²⁸² Cf. NOLLAND 2005:1237 and SCHWEIZER 1986:341.

²⁸³ GUNDRY 1994:244-245. Elsewhere (p. 583) he writes: "We might have expected "In three days," as in v 40, or "On the third day," as in 16:21, 17:23, 20:19). Instead, "After three days" summarily paraphrases 12:40, according to which "the Son of man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." The other expressions all occurred in private communications to the disciples. So Matthew switches to Mark's "after three days," which he always rejected before, in order to indicate a particular reference to the only prediction of Jesus' resurrection heard by the Jewish leaders (cf. Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34; see also the comments on 12:40)."

²⁸⁴ While the expressions are strikingly similar there seems to be some reason for caution. *Firstly*, a similar expression is also found in 2 Sam 13:16 and 2 Pt 2:20 which shows that it may be a common idiom. *Secondly*, the expression in 12:45 is not redactional but cited *in verbatim* from Q. This means that we are not talking about typical Matthean redactional expression. *Thirdly*, in 12:45 the phrase is on the lips of Jesus and it describes the generation of the day whereas in 27:64 the expression is uttered by the enemies of Jesus and the Jesus movement depicted as πλάνη. Had Matthew wanted to emphasize Jesus' resurrection as an actualized sign of Jonah (as vigorously argued by HOFFMANN 1988) πλάνη should denote what the Pharisees and the high priests and not Jesus' followers were about to do. I am not convinced about "the irony explanation" harboured e.g. by STANTON 1992:82. Irony is often difficult to define and can be loosely suggested to a myriad of contexts. Here I regard the suggestion of irony rather conjectural.

in the form of a slight alteration of source, rather than a straightforward creation of the GS on the basis of Q-based 12:38-42. For our current question (the use of *μετὰ*) this means that the expression *μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἐγείρομαι* may have been derived from the source, while some other details are redactional links to 12:38-42. To establish a sufficient answer to this problem, analysis of the above-cited argument of Gundry for redactional origin of the use of this non-typical resurrection prediction is offered.

It is useful to list the different time expressions concerning Jesus' resurrection in the gospel of Matthew:

- A ἕως τῆς τρίτης ἡμέρας 27:64
- B ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ τῆς γῆς τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ τρεῖς νύκτας 12:40
- C μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἐγείρομαι 27:63
- D τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ 16:21

We can take as a basis the confessional expression D and consequently assume that if Matthew had desired harmonistic general presentation, A, B and C should have corresponded to D. Since D is used redactionally in three contexts, and is similar to the old confession, it is a meaningful starting point.

Gundry argues that in 27:63 Matthew wished to imply that Jesus would be raised *after* the third day in order to harmonise better with 12:40 where the resurrection can be calculated to have taken place on the fourth day (after three days and three nights is on the fourth day or more). This would mean that Matthew saw a tension between D and B. However, there seems to be serious problems with this hypothesis.

First, if we accept that 12:40 is redactional (as most commentators do) it remains to be explained why Matthew created such a contradiction. Why did he not create a saying that - in a way- matched the confessional τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ in the first place? He could have written, for example, that "like Jonah came from the fish's belly τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ so will the son of man". If the LXX Jonah saying was so paradigmatic for Matthew that he did not feel free to alter it in this way, we could expect that he would

have left the Markan (8:31, 9:31, 10:33) μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας untouched in redaction.

Secondly, why does Matthew use the expression ἕως τῆς τρίτης ἡμέρας (until the third day), hinting that (to read the expression in a literal fashion) the guard could be taken off duty before the third night and the fourth day when the resurrection was supposed to take place according to 12:40?²⁸⁵ The explanation, considered plausible by Gundry, that days could be reckoned from the Saturday when the delegation met Pilate, fails to convince. The third day was defined in the discussion between the delegation and Pilate as being the allegedly predicted day, the third from the death. So, Gundry must assume that Matthew was concerned by the possible discrepancy between 12:40 and 27:63 but not between 27:63 and 27:64!

Thirdly, if Matthew had been concerned about the discrepancy between the exact time expressions between 12:40 and 27:63, then why was he not concerned about the corresponding problem between Jesus' words in 12:40 vs. 16:21, 17:23 and 20:19? Was Jesus predicting his own resurrection inaccurately in Matthew's narrative?

It seems to me that Gundry's theory, provided to explain μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας expression in Mt 27:63 as a Matthean creation based on the redactive expression in 12:40, creates more problems than it resolves.

In what follows I present what I consider a better theory to explain the curious use of μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας in 27:63. For Matthew the exact time was not a decisive factor in choosing the expressions describing Jesus' resurrection.²⁸⁶ As far as the theme of "three days" being imbedded into

²⁸⁵ The contradiction noted also by DAVIES & ALLISON 1997:653-654.

²⁸⁶ As put by HAGNER (1993:354): "But this kind of minor discrepancy, the obsession of some modern interpreters, was of no concern to Matthew or to any of the evangelists, nor can it be allowed to affect the discussion of the chronology of the passion and resurrection of Jesus." and FRANCE (2007:491): "The different phrasing of the three day period compared with the "third day" of Matt 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; 27:64 and the "after three days" of Matt 27:63 is due to the LXX wording, but in Semitic inclusive time-reckoning these do not denote different periods as a pedantic Western reading would suggest."

the expression, it was considered, along with the Jewish thinking of the day, to be exact enough to make the point. This means that Matthew did not see any contradiction between the time expressions in 12:40, 16:21, 17:23, 20:19, 27:63, 27:64 and the Passion narrative in general. He was, however, so used to the confessional language when expressing the day of Jesus' resurrection, that he changed Mark's expression *μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας* to the confessional *τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ* three times. The change had nothing to do with the exact timing, but rather was a link to the general confessional language of the Christians. That he did not change it in 27:63 is – admittedly- still challenging. I propose that the expression was found in the source Matthew used, and because it was on the lips of Jesus' enemies, he did not feel it necessary to change it to a confessional form. The theological potential was lighter when the prediction was mediated through a hostile character backing up a lie, than when Jesus the Son of God was saying it himself.

3.3.3. Conclusion

After analyzing the suggested tradition markers we have found that following words and expressions can be regarded as indications of a pre-Matthean GS: *ικανός, ἐκεῖνος ὁ πλάνος, ἔτι ζῶν, ἐποίησαν ὡς ἐδιδάχθησαν* and *μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἐγείρομαι*. When the expressions are listed in the order of occurrence it is evident that they are part of a story, and it is reasonable to attempt to fill the gaps with such words that logic requires.

*ἐκεῖνος ὁ πλάνος..., ἔτι ζῶν...μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας
ἐγείρομαι...ικανός...ἐποίησαν ὡς ἐδιδάχθησαν*

These expressions have sufficient substance around them to form a meaningful narrative. There must have been someone who told another that *ἐκεῖνος ὁ πλάνος* -while still living- said that he would be raised from the dead after three days. This makes the roles of the Pharisees, chief priests and Pilate essential for the narrative. There must also have been someone who did what they were told /taught to do. Consequently the soldiers in the story are also necessary. The word *ικανός* can refer to many things but "much silver" is one meaningful suggestion, and this

leads to an account of bribery. After getting guards posted, the chief priests and Pharisees bribe the soldiers to do what they tell them to do because the deceiver Jesus had stated that he would be resurrected. As seen even in this attempt to reconstruct a minimal pre-Matthean narrative there must have been a story with the same basic elements and plot as in the Matthean GS.

4.0. The Conflict between the Jews and Christ-Believers

4.1. Introduction

It is very likely that both in its Matthean and pre-Matthean forms the GS was born in a setting of conflict. It would be hard to locate the accusations of bribery and theft, together with the Christian claim that “Καὶ διεφθίμισθη ὁ λόγος οὗτος παρὰ Ἰουδαίους μέχρι τῆς σήμερον [ἡμέρας]”, in a period of peaceful co-existence. For this reason two parameters can be used in an attempt to estimate the birth context of the GS. First, there must be a sufficient level of antagonism against “the Jews” and their counter polemic among the Christ-believers to motivate the production of the GS. Secondly, the idea of an empty tomb must have been connected, either implicitly or explicitly, to the proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus. These parameters are *sine quibus non* for the birth of the GS. In this chapter an attempt will be made to find out when the first of these parameters was operative during the early Christian period. This survey is important because of the heavy emphasis on the post-70 “parting of the ways” of Judaism and Christianity amongst New Testament scholarship. Since the majority of the conflicts between Jesus and the Jewish leaders in the gospels are interpreted as reflections of post-70 struggles, it is meaningful to handle the question: “Is the GS a reflection of these struggles as well?”

4.1.1. Social-Scientific Models and Historical Studies

Scientific study of history is always - to some extent - dependant on the reconstructions of situations based on what can be reasonably assumed to have happened; something that can be called the disciplined use of the historical imagination.²⁸⁷ The reasonable assumptions are naturally often reflections of modern experiences as human behaviour of the past is defined with the help of analogies. In some cases the analogies are rather

²⁸⁷ ALEXANDER 1998:71.

immune to criticism especially when based on phenomena, which are only loosely dependant on cultural specificities.²⁸⁸ As we move to human behaviour, however, or to the meaning of given signals, cultural codes etc. subjectivity increases.²⁸⁹ In order to avoid anachronisms students of ancient history have begun to utilize social-scientific models and theories.²⁹⁰ With proper social-scientific tools the meanings, reactions and causalities in a given historical description may be better understood and contextualized without reading too much modern experience into the events of the past.²⁹¹ While social-scientific studies have greatly enriched the research into early Christianity, the application of the modern (sometimes disputable) theories to the past has received its share of criticism.²⁹² It has been repeatedly noted that gaps in historical knowledge should not be filled with social-scientific models.²⁹³ The models may also be disputable and grossly simplifying when applied to the study of a historical phenomenon.²⁹⁴ Sometimes a student may be so enticed by a social-scientific model that the source material seems to be

²⁸⁸ See for example the approximation of the agricultural productivity in STEGEMANN& STEGEMANN 1999:42-44.

²⁸⁹ For an insightful review of the complexity in defining the social location of a historical object see ROHRBAUGH 1987.

²⁹⁰ MALINA (1982:240): "In sum, social science methods can offer biblical interpretation adequate sophistication in determining and articulating the social systems behind the texts under investigation. Instead of spelling out meanings on an intuitive basis, often in terms of sophisticated ethnocentrism, social science methods can put some testable control on meanings thus intuited as well as provide a fruitful framework for further study." See also GAGER 1982, TIDBALL 1985.

²⁹¹ MALINA (1996:20): "...the social science approach to biblical interpretation is best suited to the task of reading the biblical books with a view to understanding the meanings communicated by their authors. Such a scenario model of reading might be called the social context approach."

²⁹² Some criticism is rather strongly motivated by ideological concerns. See e.g. CAULLEY 1995. The methods are outrightly rejected by RODD (1981) but (as he seems to note himself) his criticism would make all historical study rather difficult. He correctly doubts the meaningfulness of testing a hypothesis with historical data but I think that the more descriptive kind of function for a social-scientific model is immune to this criticism. For balanced reviews of the sociology in the Biblical studies see EDWARDS 1983, OSIEK 1989, HOLMBERG 1990, MULLHOLLAND 1991, COLEMAN 1999 and CRAFTERT 2002:22-25. A good defence for the recently much applied "Mediterranean model" is given by CROOK 2007.

²⁹³ RODD 1981, HOLMBERG 1990.

²⁹⁴ See e.g. HOLLENBACH's (1982) way of utilizing a simplistic and one-sided theory of demonic possession. About the possession theories see e.g. BODDY 1994.

chosen on the basis of the criterion of its suitability for the model applied.²⁹⁵

In an attempt to avoid the fallacies listed above we try to analyze the development of the conflict between Jesus' followers and the Jewish leaders mostly with the help of explicit descriptions of conflicts in existing sources, and by applying a social-scientific approach to these texts. There is not one single dominating model to cover the whole conflict, but rather analogical phenomena are used as explanatory tools to elucidate the ancient conflict in its context.²⁹⁶ While the lion's share of sociological analyses in the field of New Testament studies has concerned the communities behind the gospels, they are not of primary concern here. Consequently no attempt is made to read elaborate community histories through the gospel texts. Instead, as already noted, we concentrate on the episodes in the life of the historical Jesus and his disciples moving to the world of the Early Christians only when the source explicitly claims to be about them.

When the conflict at hand is studied I find it useful to divide sources into three classes: i) Description of a conflict e.g. Mk 2:1-3:6. ii) Text laden with explicit conflict potential e.g. Mt 5:20 and iii) Material imbedded with implicit conflict potential which is not necessary aggressive or hostile against any outgroup per se, but which can be interpreted as hostile within a common symbol universe e.g. John 3:16.²⁹⁷ In this study we mostly concentrate on the first category i.e. on the explicit conflict descriptions. Since the tradition historical process of gospel pericopes is complex and consequently the historicity of a given conflict pericope cannot be taken for granted, we try to keep the focus on those stories which can - with sufficient reason - be attached to the life of the historical

²⁹⁵ The case in point is VAN AARDE's (2002) attempt to explain the identity of Jesus as a reflection of poor relationship with his father. But see MILLER (1997:31-45) for poignant criticism of the idea.

²⁹⁶ Thus we try to avoid the fallacy of GAGER (1975) who tried to explain the birth of Christianity with the help of modified version of Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance. For criticism of Gager see e.g. RODD 1981 and MALINA 1986.

²⁹⁷ While the tone of the passage is seemingly positive, it is possible to interpret it in a most exclusive way, i.e. "if you do not believe in him (be within our group) you will perish".

Jesus.

When it comes to the history of Early Christianity we lean heavily on the Book of Acts and the Pauline epistles since the former is meant to be understood as a description of the time period 30-60 A.D. and the latter were written within that particular time period, and include some explicit conflict descriptions and other relevant information concerning the conflicts.²⁹⁸

4.1.2. Diachronic Nature of a Conflict

The nature of a conflict between two groups is usually a complex phenomenon caused by and resulting in different perceptions and interpretations of reality. This very complexity of the conflict dynamics challenges the student to analyze numerous factors, which are operative in any particular conflict.²⁹⁹ In a rough division into synchronic and diachronic features of the conflict at hand, it is the latter that oftentimes tends to be ignored. This is remarkable since the diachronic nature of the conflict has received much attention in recent conflict sociological research. This is seen e.g. in the emphasis on the processes which start from the forming of the ingroup and which finally leads to conflicts with outgroups.³⁰⁰ The conflict may be analyzed as a cumulative process where past (as a memory) is in interactive relationship with the present.³⁰¹ This perspective is, I believe, fruitful for the study of the

²⁹⁸ As for the hesitancy of some to use Acts as a source it is useful to read the poignant comment by WEDDERBURN (2002:78): "For, however much we may stress that the letters of Paul are primary sources and that the Acts does not enjoy the same status, sooner or later most histories of earliest Christianity come back, however tentatively, to this source and nevertheless make some use of it, as indeed they must: not only is the only other alternative, the Pauline letters, no purely objective source of information, but the information which they provide is fragmentary in the extreme and offers next to no information about much of the earliest period of the rise of Christianity."

²⁹⁹ E.g. according to KOROSTELINA (2007: 125-147) the factors influencing conflict dynamics are 1) intergroup prejudice, 2) readiness for conflict, 3) relative deprivation, 4) majority-minority position and conflict intentions, 5) intergroup boundaries, 6) outgroup threat, 7) security dilemma and 8) ingroup support.

³⁰⁰ See BREWER 2001:2-41.

³⁰¹ As stated poignantly by MCGARTY (2002:27): "The long-term knowledge about some group can be expected to be accumulated from a wide variety of sources. This will

conflict creating the context for the tradition history of the GS. In order to elucidate the influence of diachronic continuum on the conflict we approach the conflict with three social-scientific considerations: i) the formation of a group and its identity, ii) the concept of the symbolic universe and iii) the concept of social memory. Firstly we present these concepts in brief, and then apply them to the study of the conflict history at hand.

Group Formation, Identity and Cognitive Dissonance

Groups are formed through different identifiable phases and the identity of the group develops simultaneously. As the identity of the group develops, the common interpretational frameworks are similarly built. New perceptions are interpreted accordingly and become part of the identity as a result of a dialectical or spiral process. When a member of the group has paid a significant relative price for his or her group membership it is more likely that he or she will interpret perceptions positively from the viewpoint of the group. The cognitive dissonance brought forth by new *cognitios* or perceptions is thus likely to be solved with a bias towards confirmation of the group's prevailing thinking and behavioural models.³⁰² One way of solving this dissonance is to create stereotypes of hostile outgroups and thereby categorize them. The formation of stereotypes also strengthens the group cohesion by increasing the intragroup attraction.³⁰³ Furthermore, exaggerated characterizations of the ingroup's superiority and the outgroup's inferiority are bound to increase tension between the groups when the outgroup gets to know the accentuated claims. However, as often is the case with social-scientific theories, ingroup favouritism (and thus also discrimination against the outgroup) is not an automatic outcome of intergroup categorizations.³⁰⁴

include a myriad of previous interactions which, or reactions to, members of that group which may no longer be available to conscious recall (and perhaps never were perceived at a more than subliminal level in the first place) but which retain some trace in memory. At particular times that long-term knowledge will be instantiated in current perceptions of a group or of group members."

³⁰² About perceptual bias as "accentuation" see HOGG & ABRAMS 1990:69-73, REYNOLDS & TURNER 2001:170 and also PLATOW & HUNTER 2001:202-203. For a good survey of studies concerning so called In-Group bias see BREWER 1979.

³⁰³ About the formation of stereotypes see especially MCGARTY 2002.

³⁰⁴ According to REYNOLDS & TURNER (2001:166) ingroup favouritism is functionally

The stereotype formation process has been divided into explanation and justification.³⁰⁵ The latter in particular must happen within a meaningful construction of reality and with understandable rhetoric i.e. within the shared symbolic universe. Actual physical conflict events naturally deepen the gap and conflict between the groups. An interpreted conflict becomes part of the collective memory, and thus confirms the credibility of prevailing negative stereotypes. These conflicts also result in conflict memories which are an important part of the group's existential identity since they both form and justify the intergroup boundaries and provide meaning for the group's very existence. It is also in this respect remarkable that a shared fate of failure or victimisation may greatly elevate group cohesion.³⁰⁶ Thus the experience of a threat or of aggression from the outside, and later the memory of it, are likely to strengthen the group identity. The first occasion of violence, especially if it resulted in the killing of an ingroup member, regularly intensifies the conflict and is likely to remain in the collective memory for some time to come.³⁰⁷ Consequently, the phenomenon of social memory or collective remembrance is an essential part of conflict history.

The Symbolic Universe

The abovementioned interpretational framework is closely connected to the symbolic universe of the group.³⁰⁸ Claims, accusations, deeds, symbols etc. get their ultimate meaning within the interpretational framework. The legitimation of identity claims and categorization of an outgroup must be rooted into the symbolic universe, the highest level of legitimation of the social reality that human beings create.³⁰⁹ The symbolic universe is present when:

dependent on "(a) whether participants define themselves in terms of the ingroup, (b) whether the outgroup is a relevant comparison group in the context of interest, and (c) the extent to which the comparative dimension (i.e., points symbolizing money) is important and relevant to the intergroup comparison.

³⁰⁵ MCGARTY 2002:16.

³⁰⁶ So e.g. HOGG 1990:104 and BREWER 1979:315.

³⁰⁷ See BAR-TAL 2003.

³⁰⁸ BERGER & LUCKMANN 1966. See RICHES 1996b:384-387,

³⁰⁹ BERGER & LUCKMANN 1966:95. See also NDWANDWE (2000:16-23) and LUOMANEN (2007:201-208) for the use of the theory in New Testament studies.

all the sectors of the institutional order are integrated in an all-embracing frame of reference, which now constitutes a universe in the literal sense of the word, because *all* human experience can now be conceived of as taking place *within* it. The symbolic universe is conceived of as the matrix of *all* socially objectivated and subjectively real meanings; the entire historic society and the entire biography of the individual are seen as events taking place *within* this universe.³¹⁰

Thus conflict rhetoric is rooted in the symbolic universe, which also provides the essential basis for stereotypes, categorizing and legitimation of one's own role and behaviour. Members of the group learn to define their identity with the help of these roles, as well as to define and understand the intergroup boundaries. Berger and Luckmann's famous theory also includes the idea of "experts" who maintain the symbolic universe and "claim to know the ultimate significance of what everybody knows and does".³¹¹ The religious and political power of the social entity, which shares the common symbolic universe, is - to a great extent- in the hands of these experts, especially within a society where religion and ethnic identity are more or less one and the same. Consequently, there is significant conflict potential imbedded in the competitive expertise claim of someone operating within the same symbolic universe but who threatens the position of the older "status quo" experts. The expertise claim may be either explicit or implicit.

Social Memory

A group's identity is greatly influenced by the shared memories of its members.³¹² Memories of the interaction between the ingroup and outgroups are especially relevant when defining the *raison d'être* of the

³¹⁰ BERGER & LUCKMANN 1966:96.

³¹¹ BERGER & LUCKMANN 1966:117.

³¹² See KIRK 2005:4-5. See also THATCHER & KIRK (2005:32): "A group's "social memory" is the constant, creative negotiation of commemorated pasts and opened presents." For the further reflection of social memory applied to the biblical studies see BYRSKOG 2006. However, it should be noted that in our study the concept of social memory is used primarily in analysing those elements which have to do with the conflict mentality.

group. The role of social memory³¹³ has recently been strongly emphasized in the sociological study of conflicts. The groups remember and use their past to define their identity in a dialectical process where the past influences the present and is also modified (on the memory level) by the present.³¹⁴ The social memory theories in conflict dynamics underline the continuous nature of a conflict.³¹⁵ An intergroup conflict is often a process where explicit outbursts are attached to the memories of past conflicts. The ingroup identity is partly formed as a reflection on the outgroups' aggressions in the past, and as a result of processing these experiences.

4.2. The Group Formation of the Twelve

4.2.1. The Continuing Influence of the Group of the Twelve

The role of the inner group of the twelve around Jesus of Nazareth creates the basis for our approach.³¹⁶ This inner group, and particularly its leading members, Peter, James and John, influenced the formation of Early Christianity during the first decades. Should we trust the old tradition Peter was active until the mid-60s when he allegedly died in Rome.³¹⁷ James was killed in the beginning of the 40s, and when Paul writes the letter to the Galatians in the late 40s or in the 50s he assumes the position of the pillars (2:9) as a self-evident fact. The concept of the twelve was part of the early confession (1. Cor 15:4). The status of the Jerusalem church was central at least up to the 50s as we can reason from 1. Cor 16. This makes the role of the twelve a factor not to be ignored in

³¹³ MISZTAL (2003:11): "Memory is social because every memory exists through its relation with what has been shared with others: language, symbols, events, and social and cultural contexts."

³¹⁴ MISZTAL (2003:14): "...it can be said that the reconstruction of the past always depends on presentday identities and contexts."

³¹⁵ About the somewhat hard to define nature of the social memory see e.g. OLICK & ROBBINS 1998.

³¹⁶ The historicity of the twelve is ably defended in MEIER 2001:125-197.

³¹⁷ See BOCKMUEHL 2004.

the formation of Christianity during its first decades.³¹⁸ Against this background it is obvious why we, as students of Early Christian history, should be interested in the formation of this group's self-identity. The bridge between pre-Easter and post-Easter dynamics can be crystallized as follows:

- a) In the spring A.D. 30 the group already had a strong identity with more or less clear awareness of intergroup boundaries, with stereotyping categories of outgroups and identity defining and confirming social memories probably interpreted with a strong in-group bias. Thus the development of the relationship between the early Christians in Jerusalem and the Jewish leaders after the Easter A.D. 30 did not start without a pre-history.
- b) The conflict stories were told to the new arrivals of the communities as part of the traditions. The "Jesus period" was the basis of the twelve's status and the very existence of four canonical gospels, all telling about that period, demonstrates the significance of the sacred past in the Christian communities in the second half of the first century.

4.2.2. Group and Identity

The identity of Jesus' closest followers (the twelve) as members of a group as well as their more collective group identity most probably developed rather quickly after the group members were called to follow Jesus.³¹⁹ Their social status changed after this decision.³²⁰ This means that they probably experienced some post-decisional cognitive dissonance when attempting to motivate the choice made. The appreciation of a new membership in a group is bound to be rather strong in this sort of

³¹⁸ See also EVANS 2008:216.

³¹⁹ A short but well-informed and insightful description of the small group formation and its established phases in Jesus' and his disciples' life is given by MALINA 2002:11-15. The phases are forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. About the recruitment to the Jesus Movement see DULING 2002.

³²⁰ See OPORTO GUIJARRO (2002a) for a good description of a family conflict resulted in joining the Jesus movement.

situation. This in turn actualizes in the strong group cohesion and in-group bias concerning the evaluation of intergroup conflicts.

Jesus gave his disciples a religious status and identity e.g. by sending them to preach the kingdom of God and teaching them to perform exorcisms and healings.³²¹ While the scope of this pre-Easter mission is far from clear it is nonetheless obvious that the twelve practically adopted to some extent a similar role as John the Baptist and Jesus, i.e. a marginal religious figure acting against, or at least independently from, the prevailing religious hierarchy. Even if the activity of the disciples in this role was not as significant as that of Jesus and John in the eyes of the opponents, it must have strengthened the identity of the group of twelve. It is also very likely that the disciples faced the same critical charges as Jesus when they performed miracles and exorcism and imitated the mission of Jesus. The formation of intergroup boundaries in this case can be divided into two: a) Jesus' conflict with the religious leaders which naturally greatly affected his disciples as well and b) the conflict resulting from the group's natural tendency to create a meaningful reason for its existence and use the categorization of the outgroups for this purpose.

We will first briefly reconstruct the central elements of the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders, utilizing the concept of the symbolic universe to understand the essence of the conflict better. Thereafter we move to the analysis of three conflict traditions; first pondering the relationship of social memory and conflict traditions and then going through these events one by one. The aim of this attempt is to create a meaningful reconstruction of the conflict between Jesus' group and the religious leaders in Galilee and elucidate the conflict potential in the group's collective memory and interpretational in-group bias.

³²¹ While the details of this mission are hard to reconstruct, it is rather probable that Jesus did send forth the disciples during his ministry. So e.g. NOLLAND 1993:548, MARSHALL 1978:350 and GUELICH 1989:320. The mission idea is multiply attested and harmonious with the scene in Mk 9:1-29 where the disciples could not cast a demon. This inability of the disciples meets the criterion of embarrassment and thus has a good claim of authenticity. Now, if the disciples attempted to exorcize it indicates some sort of independent activity.

4.2.3. Jesus against the Religious Leaders

The Symbolic Universe in the Conflict

The symbolic universe defines or sets the boundaries for the roles of religious agents since the claims need to be understandable for the one making a claim as well as for those hearing it. Thus Jesus' legitimation had to take place within the worldview of Galilean Jews and was thus keenly attached to the Scriptures and to the way people interpreted them. Cromhout has persuasively argued that so called covenantal nomism can be regarded as a meaningful symbolic universe and ethnic descriptor for Israelites of the Second temple Judaism.³²² Consequently, the religious identity was rooted in the idea of election of Israel, Torah, and in the continuum from events of past to the present moment.

The historicity of the conflict between Jesus and religious leaders in Galilee is well attested in the sources.³²³ According to the Synoptic gospels the primary opponents in the Galilean period were the Pharisees and the Scribes. The actual attitudes of these groups in general are not readily traced from the traditions since the in-group bias in perception and experiencing the actual conflict event, in remembering it, as well as in its later tradition history have all possibly influenced the accuracy of any given story as it is written in the gospels.³²⁴ Nonetheless, Jesus was, did, or said something that attracted opposition from among the leaders, thus resulting in conflict both between himself and these leaders and between them and his followers. To grasp the essence of this conflict better we attempt to trace Jesus' claims and the way he legitimated these claims.

Jesus' central idea seems to have been that the kingdom of God was breaking in. The idea was rooted in the symbolic universe of the Israelites who were expecting Jahve's intervention to the fate of his

³²² See CROMHOUT 2007.

³²³ The conflict is actual e.g. in M, L, Mk, Q and John (multiple attestation). Some sayings (meeting the criterion of embarrassment) are irreducibly connected to the conflict like Beelzebub accusation in Mt 9:32/12:24, Mk 3:22 and Lk 11:15.

³²⁴ E.g. when it comes to the Pharisees the general attitude toward them is negative but there are also neutral descriptions and even positive (Lk 13:31-35).

people.³²⁵ It is certainly important that the question Jesus raised was not “is the kingdom of God arriving?” but rather “is this the arrival?”. The Pharisees and scribes, experts in the symbolic universe, were forced to take a stand concerning Jesus’ proclamation. In many respect Jesus resembled the Pharisees, a fact that has even led some scholars to label him as a Pharisee.³²⁶ He was called to the house of a Pharisee and was warned by a friendly Pharisee about the murderous intentions of Herod.³²⁷ One indication of Jesus qualifying among the Pharisees is that his brother James was apparently quite popular among this religious party.³²⁸ Since they both shared the same religious home this “quasi-pharisaism” of Jesus would be quite understandable. However, Jesus socialized with the lower religious stratum, i.e. with people called sinners and publicans in a striking contrast with the Pharisees. Even if Jesus’ agenda had not included a direct attack or criticism against the Pharisees to begin with, he ignored their role as the experts of the symbolic universe i.e. as the authoritative interpreters of Torah and God’s will. Thus, much in the way as his mentor John the Baptist, Jesus at least indirectly rejected the Pharisaic halakha as the way of Jahve. This indirect attack against the prevailing religious system is also seen in Jesus’ indifference towards the covenant markers.³²⁹

³²⁵ We do not have to go into details in reconstructing these expectations. Suffice it to say that the idea of God’s intervention was harmonious with the symbolic universe and thus meaningful in the minds of Jesus’ audience. HOLMÉN (2004:26-27): “Further, the actualization of the Jeremian (and Ezekielian) vision of the inner knowledge of God’s will would suggest that the visions of the great restoration of Israel, put forward by the major prophet books, were in general of importance to Jesus. Indeed, the actualization implies that he saw his mission as coinciding with the eschatological visions becoming reality. What comes as most intriguing is, however, the idea that the renewal of human being and his or her relationship to God, presupposed by the Jeremian (and Ezekielian) vision, is already taking place somehow. It is difficult to escape the impression that to Jesus this must have entailed major revisions as to what the religion had formerly thought of arranging the relationship.”

³²⁶ So e.g. PHIPPS 1977, BERGER 1988 and MACCOBY 2003.

³²⁷ See Lk 7:36-50, 13:31-35. See also John 3:1-2 where Nicodemus, a Pharisee, is giving a positive appraisal about Jesus.

³²⁸ It is interesting that those complaining about James’ execution were probably Pharisees according to Josephus.

³²⁹ See HOLMÉN 2001 and more briefly HOLMÉN 2004.

The Miracle as Legitimation

It is practically impossible to reconstruct the conflict scene without giving due heed to the miracles Jesus allegedly performed. That Jesus performed deeds interpreted as miracles and exorcisms by both friends and foes is generally considered to be a fact beyond reasonable doubt. Miracles and exorcisms of this magnitude were apparently rather rare in 1st century Judaism as Eve has convincingly demonstrated having gone through the Jewish literature of that period.³³⁰ This does not mean that miracles or exorcisms would have been unheard of in the Palestinian context in the 1st century.³³¹ The phenomena regarded as “supernatural” or “magical” in the eyes of a modern student of history must have been rather common at that time. But it is evident that Jesus of Nazareth operated exceptionally successfully within this realm.³³² A good point of comparison is the story told by Josephus about the famous exorcist Eleazar who put up an exorcism show in front of the emperor. The highly appreciated ability was to expel a demon out of a man and command it to break a pot as a sign of its exit.³³³ If an exorcism of this magnitude was significant enough to attract such an audience, it is readily understandable that Jesus who, according to the Synoptic tradition performed this sort of things quite often, was able to raise astonishment. Josephus’ interpretation of the event is indicative. Because of Eleazar’s exorcism *all men may know the vastness of Solomon’s abilities, and how he was beloved of God.*³³⁴ If the exorcisms performed by Jesus were in the same class as that of Eleazar it is understandable that his abilities were admired by the people and questions about his relationship with Jahve would have been asked.

There was a role for an exceptional miracle-maker in the Jewish symbolic universe, namely that of a prophet.³³⁵ For example the so-called sign

³³⁰ See EVE 2002. He criticizes VERMES (1973) who compared Jesus to such Jewish miracle-makers as Hanina ben-Dosa and Honi the Circle-drawer. Also MEIER (1994:581-588) and WITHERINGTON (1995b:108-112) have presented same kind of criticism.

³³¹ See e.g. Q 11:19, Acts 19:13.

³³² About the so called Mediterranean mindset concerning the miraculous see PILCSH (2002) who applies the concept of Altered State of Consciousness to the realm here referred to as “miraculous”.

³³³ *Jos. Ant.* 8.5.1.

³³⁴ *Jos. Ant.* 8.5.1.

³³⁵ For a good survey of the expectations of a miracle-maker of OT prophets’ class see

prophets were able to attract relatively large followings by claiming to give a sign. This is indicative of a more general expectation of the prophet legitimated by signs. The great value of signs is also shown by Paul, who crystallized the Jewish religious state of mind by stating that Ἰουδαῖοι σημεῖα αἰτοῦσιν (1Cor 1:22). Whether Jesus explicitly defined his role in the coming of the kingdom of God or not, it is evident that the miracles themselves raised this sort of speculation among the crowds. While exact analyses of the crowd's motives for coming to see Jesus is not possible, we may suppose that there were both political/religious reasons and purely individualistic needs including searching for a cure for a disease.

De-legitimizing Jesus

The healings and exorcisms as such were hardly a problem for the religious authorities in Galilee.³³⁶ The great attraction Jesus' miracles gained, however, made his way of breaking the prevailing religious codes challenging for the Pharisees and scribes whose expertise in the symbolic universe was threatened by the halakha of Jesus. If they were not willing to join Jesus, the remaining option for them was to meaningfully delegitimize Jesus within the symbolic universe. The most viable way of doing this was to categorize Jesus with labels rooted in Torah. McKnight has provided a helpful survey of how this characterization is reflected in the Synoptic tradition.³³⁷ Some categories

KOSKENNIEMI 2005.

³³⁶ GRABBE (2000:251): "Thus, practices that we today might label as magical represented a perfectly respectable craft, such as healing and exorcism. Exorcism and control of the spirit world were acceptable in Jewish society and even traced back to Solomon (Josephus, Ant. 8.2.5 §§45– 49; cf. the Testament of Solomon); such skills were a common feature of the miracle worker. Healing and exorcism were closely associated since it was thought that many diseases were the result of demonic possession. Jews had a reputation as exorcists."

³³⁷ MCKNIGHT2003:73-76. McKnight's central thesis that Jesus was treated as Mamzer (a person born outside wedlock or in an incestuous relationship) has much to recommend itself. So also EVANS 2001. On the other hand, the idea has been criticized by MCGRATH 2007. For a definition of mamzer see e.g. BAR-ILAN 2000. A somewhat similar (to McKnight's thesis) idea of Jesus being despised mamzer, has been suggested by CHILTON 2000 (and 2001) but criticized e.g. by QUARLES 2004. That Jesus was called "son of Mary" (Mk 6:3) may or may not indicate mamzer-status. While McKnight is in many respect convincing it is useful to read MCHARVEY (1973) and ILAN (1992) for the phenomenon of "neutral" use of a metronyme. When it comes to the epithet "glutton and

used against him were a false prophet, deceiver, magician³³⁸ glutton and drunkard. The sins this figure is guilty of are e.g. being in allegiance with Satan thereby performing sorcery and magic, uttering blasphemous words against Jahve and otherwise breaking the Law. What is important to notice is that the law-breaking as such did not necessary lead to the categorization of Jesus as a false prophet or deceiver. Instead, due to the competitive situation, the categorization may have led Jesus' opponents to search for confirmation for their aprioristical judgement. The delegitimizing dynamics presented here are well demonstrated in the conflict scene of John 9:16: ἔλεγον οὖν ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων τινές, Οὐκ ἔστιν οὗτος παρὰ θεοῦ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ὅτι τὸ σάββατον οὐ τηρεῖ. The categorization is made and the breaking of the Law (τὸ σάββατον οὐ τηρεῖ) provided as a confirmation. The miracle of Jesus is not questioned as such, but its origin and the categorization is based on "a symptom" of a false prophet i.e. the breaking of the Law.

Jesus' Defence

It is probable that de-legitimizing Jesus by categorizing him as a false prophet was not entirely successful, not least due to the magnitude of his miracles. The concept of a greater miracle or a better ability to operate with the things of transcendental realm was not unfamiliar to the ancients.³³⁹ If we agree with Meier in regarding the healing of the blind Bartimaeus as historical, the words of a healed man in John 9:32³⁴⁰ ἐκ τοῦ

drunkard" I prefer McKnight's interpretation as the one rebelling against his parent from the suggestion of MARSHALL (2005) according to which this reflected Jesus being an uninvited guest in the parties.

³³⁸ While the term as such does not appear in the Gospels it was rather common to use this term synonymously and together with the term πλάνοσ, deceiver which is the term used of Jesus in Mt 27:53. For a good presentation of the terms see STANTON 2004:127-147.

³³⁹ See e.g. Ex 8:18-19, 1 King 18:19-40, Jn 9:32, Acts 8:9-13.

³⁴⁰ Whether the story is based on a historical event is not of primary concern here. As a narrative it provides a plausible scene of how the opponents of Jesus "must react". But, PAINTER (1986:33): "No miracles of the giving of sight to the blind are known to us in the Old Testament but the restoration of sight to the blind seems to have been an aspect of messianic expectation (Isa. 29.18; 35.5; 42.7; 61.1-2; see Mt 11.5 = Lk. 7.22; Lk. 4.18). While it is possible that the expectation gave rise to stories of the healing of the blind by Jesus, the widespread attestation of this activity in the gospel tradition, and the absence of messianic overtones from many of these stories, suggest that some, at least, are derived from the healing ministry of Jesus (see Mk 8.22-26; 10.46-52). Thus the evidence that the

αἰῶνος οὐκ ἠκούσθη ὅτι ἠνέωξέν τις ὀφθαλμοὺς τυφλοῦ γεγεννημένου: εἰ μὴ ἦν οὗτος παρὰ θεοῦ, οὐκ ἠδύνατο ποιεῖν οὐδέν are indicative of the dissonance as it raged in the minds of many.³⁴¹ Due to the miracles there was not an immediate need for a defensive counterargument on Jesus' part. However, since Jesus was teacher as well as a healer, it is logical to assume that he categorized the miracles within the prevailing symbolic universe, thus linking them to the arrival of the Kingdom of God.³⁴² This also worked as an implicit counterargument to the above-mentioned accusations. If the miracles were empowered by God, Jesus could not have been God's enemy. According to a well-attested saying Jesus also applied a somewhat more straightforward strategy in defending his mission. As a defence against the accusation of being in allegiance with Beelzebub, Jesus refers to the exorcism of other Jews (Lk 11:19) and to the magnitude of his exorcisms by stating (11:20) εἰ δὲ ἐν δακτύλῳ θεοῦ [ἐγὼ] ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, ἄρα ἔφθασεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.³⁴³ The background of Jesus' words is Exod 8:12-15 where the magnitude of the plagues as

evangelist made use of a traditional miracle story in John 9 allows for the possibility that the tradition might go back to the healing ministry of Jesus.

³⁴¹ See especially MEIER 1994:686-690. The primary reasons for considering this as a history-based tradition are I) the geographical details match well with the Palestinian context, ii) the mention of the name is rare in miracle traditions (about this see esp. BAUCKHAM 2006:39-66) iii) the term Ἰὲ Δαυὶδ is quite likely a reference to Solomon-like exorcist/healer figure. See DULING 1975 and CHILTON (1982) who is criticized by FRANCE (2002:423) for seeing Solomon as a healer instead of an exorcist. This fails to convince since e.g. Josephus emphasizes Solomon's healing skills. See CHARLESWORTH 1995. ROBBINS (1973:234) argues that the "son of David" is a Christological addition, but the term appears only here in the whole Gospel which weakens remarkably Robbins' argument. See also ACHTEMEIER 1978:118-119. iv) The Aramaic "Rabbouni" is likely a sign of primitive formulation (DUNN 2003a:643), v) the concluding note καὶ ἠκολούθει αὐτῷ ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ (10:52) may indicate that Bartimaeus became a disciple whose testimony was known in the early Christian communities in Palestine. For arguments for historicity see also JOHNSON 1978 and EVANS 2001:126-135.

³⁴² THEISSEN & MERZ (2001:320): "Die Schrift vermittelt Kenntnis von Gottes eschatologischem Handeln, das Jesus in der Gegenwart als erfüllt erfährt und mit ihrer Hilfe interpretieren kann: So deutet er etwa die durch ihn geschehenden Wunder als Erfüllung prophetischer Aussagen über die Heilzeit (Mt 114f Q). Möglicherweise trifft die Darstellung von Lk 4,18-21, nach der Jesus beanspruchte, die Verheissung von Jes 61,1f zu erfüllen ebenfalls sein Selbstverständnis."

³⁴³ For a detailed analysis of the authenticity of Lk 11:20 see MEIER 1994:407-423. The originality of Matt 12:28 "spirit of God" is argued e.g. by EMMRICH 2000:270-273.

miracles exceeds those of the Egyptian magicians finally leading them to admit that “this is the finger of God”.

4.2.4. Social Memory and the Conflict

The role of Jesus and his conflicts with the religious leaders were surely influential when the group identity of the disciples was being formed. It is evident that when Jesus was labelled as a false prophet and deceiver the same shadow covered the disciples as well. However, the authenticity of Jesus’ polemical sayings and deeds are often under dispute, and a detailed analysis of all these conflict stories would require more than what is reasonable within the framework of the current study. Suffice is to note the general nature of the attack against Jesus and its effect on the disciples as we have attempted to do above. Nonetheless, there are conflict stories in the Synoptic tradition where the disciples are the direct targets of the criticism. The historicity of these conflict stories is often challenged as well, and the disciples have been seen as some sort of symbol of the later Christians; the conflict pericopes echoing the *Sitz im Leben Urgemeinde* instead of that of Jesus. Setzer agrees with Bultmann in presuming axiomatically that a disciple in conflict is always actually a later Christian in conflict.³⁴⁴ While the identification of the Christians with the disciples of gospel narratives may be a reasonable assumption, it is questionable to give it an axiomatic status.³⁴⁵ Firstly, we hardly possess any evidence of a disciple definitively presenting later communal problems, which makes the approach rather speculative. Secondly, some important themes, which were actual in the lives of the early Christians, are astonishingly lacking in the synoptic material. If these major halakhic questions are not handled by creating stories of the disciples in conflict, it might not be as self-evident that the quarrels of minor details were. Thirdly, the documents as they stand claim to describe the past and seem rather consistently to carry the impression of the pre-Easter situation as Lemcio has, rather convincingly to my mind, demonstrated.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁴ SETZER 1994:28.

³⁴⁵ About the problems of “mirror-reading” the gospels see earlier footnote 211.

³⁴⁶ See LEMCIO 1991.

As already noted, the early group formation is often overlooked when a community situation is projected as a motivator for a given text. Numerous pericopes often believed to reflect problems occurring in a community rather easily find an “alternative homeland” in the pre-Easter collective life of Jesus’ disciples.³⁴⁷ The group of the disciples had its identity and shared history already in the pre-Easter setting. While we should not change the axiom to the opposite and aprioristically label everything as historical, it is meaningful to critically analyze the plausibility of the scene described and the possible reasons for remembering it. The latter phenomenon can, I believe, be better understood with insights from social psychology and sociology where the concept of social memory has been intensively studied.

Much emphasis has been laid on the didactic function of Jesus traditions within the traditional form-critical approach. That they were used as such is beyond reasonable doubt, but nonetheless other dimensions should not be forgotten either.³⁴⁸ An emotionally intense situation is readily remembered and these situations are later handled by talking about them and sharing the experience with the peers.³⁴⁹ One emotionally intense factor in the social memory of a conflict history is the influence of a humiliating experience on subsequent behaviour and social memory. The emotional trauma caused by humiliation has, in many cases, been shown to be severe.³⁵⁰ While being all but a global human phenomenon, humiliation must be defined within specific cultural parameters, i.e. within the framework of honour and shame codes of a given culture. The humiliation leads to an intense negative emotional experience, which is very likely shared later with peers, and thus it easily becomes a part of the social memory of a group. This could

³⁴⁷ Is there any group where for example the story about the disciples asking who is the greatest among them would not be reflective of the *Sitz im Leben*?

³⁴⁸ Since Matthew (28:20) ends his gospel with Jesus saying διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν it is logical to assume that these commandments are found in the document just being finished. Another example of Jesus’ traditions in didactic use is in 1. Cor 7. Although it would be misleading to speak about a consensus there are also numerous studies suggesting that Jesus traditions are echoed in the Pauline Corpus.

³⁴⁹ As put by PENNEBAKER (1997:ix): “Both laboratory and real world investigations have long demonstrated that it is difficult, if not impossible, to experience intense emotions without sharing them with others.” See also LIU & LASZLO 2007.

³⁵⁰ See LINDNER 2001.

explain why some seemingly rather trivial disputes including the disciples have found their way into the common traditions. The motive for telling and retelling the stories about these humiliations is not necessarily any current community situation, but stems from the original need to share the emotionally strong experience with others. After being told repeatedly in the community a humiliation story becomes a part of common traditions, which are remembered for their own sake.

Another relevant phenomenon is victimisation, where a group interprets a conflict so that the ingroup is an innocent victim and the outgroup the aggressor. Social memories about the victimisation of the ingroup by an outgroup are seen in numerous social processes.³⁵¹ It is important in confirming the disciples' status as those persecuted by the enemies of God in the same way as the prophets of the past.³⁵² Victimisation in that context enabled their identification with the prophets who were victimized as well. While the persecution hardly resulted in significant physical aggression in the pre-Easter setting, the humiliating accusations from the religious leaders may have been experienced as an unjust attack.

In what follows we analyze three synoptic descriptions where the abovementioned dynamics is operational, and the disciples are criticized by the religious authorities in Galilee.³⁵³ Thereafter we move from Galilee to Jerusalem where the conflict escalates. The procedure is common in historical Jesus studies. We try to establish probable authentic descriptions and bridge these descriptions using social-scientific models.

4.3. The Group in Conflict in Galilee

In the story of the disciples plucking grain on the Sabbath (Mk 2:23-28) it is the disciples who are explicitly criticized by the Pharisees. The basic historicity of the pericope is probable due to the "bluntness" of the

³⁵¹ DEVINE-WRIGHT 2003:9-34.

³⁵² See Q13:34-35.

³⁵³ The same dynamics can be found to some extent also elsewhere. See e.g. Lk 19:37-40.

accusation. It is difficult to find a meaningful *Sitz im Leben* for inventing this sort of a story. Eating kernels in the cornfield on the Sabbath was hardly a major halakhic dilemma for any Palestinian Christian community. Even if it had been, would it not have been Jesus who was breaking the Pharisaic understanding of the Sabbath rather than the disciples?³⁵⁴ The story indicates that the disciples (at least those accused) had not been following the Pharisaic halakha prior to following Jesus.³⁵⁵ Jesus seems to have been somewhat closer to the Pharisees in his

³⁵⁴ For others seeing the core of the story as historical see e.g. GUELICH 1989:119-130, GNILKA 1979:122, PESCH 1977:183 (referring to the “non-relevance” of the problem for Palestinian churches), GUNDRY 1993:148-149 (some original arguments about the non-use of the OT in 2:1-3:6). Not all agree on the historicity of the episode. SANDERS (1993:214) writes: “The story of picking grain on a Sabbath stands out as being improbable. Jesus’ disciples are picking grain, when suddenly Pharisees appear. But what were they doing in the midst of a grain field on the Sabbath?”. This objection is rather conjectural since the fields were probably close to the houses and the group on the field would have readily been seen. Sanders’ arguments against the historicity of the event have been effectively countered by BACK (2000) whose insightful analysis of suggested *Sitz im Leben* for the pericope has unfortunately been ignored by MEIER (2004:577-578) who also argues against the historicity of the pericope. The core of Meier’s argument is that the historical Jesus could not have distorted the Scripture as the Markan Jesus does when referring to 1 Sam 21:2-10. The reason for this being is that the Pharisees “would have laughed their heads off – and invited the populace to do the same” which to Meier’s mind is impossible since “if this was the actual competence of the historical Jesus in teaching and debating, his movement would not have lasted a month in first-century Jewish Palestine.

I do not find Meier’s claims convincing since the very logic of his argument turns against himself. How could an Early Community survive a month in first-century Jewish Palestine if it invented this sort of pericopes of its master? Would not the opponents of this community laugh their heads off? I also regard Meier’s assumption that Jesus’ accuracy in Scripture quotation was an important element in explaining “his widespread popularity, his accordingly violent end, and the impact of his ministry on subsequent history” as exaggerated. It was the miracles and the image of the one anointed by God himself, not the excellence in rhetorics or the exact nature of his teaching that made Jesus so popular. As DAUBE (1956) and KEENER (1999) repeatedly show, much of Jesus’ teaching had parallels in Rabbinic traditions (but see also PARSONS 1985). On the other hand Palestine did not abound with miracle-workers of “Jesus’ class”. See e.g. EVE 2002. If something in Jesus’ teaching led to the violent end it was more likely the theology of inclusion of sinners into the kingdom of God and possibly the implicit (or explicit) Messianic claims.

³⁵⁵ Levi the tax collector is a very good candidate for harbouring a mostly non-Pharisaic life-style.

manners and customs than his disciples.³⁵⁶ Thus the disciples understood themselves to be a group different from the religious authorities (here the Pharisees) and thus criticism of this sort very likely only deepened the gap between the two groups.³⁵⁷ There is an element of humiliation in the scene when the disciples are criticized in front of their teacher, and of something that he himself is not guilty of. The disciples risked bringing shame to their teacher by not following the Sabbath customs.

Since the creation of this scene as a later sociological reflection strikes us as improbable, the question concerning the reason for it being remembered and retold arises. Independently from the authenticity of Jesus' answer, the reason for this relatively dull setting for the story is best understood as having its roots in the strong emotions aroused as well as its role in strengthening the group's identity.

Another relevant episode is the heated discussion about the washing of hands before eating. Again it is τινὰς τῶν μαθητῶν who are criticized, not Jesus.³⁵⁸ Had the setting been invented to support the practise of eating without washing hands it is awkward enough that it is not Jesus who is criticized for not washing his hands.³⁵⁹ Mark uses the criticism of

³⁵⁶ I would not go as far as e.g. BERGER (1988) and MACCOBY (2003), who regarded Jesus as a Pharisee.

³⁵⁷ About the marginalization of the group SALYER (1993:165): "In the social analysis of Mark 7 we saw that Jesus and his disciples existed on the margins of the purity system. One of the primary functions of deconstruction is to take what has been marginalized and enhance it until the centre is shattered and its power dissolved."

³⁵⁸ The redaction critical solutions in dividing Mk 7:1-23 to tradition and redaction, as well as judgments of the historicity of each part, vary. See e.g. GUELICH 1989:360-362 and 372-374 and DONAHUE & HARRINGTON 2002:226-231. See also ANDERSON (1976:221) who emphasizes the impossibility of the task. For a detailed and complex (but not convincing) attempt to divide the unit to parts see e.g. CUVILLIER 1992. However, the setting of the dispute as presented in verses 1 and 2 is likely historical. As put by MCELENEY (1972:258-259): "With historical presumption, we accept the facticity of the encounter between Jesus and his opponents (at least as a typical encounter). On that occasion, Jesus was asked why his disciples did not follow (walk in the way of) the traditions of the ancients but instead ate with defiled hands." Apparently so also MARCUS 2000:447-448. See also CUVILLIER 1992:177.

³⁵⁹ I find two considerations supporting this statement: a) The synoptic traditions do not shy from presenting criticism pointed at Jesus, b) the disciples are not didactic role models due to their ambiguous role as doers of both wrong and right in the Gospels.

the disciples by the Pharisees as the setting for Jesus' teaching about food, which reaches its climax in the evangelist's explanatory addition καθαρίζων πάντα τὰ βρώματα. The persuasive force of this setting may be questioned since Matthew, possibly feeling uncomfortable with the Markan statement, interprets the issue as concerning only the thing handled in the setting i.e. washing hands before the meal.³⁶⁰

My suggestion for the reason of this episode being remembered is the emotionally loaded character of the experience due to the same sort of humiliation as in Mk 2:23-28. Both episodes also include the basic dynamics of two conflicting groups. Most probably the criticism deepened the intergroup boundaries between the disciples and the religious leaders. By coming forward to criticize the group of disciples, the Pharisees and scribes forced the former to see them as their opponents and thus located them accordingly in the symbolic universe. The categorization influenced the subsequent attitudes, perception and interpretation of contacts as well as the memories of these events.

The antipharisaic (and anti-scribal) attitude of Jesus' group can be seen to have been built of at least the following elements: a) Many disciples had lived in a group despised by the Pharisees and not followed their religious customs in their pre-Jesus period, b) the criticism the Pharisees focused on Jesus, the rabbi of the disciples, and thus strengthened the negative picture of the Pharisees in the minds of the disciples, c) the humiliating criticism the Pharisees focused on the disciples themselves in front of their admired rabbi, Jesus, thereby strengthened the group's negative attitude towards the Pharisees.³⁶¹

³⁶⁰ It is possible that Matthew has another source in use here besides Mark's gospel. However, the explanatory clause of Matthew (15:20b) τὸ δὲ ἀνίπτοις χερσὶν φαγεῖν οὐ κοινοῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον strikes quite clearly as a correction of Mark's explanatory statement in Mk 7:19b.

³⁶¹ It is very likely that Jesus had also friends and sympathizers among the Pharisees and not every confrontation was hostile (see e.g. Lk 13:31). The same applies to the scribes who were not Pharisees. The rather black and white picture in the gospels and traditions is meaningfully understood as a general idea of the disciples concerning Galilean religious leaders.

While the Pharisees and Scribes were competing with Jesus for expertise in the religious symbolic universe, they were probably not the most lethal party in Galilee from the disciples' point of view. The Jesus group regarded tetrarch Herod Antipas as an enemy and a threat.³⁶² He had e.g. executed John the Baptist, who Jesus and his followers sympathized with, and was obviously chasing Jesus as well. The constant relocation of Jesus with his disciples from one place to another made it difficult for Herod to catch Jesus. Arrest of Jesus when he was preaching among the thousands of people was risky, and it was understandably difficult to trace his other whereabouts. In this respect it is interesting that the gospel tradition does not mention Jesus visiting the cities of Galilee. This may have been due to the risk of being arrested by Herodian soldiers. In any case, the Herodian government was another outgroup hostile to Jesus' followers, and Herodian persecution very likely strengthened the identity of the group as "those persecuted". As already noted, the role of being persecuted is readily found in the Scriptures in the Jewish symbolic universe and echoes of this abound in the Synoptic tradition.³⁶³

4.4. The Group in Conflict in Jerusalem

The conflict between the ingroup (Jesus and his followers) and the outgroup (religious leaders) intensified in Jerusalem. We will briefly analyze three episodes which deepened the conflict setting between the Jesus group and the religious leaders. It may be useful to remark at this point that the term "religious leaders" should not be interpreted as every priest, Sadducee, Pharisee etc. in Jerusalem. Suffice is to note that there were important power groups, including people from the very top of Jewish governmental hierarchy, who considered Jesus to be a serious threat to their religious position or to the *status quo* in Jerusalem in general. From the High priest's viewpoint Jesus was a dangerous enemy

³⁶² FITZMYER (1985:1028): "There seems to be a consensus among commentators that the report of the Pharisees to Jesus about Herod's attitude toward him is a piece of authentic tradition rooted in Stage I of the gospel material." So also NOLLAND 1993:739. For a good representation with many insightful remarks about the relationship between Herod and Jesus see TYSON 1960.

³⁶³ Mt 23:37.

full of political, even revolutionary, potential. The appeal of his miracles and exorcisms to the crowd magnified the significance of, e.g., his provocative act in the temple. The attack against the High Priest could hardly have been more explicit, and this forced the religious elite to plan Jesus' elimination. More or less all of Judea depended on the economy of the temple cult and the income which flowed from the hundreds of thousands of pilgrims. Disrupting the temple economy or changing its character would have affected the economy of the whole province. The religious and political status of the Sadducees and especially the High Priest himself would also have been jeopardized if the mass movement led by this Galilean prophet had gained momentum. Against this background it is easy to understand why Jesus was arrested at night, and why the meeting of the Sanhedrin was held at an exceptional time and Jesus handed over to Roman custody as quickly as possible.³⁶⁴

4.4.1. The Temple Episode

The Event

According to every canonical gospel, Jesus acted provocatively in the temple.³⁶⁵ Most scholars who accept the historicity of this episode link it with the reasons for Jesus' crucifixion.³⁶⁶ As for our present task three relevant questions arise: a) Is the event historical, b) if so, what can be said about Jesus' motives for doing this and c) what conclusions did the temple authorities draw from the episode.

Referring to the myriad of scholars who accept the historicity of Jesus' temple act is a shaky way to establish anything, as Miller has insightfully pointed out.³⁶⁷ Instead, we analyze briefly the actual arguments

³⁶⁴ I am not convinced by e.g. MYLLYKOSKI's (1991:139-140) argumentation according to which the Markan story cannot be true because it includes exceptions of normal routines of Sanhedrin. First, our knowledge of these routines and exceptions is scarce. Secondly, the exceptional situation i.e. a miracle maker putting up a provocation in the temple, certainly motivated exceptional procedures.

³⁶⁵ For a brief but informative comparison of different interpretation of the event see HERZOG 1992:817-821.

³⁶⁶ So e.g. HOLMÈN 2002:54. SANDERS (1985:61) regards Jesus' activity (and conflict thereby caused) as "an almost indisputable fact".

³⁶⁷ MILLER 1991:236. It is difficult not to wholeheartedly agree with MILLER's (1991:245)

suggested against and for the historicity of the temple episode. The older German scepticism doubted the plausibility of the scene where Jesus could actually have accomplished the depicted provocation alone.³⁶⁸ More recently Mack, Miller and Seeley have doubted the historicity of the episode.³⁶⁹ Mack's argument emphasizes that the anti-temple attitude fits into Markan plots (as found by Mack himself) and thus is Markan fiction.³⁷⁰ However, the fact that something fits into a story is by no means evidence or even an indication of it having been fabricated.

Seeley, whose scepticism is seen as the most elaborated e.g. by Casey³⁷¹, argues that the story does not make sense in the Jerusalem situation during Jesus' ministry, but only after the Temple's destruction after 70 A.D.³⁷² To express his idea in the language of common methodology, it is the challenge of the criterion of incoherence which Seeley sees to be met by the story. Jesus did not do this sort of thing. However, what Seeley fails to do is to provide any actual argument for the view that Jesus would not act in this way.³⁷³ His other assumption, that the gospel of

sarcastic criticism of Witherington's argument that even Bultmann admits the historicity of the episode. Much in the same manner DUNN (2003a:638fn119) counters Seeley by noting that the Jesus Seminar voted for the likelihood of the episode's historicity.

³⁶⁸ For a descriptive collection of the representants of this viewpoint see EVANS 2001:165. For a satisfactory refutation of these theories and a good case for the plausibility of the scene see GUNDRY 1993:646-647.

³⁶⁹ MILLER 1991, MACK 1988 and SEELEY 1993a.

³⁷⁰ MACK (1988:292): "The temple act cannot be historical. If one deletes from the story those themes essential to the Markan plots, there is nothing left over for historical reminiscence. The anti-temple theme is clearly Markan and the reasons for it can be explained. The lack of any evidence for an anti-temple attitude in the Jesus and Christ traditions prior to Mark fits with the incredible lack of incidence in the story itself. Nothing happens. Even the chief priests overhear his "instruction" and do nothing. The conclusion must be that the temple act is a Markan fabrication".

³⁷¹ CASEY 1997:324. So also MYLLYKOSKI 2002:34.

³⁷² SEELEY (1993a:271): "Our only recourse seems to be agreement with Buchanan, who says that the account which "now appears in the gospels ... does not make sense in the Jerusalem situation during Jesus' ministry."

³⁷³ That he rejects EVANS' (1989) suggestion that Jesus protested against priestly corruption by mentioning that there is no contemporary evidence for corruption charges does not convince. It is still a very plausible motive and the implausibility of the story is what Seeley eagerly attempts to demonstrate. Furthermore, HOLMÉN (2000) has argued that the edge of Jesus' criticism was pointed at those attending the temple. Surely Seeley cannot claim that Holmén has not provided contemporary evidence of this sort of

Mark is a highly fictive narrative reflecting post-70 *Sitz im Leben*, needs more than just a claim.³⁷⁴ And, as Casey poignantly remarks when criticizing Seeley, verse 16 hardly symbolizes destruction.³⁷⁵

Miller's handling of the issue is more sophisticated, and his way of using the criteria of authenticity as a basis for the reasoning, enables analytical discussion. Thus we proceed by evaluating the evidential force of the criterion of multiple attestation, and the criterion of dissimilarity concerning Jesus' temple act.

The core of the story is told in John and thus can be considered to meet the demand of the CMA if John is not dependent on Mark. Even if John had known Mark and/or other Synoptic gospels, it does not totally nullify the meaning of CMA.³⁷⁶ Firstly, we know that the fourth evangelist had access to a rich collection of traditions which are not found in the Synoptic gospels. If an author has repeatedly contradicted another document known to him, and can be shown to have leaned on other sources, the CMA may still have some light to give to the problem of authenticity.³⁷⁷

Secondly, e.g., Matthew and Luke had an access to the tradition about Jesus' temptations both in Q and Mark, which demonstrates that no automatic conclusion about direct dependence should be drawn in the case of Mark and John even if John knew Mark's gospel. It is also possible that Luke has an independent tradition behind his depiction of the temple episode (19:44-45).³⁷⁸ Jesus' critical stance against the temple is

activity. Even if we accepted his criticism of Evans (which I do not) the same logic does not apply to Holmén's suggestion.

³⁷⁴ The whole case of Seeley rests on his way of dating the gospel of Mark. Unfortunately, he does not provide any evidence, but only an ever so vague reference to "consensus" for his view.

³⁷⁵ CASEY 1997. SEELEY (2000) has replied to Casey's criticism, but to my mind not convincingly.

³⁷⁶ *Pace* HOLMÉN 2002:53.

³⁷⁷ E.g. Matthew has used almost the whole gospel of Mark in his book. Should we, on a methodological level, juxtapose the relationship between Matthew and Mark to that of Mark and John?

³⁷⁸ See DAWSEY 1991. The majority opinion as formulated e.g. by FITZMYER (1985:1260): "Though inspired by the Markan version, Luke has considerably redacted the Markan

also multiply-attested which makes the act coherent with other themes in the pre-Synoptic traditions.³⁷⁹ The multiple attestation shows that the tradition is pre-Markan, which does not mean that it goes all the way back to Jesus' life.³⁸⁰ Since John locates the pericope (in the beginning of the ministry) differently from Mark (Easter week) I tend to see the independence argument somewhat stronger than dependence, and thus would suggest that CMA demonstrates a pre-Markan origin for the story.³⁸¹

Miller argues against the fulfilling of the CD in the temple act pericope referring to "all pre-Markan christologies" which I understand as a reference to the assumption *à la Mack* that pre-Markan Christianity was divided into numerous different sections.³⁸² The basic idea is that it is not difficult to find a meaningful *Sitz im Leben* for the creation of the story in the great variety of theological and sociological segments under the common label early Christianity.³⁸³ However, a couple of considerations suggest that the criterion is actually rather well met.

source, and yet there is no real evidence that he has used any alternate source." should perhaps be re-evaluated due to Dawsey's presentation. It is unfortunate that SEELEY (1993a) does not so much as mention Dawsey's work.

³⁷⁹ See HOLMÉN 2002:51–52.

³⁸⁰ As pointed by MILLER 1991:245.

³⁸¹ Which matches up with TAYLOR's (1955:461) comment: "We have, in fact, the paradoxical situation that the Markan story agrees better with the Johannine date and the Johannine account with the Markan setting."

³⁸² MILLER 1991:250.

³⁸³ MILLER (1991:245): "Let us take up Witherington's points. 1) He claims that the scene cuts against the interests of the early church. This is a relevant point. But is Witherington right? I think not, for his reasoning involves fallacy: that what is true of a part is true of the whole. The fallacy is built into Witherington's vocabulary: any statement about "the church" is likely to be overgeneralized. If we grant that some early Christians were involved in the temple (and this would have to be demonstrated), it does not follow that all Christians were (e.g. those represented by Stephen's speech in Acts 6). The same goes for the cultivation of a non-threatening stance toward the Empire. Besides, neither objection stands if the TD is Markan fiction. The first would be irrelevant after the temple's destruction, and while the second plays a role in Luke and Paul, it is not a demonstrable factor in Mark."

Miller's reference to "those represented by Stephen's speech in Acts 6" is awkward. Firstly, there is no Stephen's speech in Acts 6. Secondly, if it is the speech in Acts 7 (as it probably is) what Miller means, it is very questionable to draw the "non-involvement conclusion". The speech has gone through Luke's editing and the citation in 7:49-50

Holmén suggests that the verse 17 would be embarrassing for the early Christians.³⁸⁴ The actual current led from Jerusalem to the nations, and not like the verse implies that the Gentiles would come to the temple.³⁸⁵ His argument is further strengthened by the fact that Matthew and Luke omit the words $\pi\tilde{\alpha}\sigma\iota\nu\ \tau\omicron\iota\tilde{\iota}\varsigma\ \xi\theta\nu\epsilon\sigma\iota\nu$.³⁸⁶

Jesus' aggressive behaviour is not quite in line with any of his teachings and deeds elsewhere in the pre-gospel tradition.³⁸⁷ Even if harsh and judgemental words matched up with the eschatological sayings, the violent behaviour does not. It seems that there is not a suitable *Sitz im Leben* for this sort of behaviour in any pre-Markan Christian community.³⁸⁸ At least we are void of any evidence for the existence of such a group.

Due to the above-mentioned reasons it seems to me reasonable to assume that the historical Jesus acted provocatively in the temple more or less in the manner depicted in Mark 11:15-19. In what follows we briefly analyze the act in its context, asking what might have motivated Jesus to act as he did and how what he did would have been understood by the leaders of the temple system.

together with the verse 47 are hardly simply any old leftovers from the source, but rather something that Luke wholeheartedly agrees with. Additionally, Luke's general attitude toward the temple seems to be positive (e.g. 3:1, 21:26). It is also very remarkable that Luke explicitly mentions (6:13) that those claiming that Stephen speaks against the Holy Place are false witnesses. While Miller's "star witness" fails to convince, it is noteworthy that the positive attitude and even continuous involvement in its cult, is attested in gospel tradition (see e.g. Mt 12:4, Lk 6:4, Mt 5:23-24, 17:24-27, 23:31 and 23:16.). See also WISE 1992:816.

³⁸⁴ HOLMÈN 2002:57.

³⁸⁵ See Is 2:2. Much in the same manner TAYLOR 1955:463.

³⁸⁶ Here we have evidence that at least two Christ-believers in the first century have regarded the saying as not suitable for the story. This is a remarkable confirmation for the viewpoint that the claim of embarrassment here is not only an anachronistically constructed pseudo-argument.

³⁸⁷ While this might be turned to incoherence, I prefer to see it as a sign of dissimilarity. We have probably a better grasp of what the early Christians wrote than what Jesus could and could not do.

³⁸⁸ PESCH (1977:198): "Jesu Aktion gegen den geordneten Handel im Tempelvorhof ist ohne Vorbild und Parallele und wird daher nicht von urchristlichen Tradenten erfunden sein, zumal nicht von der tempelfreundlichen Urgemeinde."

The enigma of Jesus' motives is a generally acknowledged problem in New Testament scholarship.³⁸⁹ For example Evans has suggested that Jesus criticized the corrupted priests, and Holmén sees the edge of the protest directed at those attending the temple cult.³⁹⁰

The motives behind Jesus' exceptional act may have been complex and multidimensional; one of them being the intention to provoke the religious leaders to take concrete action against himself. Many factors point to the fact that Jesus went to his death voluntarily in Jerusalem, and thus the temple act may very well have been, as it subsequently turned out to be, a way to trigger the "killing of the prophet". The provocation, however, needs to be in line with Jesus' role as a prophet and religious figure and thus the "triggering act" theologically meaningful and motivated. According to this hypothesis "Jesus did not aim to be repudiated and killed; he aimed to charge with meaning his being repudiated and killed".³⁹¹

In the first place, Jesus was most probably aware of the severity of his action since the temple system was the very nerve of both religious and economic life. That this provocation took the form of a prophetic act is only natural since Jesus lived through the identity built on the OT symbolic universe. The "semi-violent" behaviour was not enough to be seen as a revolutionary attempt but carried more weight than the speech he otherwise used when protesting against the religious system in Palestine. In short, Jesus must have been rather well aware of his coming fate and still he did what he did.³⁹²

³⁸⁹ NOLLAND (1993:935): "The historicity of the core account has occasionally been questioned, but the very difficulties of the account tell strongly in its favour; its historicity is generally recognized even by those who have quite a minimalizing approach. Much more difficult is the question of what the event represented in the mind of Jesus and/or of those who witnessed it." So also GNILKA 1979:130. See also HIERS 1971, EVANS 1993, CASEY 1997 and HOLMÉN 2000.

³⁹⁰ See EVANS 1989 and HOLMÉN 2000.

³⁹¹ MEYER 1979:218.

³⁹² DUNN (2003a:805): "There need be little doubt, then, that Jesus did anticipate rejection for his message in Jerusalem, to share the fate of the prophets, to suffer as a man in the hands of men, to drink the cup of suffering and be fully caught up in the final tribulation." For other insightful treatments of this viewpoint see GREEN 2001:96-101 and

Secondly, the tragic fate of Jesus' "mentor" John the Baptist at the hands of Herod was known to Jesus.³⁹³ Herod was allegedly persecuting Jesus as well, so that the same deadly shadow would have been hovering over Jesus' ministry. Jesus knew that one outgroup – those with political power – was dangerous, and yet still he challenged them in front of their very eyes.

Thirdly, it is rather easy to find examples and prophetic role models in the Jewish religious tradition for voluntary and even expiatory death.³⁹⁴ If Mk 10:45 is accepted as authentic, it would strongly suggest that the reason Jesus went to Jerusalem was to die there.³⁹⁵

HOLMÈN 2009.

³⁹³ This perspective is well handled in HOLMÈN 2009.

³⁹⁴ For examples see EVANS 2001:386-388 and HOLMÈN 2009.

³⁹⁵ For a list of arguments against the authenticity of Mk 10:45 and for its substantial historicity see PAGE 1980:139-154 and EVANS 2001:119-125. To put the discussion briefly I try to pick up the essential points in discussion. As for the authenticity, the "I have come" –sayings are multiply attested as demonstrated by MCKNIGHT 2005:161-163. Luke quite likely knew the ransom saying, or a closely similar tradition, since he uses "ransom language" elsewhere. See Lk 1:68, 2:38, 24:21; Acts 7:35. So DUNN 2003a:813. See also RIESNER (2003) and KIM (1983:44-45) who lists hypothetical (but plausible) reasons for Luke to shorten the Markan saying. What I also regard as meaningful from this viewpoint is that in 1 Cor 15:3 probably reflects the same OT passage thus making the idea of the ransom death very early.

As BRUCE (1982:58) points out the word-parallelism between Mk 10.45 and the fourth Isaianic Servant Song (Is. 52:13-53:12) is not exact (but see FRANCE 1968) the thought of the Servant Song is well reflected in the ransom saying. This also makes the grounds of e.g. SEELEY's (1993b) theory of the Hellenistic origin of the saying somewhat shaky. Now, it has been stated by HARE (1990:276) "It cannot be demonstrated that Jesus clearly and firmly taught that his death was to have saving power (Mk. 10:45), because the post-Easter church should otherwise have been unanimous in its interpretation of the cross. C.H. Dodd's startling claim, "The Jerusalem kerygma does not assert that Christ died for our sins" [p 25] has been reaffirmed by J. Roloff, who identifies three different ways of interpreting Jesus' death in the early church." However, I am not convinced of ROLOFF's (1972/73) identifications due to some methodological reasons. It seemed to me that Roloff was reading "three ways" into the text and not vice versa. Furthermore, it is not evident that whatever soteriological systems were created on the base of "ransom idea" they all would be "unanimous" in detail. The Is. 53 was very early used universally among Christians to reflect the meaning of Jesus' death, and as put by CASEY (1999:212): "It remains possible that Jesus was informed by Isaiah 53, among many other texts, as he meditated on his death."

Fourthly, Jesus' triumphal entry to Jerusalem is coherent with this idea of an intentional provocation in the temple if we assume that Jesus anticipated that the reaction of the religious leaders would lead to such an act.³⁹⁶

Fifthly, the activities of Jesus after the temple episode also suggest a "provocation motive". In the last supper Jesus talked about his future death. It is also highly suggestive for the viewpoint presented here that Jesus did not attempt to escape or fight back when he was arrested. This behaviour would not be readily understandable if Jesus had not decided to die in Jerusalem.

When the longer conflict history perspective is taken as a framework the question about the disciples' awareness of Jesus' motives becomes an important issue. Was Jesus' act a surprise to his followers? The non-violence of Jesus in other traditions might defend this viewpoint. The act of Jesus was a) perceived by the followers, b) interpreted within their present religious and social framework, c) remembered and re-interpreted later in the light of Easter events etc. d) told and re-told in the Early Christian communities, e) finally written down in the gospels. The first phase must have been rather confusing since Jesus covered his temple act with prophetic citations and theological motivation which surely somehow also reflected his other teachings. The disciples did not see any intentionality of death in Jesus' act, and later (in the post-Easter context) it is probable that the reason behind the process of events was expressed in terms of God's sovereign plan. The disciples would hardly have understood the temple act as a protest of the cult proper since they participated in it only after the events of Easter.

The Reaction of the Jerusalem Leaders

From the viewpoint of the religious leaders in Jerusalem the temple act was most alarming and triggered determined action against Jesus.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁶ For the historicity of the triumphal entry see EVANS 2001:138-141.

³⁹⁷ See also GREEN 1998:29-30. As Josephus tells Theudas and an anonymous Egyptian were able to attract relatively significant following by only promising miracles. Although they would not chronologically be exact contemporaries of Jesus I assume that the religious leaders in Jerusalem were fully aware of the socio-dynamic potential among the crowd for this sort of activity

While Jesus was hardly an unknown figure to the leaders of Jerusalem before his actual visit to the city, the temple episode was, according to my hypothesis, the straw that broke the camel's back.³⁹⁸ Later on the memory of the temple act quite likely influenced the attitudes of the leaders toward anything associated with this rebellious Galilean. Thus the re-kindled Jesus movement was seen as a part of the continuum which starting with Jesus entering Jerusalem on a donkey and raging in the temple. This alone would have been enough to motivate persecution of the Early Christians by religious leaders in Jerusalem.³⁹⁹ Consequently, while Jesus' temple act has been generally (and correctly to my mind) seen as the main reason for his subsequent crucifixion, I would suggest that it was also an important motivator for post-Easter actions against the Early Christians, whose "inherited" Jesus' temple act, in the eyes of the Jerusalem leaders, was an indication of their dangerous nature.

4.4.2. Sword in Gethsemane

The Event

According to all canonical gospels a servant of the High Priest lost an ear because of a sword strike.⁴⁰⁰ Before the episode can be added to the conflict history two points should be established. Firstly, who was the one swinging the sword in Gethsemane according to the gospel of Mark? The second question concerns the historicity of the episode. It is meaningless to speculate on the subsequent reactions if the event never took place. The Markan expression εἷς δὲ [τις] τῶν παρεστηκότων is a little ambiguous since it does not necessarily (as is the case in other gospels) refer to a disciple of Jesus but rather to someone just standing nearby. Gundry has suggested that the one striking was actually someone from the arresting party, and thus the servant of the chief priest becomes a victim of "friendly fire".⁴⁰¹ Another suggestion is that the

³⁹⁸ Reference to "scribes from Jerusalem" in Mk 3:22 speaks for rumours of Jesus having reached the ears of Jerusalem leaders, and sending their own men to go and see.

³⁹⁹ See also HENGEL (1991:83-84) who sees similar motives behind Paul's persecutive activity.

⁴⁰⁰ Mk 15:47, Mt 2:51, Lk 22:50, Jn 22:50.

⁴⁰¹ GUNDRY (1993:360) argues that the "To identify the swordsman in Mark as a disciple makes Jesus response inappropriate, because sword-wielding by a disciple would

swordsman was from a third party, which happened to be around and who were willing to fight for Jesus.⁴⁰² Finally many commentators understand the swordsman to be one of the disciples.⁴⁰³ Furthermore, it has been suggested that the name of the disciple was not revealed due to the risk of him getting caught while the servant of the high priest was still alive.⁴⁰⁴ I find Gundry's suggestion slightly far-fetched, since the stroke was apparently the first (and only) at the arrest. This significantly diminishes the chance of accident. Furthermore, the servant of the high priest was very probably a well-known figure, and thus hardly a likely object for the blow from those of his own party. It is rather safe to assume, therefore, that Mark meant a disciple or another follower of Jesus in 14:47.

The episode is multiply attested due to its occurrence both in Mark and John. There has been some discussion about Luke leaning on an independent source, with some scholars regarding the differences to Mark's version as redaction, while others seeing it as explainable only by the use of a different tradition.⁴⁰⁵ Would this sort of an episode serve some purpose so that its creation had been understandable? There are at least three features in the story which suggest authenticity. a) The stroke does not kill as might have been expected if the violent action had been invented.⁴⁰⁶ I find it easier to believe, as e.g. Bauckham proposes, that the servant of the high priest lived and was known in Jerusalem for years after the episode. Thus the brief mention of the sword episode would be an explanation concerning the known fact (the injured servant of the

undermine Jesus' description of his arresters as the ones who have swords."

⁴⁰² So e.g. BROWN 1994:266-267.

⁴⁰³ So e.g. CORLEY 1992:845.

⁴⁰⁴ So COLE 1989:200, THEISSEN 1991:184-189, DUNN 2003a:773, BAUCKHAM 2006:187-189. Against this viewpoint DRAGE (1990) argues that the fourth Gospel is anti-Petrine and thus the disciple is named as Simon Peter. His case fails to convince. That the servant is also named suggests to me that Theissen, Bauckham and others have a point in their theory.

⁴⁰⁵ For those arguing for the independent source see e.g. STEIN 1992a:498 and MARSHALL 1978:834.

⁴⁰⁶ It could be maintained that had the servant died (in a fictive story) the anonymous swordsman would have been punished. But I think that cutting the ear off would have been a sufficient reason for punishment and that the tradent would have been aware of this.

high priest). b) The sword episode does not quite fit into the scriptural framework which was used to interpret the arrest of Jesus (14:26). This “sheep” is not escaping but trying to fight back; making a good candidate for a heroic behaviour.⁴⁰⁷

The Reaction of the Jerusalem Leaders

Readiness to use a sword was certainly recorded by the religious leaders of Jerusalem. The servant of the high priest was a living proof that the Jesus movement was a risk to be taken seriously, and capable of (in the eyes of the arrestors) violent revolt. When the triumphal entry (implicit kingship claim), the provocative attack against the temple system and the use of the sword in Gethsemane were combined in the minds of the leaders, it is readily understandable that they regarded the movement as a threat to the political, religious and economical *status quo* in Jerusalem. This formed the basis for the opinion of the leaders about the Jesus movement, and thus the framework later used to categorize everything that was done in the name Jesus.

4.4.3. The Crucifixion

The Event

There is not any serious question about the historicity of the crucifixion as the end of Jesus’ life.⁴⁰⁸ While Jesus’ death was later theologised within the framework of the fourth Isaian servant song, it is reasonable to assume that the Easter events shocked the disciples. The contrast between the triumphal entry and the crucifixion must have been utterly confusing for the disciples who were trying to categorize events as forming an integrated and coherent whole.⁴⁰⁹ The primary dilemma was the shameful nature of the crucifixion, which was associated with being cursed by God.⁴¹⁰ Although the martyr death on the cross could be

⁴⁰⁷ See EVANS 2001:424-425.

⁴⁰⁸ Probably the most serious and scholarly attack against the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth and thus also the crucifixion is performed by PRICE 2009.

⁴⁰⁹ GREEN (1992:152): “If the notion of a “suffering Messiah” runs counter to what we know of messianic speculation in the first century, how much more an oxymoron a “crucified Messiah” must have seemed.”

⁴¹⁰ O’BRIEN (2006) has made a vigorous attempt to show that Deut 21:22-23 was not

interpreted positively in some cases, it is difficult to combine the ideas of a royal messiah (implied by the triumphal entry) and the shameful death.⁴¹¹ At one moment the disciples are followers of a triumphant Jesus and just a moment later are associated with the mocked and parodied one.⁴¹² Needless to say, a group whose admired leader is brutally executed, is very likely to be hostile toward those regarded as responsible for the killing.

The crucifixion of Jesus by the Romans was seen as a consequence of the activity of Jewish leaders. There were numerous factors in that episode which probably deepened the antagonism between the disciples and the Jewish leaders. The disciples' inability to defend Jesus was embarrassing and humiliating. The frustration of the experience is easily projected onto the outgroup seen as responsible for the whole episode.⁴¹³ The painful event, the giving of Jesus over to Gentile hands was remembered e.g. in an old tradition preserved in Mk 10:32-34.⁴¹⁴ And finally, the cruel and shameful way Jesus was killed sealed the short but hostile intergroup history between Jesus' followers and the Jewish religious authorities.

The Reaction of the Jerusalem Leaders

generally attached to the crucifixion. While bringing forward some noteworthy points her overall case fails to convince. The shame or curse of crucifixion combined with the Messianic claim seems to have been problematic for Jews. To dismiss Justin's dialogue as only a reflection of Paul's argument in Galatians is to my mind problematic. If Justin is not interacting with the Judaism of his day, then why he set out to write the Dialogue in the first place? Furthermore, Paul writes as a Jew when he combines Deut 21:22-23 and crucifixion. I suggest that the curse and the shame of crucifixion is not often mentioned in Jewish sources due to the simple fact that the idea of a crucified Messiah was never brought forward by anyone else but Christians." For some treatments of the subject see HENGEL 1977, CHAPMAN 2000, GREEN 2004 and MARCUS 2006. About reflections of Deut 21:22-23 in NT in general see WILCOX 1977 and especially FITZMYER 1978.

⁴¹¹ CHAPMAN (2000:316): "...more positive perceptions could also be attached to crucifixion insofar as the death could be associated with the innocent sufferer or martyr as well as with latent sacrificial images."

⁴¹² About the humiliating side of the crucifixion see e.g. MARCUS 2006 and PASCHKE 2007.

⁴¹³ That one of them tried indicates that in their value system defending Jesus was a thing highly regarded. Consequently, to fail to do so must have been humiliating and frustrating.

⁴¹⁴ See the discussion earlier.

The crucifixion was also an important moment for the Jerusalem leaders in respect to the intragroup conflict. Once they had made the decision to have Jesus crucified, they were obliged to act accordingly and to justify the act. To let the Jesus movement live would have been contradictory to the execution of its former leader as one who leads Israel astray.⁴¹⁵

4.5. Inherited Antagonism

While we do not have detailed descriptions of the social psychological dynamics of the post-Easter group of Jesus' followers, we may take it for granted that they felt threatened and persecuted by the religious leaders of Jerusalem. This, at the level of social identity, added to the sense of alienation from the religious *status quo* and leaders. The dynamics were already prevalent and developing in the days of Jesus' Galilean ministry. This attitudinal influence on a cumulative antagonism can be called inherited antagonism, where new situations are interpreted in a negative light to get them to confirm with the existing ideas. The attitudes are also transferred to the new members of the group often both explicitly and implicitly. The conflict stories were told to the new arrivals of the communities as part of the traditions. The "Jesus period" was the basis of the twelve's status, and the very existence of four gospels, all of which tell about that period, demonstrates the significance of the sacred past in the Christian communities in the second half of the first century. This sacred past was partly defined by the enmity with outgroups.

4.6. Acts, the Early Church and the Conflict

I have attempted to demonstrate that the mentality of both the Jesus movement and the Jewish leaders of Jerusalem was antagonistic towards each other. In this kind of a social atmosphere conflicts are bound to arise and mutual hostility finds a fertile soil. But how did this antagonistic mentality actualise, if it did, in concrete conflicts? It is to be remembered

⁴¹⁵ This idea is clearly seen in the words of Mt 27:64: "... καὶ ἔσται ἡ ἐσχάτη πλάνη χεῖρων τῆς πρώτης."

that the post-Easter Jesus movement gets astonishingly little space in Josephus' works and thus may have remained without further attention by the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. This is a tempting interpretation if Acts is dated to the middle of the second century and considered more as romantic fiction than an historical account of early Christianity. Within this approach almost the whole history of the Jesus movement must be left under the cloud of blurry conjecture. On the other hand, more positive appraisals of Acts as a source of history have been brought forward and should these be accepted, optimism in reconstructing the general lines of the early Christian history is legitimate.⁴¹⁶

In what follows we first present the basic points of conflict history in Acts and then move on to evaluate its historical value as a source of knowledge concerning the conflicts between the Christ-believers and the Jews. After having done this we search for references to possible conflicts in the Pauline letters in an attempt to create basic lines of the conflict-history by utilizing both sources; Acts and Paul's writings. When this is done, answers to the questions: 1) What Christ-believers were persecuted by Jews? 2) Who persecuted the Christ-believers? can be put forward. While the term "persecution" is used, and we are aware of its subjective interpretational potential, we use it here as a proper term for the hostile activities from a greater party towards a minor, without any judgment whatsoever on the question who was right and who wrong. Finally the relationship of Matthew's gospel and Pauline Christianity is analysed briefly in order to consider the meaningfulness of using Pauline corpus and Acts in studying the GS, which is currently found in the context of Matthew's gospel.

4.6.1. Basic Description of the Conflict

According to Luke the disciples of Jesus spent time at the Temple (Lk 24:53) soon after Easter, indicating that they were not under an acute

⁴¹⁶ This optimism is present e.g. in HENGEL & SCHWEMER 1997 and more recently in DUNN 2009. These works stand in a contrast to an influential but (to my eye) surprisingly scornful and sardonic handling of Luke's second volume by Ernst HAENCHEN 1971.

threat in spite of being the crucified deceiver's disciples.⁴¹⁷ While the very beginning is peaceful, the episodes of conflict start soon after Pentecost. In what follows I present the important indicators of the conflicts between the Christ-believers and the Jews or the Jewish leaders as they are described in Acts.⁴¹⁸

- 1) Peter and John, the leaders of the early Christ-believing community in Jerusalem, are imprisoned and interrogated by the Sanhedrin (4:1-23, 5:17-42).
- 2) Some Hellenist Jews in Jerusalem attack Stephen and stone him (6:8-7:60).
- 3) A great persecution drives many Christ-believers from Jerusalem (8:1).
- 4) A young Pharisee, Paul, violently persecutes Christ-believers in Jerusalem and elsewhere (8:1-3, 9:1-2).
- 5) The Jews in Damascus chase the converted Paul, who manages to escape (9:23-25).
- 6) Paul tries to join the disciples in Jerusalem, but they do not let him (9:26).
- 7) Hellenists try to kill Paul (9:29).
- 8) King Herod Agrippa I executes James the son of Zebedee, and imprisons Peter (12:1-3).
- 9) Peter leaves Jerusalem to escape Herod (12:17).
- 10) Paul meets resistance from the Jews in numerous cities (13:5-28:28).⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁷ This is, however, somewhat different depiction than that given by the fourth evangelist who mentions that the disciples were gathered behind locked doors διὰ τὸν φόβον τῶν Ἰουδαίων (20:19) indicating that they felt themselves threatened by the Jewish leaders.

⁴¹⁸ It may be useful at this phase to emphasize that the term "Jew" is a challenging concept since practically all main parties in the conflicts are ethnically taken Jews. However, twisting the very terms the ancient Jews themselves used because of the later horrors of anti-Semitism risks colouring the study of history overly subjective.

⁴¹⁹ WILLS (1991:640-642) provides a useful list of these riots.

When a timeline is drawn, points 1-7 can be dated with rather probable likelihood to the first part of the 30s, points 8-9 to the beginning of the 40s and point 10 to the year 60.

However, as already pointed out, adopting this depiction for further elaboration of the conflict is not without problems. Scholarly opinion is divided on the question of the historical accuracy and reliability of the narrative, and the approaches vary from very sceptical to very optimistic.⁴²⁰ Thus it is necessary to evaluate briefly the value of the source at hand.

4.6.2. Historical Reliability of the Conflict Description in Acts

Theological Motives for Creating the Conflict Scenes

One rather common reason for doubting the historicity of the narrative are the theological motifs in the Lucan double work.⁴²¹ But theological, redactional or ideological motives leading to the existence of corresponding motifs, however obvious, do not exclude *a priori* the possibility of the historical reliability of a given pericope or theme in the text.⁴²² The dichotomy theological vs. historical is much too vague a

⁴²⁰ It may be alluring to claim for consensus or majority view for one's position as SMITH (2005:239) implies when stating: "Today some scholars still propose that Acts can be defined under the genre of ancient history in some sense, but the burden of proof has now shifted to those who would claim historicity for Acts. The expression "some scholars" refers to six-part work of dozens of scholars with impeccable critical credentials in the scholarship of Acts. (including Hengel, Murphy-O'Connor, Mason, Bauckham, Marshall, Alexander, Rajak, Bammel, Légasse).

⁴²¹ SMITH 2005:239: "...Luke has come to be recognized as an author with a theological agenda. Thus he constructs his work with a specifically theological rather than specifically historical goal in mind."

⁴²² For example, it is quite clear that Acts 1:8 provides us with an outline for the rest of the book; the Gospel is preached in Jerusalem, Samaria and then in Rome (at the ends of the earth).⁴²² So e.g. HAENCHEN 1971:143 and approvingly FITZMYER 1972:583. The beginning of Christian proclamation in Jerusalem and its later expansion to Rome are well-established historical facts. I am aware of the furious attempts (against the majority of scholars) by e.g. MATTHEWS (2005), MILLER (2005) and SMITH (2005) to disprove the status of Jerusalem as the location where Christianity began. However, the only statement which reminded me of an argument was that Mark, Matthew and John locate

criterion to be applied in the analysis of an ancient document. All it can provide is to suggest a meaningful motivation if the author has created something. Whether something is created or derived from sources must be decided on other grounds. It has also been argued that the genre of Acts practically excludes the plausibility of historical accuracy.⁴²³ However, while numerous attempts to find a suitable genre for Acts have been made the current consensus seems to doubt every one of them.⁴²⁴ From our point of view the question of possible anti-judaistic ideological motif is important since it could provide a motive for the author to create conflict scenarios. On the other hand, if such a motif is not found, the conflict descriptions can be taken more seriously.

In order to evaluate the possibility of the conflict scenes being essentially Lucan creations we need to elucidate how consistent the Jewish persecution of Christians or anti-Semitism motifs are in Luke-Acts. The question of anti-Semitic or anti-Judaistic tone in Luke-Acts is a much-

the start of the Christianity to Galilee. Finally they are forced to rely on rather acrobatic explanation to keep their idea alive. Thus at least this part of the central ideological outline has a good claim for being harmonious with the actual history. It is also significant that Luke leans on sources (like Mark and Q) when writing the gospel with no less theological motivation than when formulating the book of Acts.⁴²² Although HAENCHEN (1971:93) points that it is naïve to juxtapose the use of source (Mark and Q) in writing the gospel and the use of source in writing Acts.

⁴²³ SMITH 2005:239: "...the genre of Acts long assumed to be history, has been identified in more recent scholarship as early clearly related to novelistic "romance" literature of the ancient world."

⁴²⁴ For a standard introduction to the literary genre question in general see AUNE 1987. There are numerous suggestions for the genre of Acts. Indicative is BARRETT's (1998:xlvii) "It looks like history, biographical history, the historical monograph. It has been described as an apology, and that in several senses, and like a Hellenistic romance...To say that the book is *sui generis* may seem like running away from a difficult and disputed problem of classification, but it is in fact true." MARSHALL (1992:23): "Thus we are right to see historical and biographical features in the general form of Luke-Acts, but at the end of the day we have to recognize that the unusual nature of the subject-matter means that the work cannot be simply slotted into any of the existing literary pigeonholes." It is also interesting that Talbert, one of the initiators of the lively genre discussion, has suggested that Luke has created his own genre. See PHILLIPS (2006:383-384). SMITH (2005) picks up PERVO's (1987) solution (Acts as fictional romance) as his deductive starting point. However, devastating criticism against Pervo by AUNE (1989:68-69) and MARSHALL (1992:19-21) makes this utterly vulnerable.

disputed topic.⁴²⁵ It is generally admitted by scholars that the Lucan double work includes both positive and negative remarks about the Jews.⁴²⁶ Anti-Semitic or anti-Judaistic agenda may not be the best, and is surely not the only, way to explain the paradoxical depiction(s) of the Jews in the Lucan work. Tannehill for instance, points out that the hopes are aroused in the beginning of the book and the rejection of the gospel by Jews is seen as tragic more than anything else.⁴²⁷ If Luke had written anti-Semitic fiction, we would expect consistent negativity in his depictions of the Jews, but since this is not the case, I find it unlikely that the essence of the conflict scenes in Acts are Lucan creation.⁴²⁸ This impression is only strengthened when the last “conflict” of the book is taken under scrutiny.

At the very end of Acts there is a mild tension between the episode depicted and its theological interpretation as evidenced by Paul’s words. The author explains how the Jews reacted quite ambivalently to Paul’s proclamation. Verse 28:24 reads: “καὶ οἱ μὲν ἐπέειθοντο τοῖς λεγομένοις οἱ δὲ ἠπίστανον”. Some of the Jews believed Paul, but others did not. Nothing in the text implies which group is actually more numerous. To my eye this would make a rather awkward ending for an “anti-Semitic lie” *à la* Sanders. If the author had created stories, depicting the hostile

⁴²⁵ SANDERS (1981:667): “The entire geographico-theological plan of Luke-Acts is predicated on the simple evangelical premise that the Jews rejected Jesus and that the gospel was then taken to the Gentiles, who accepted it. While such a notion is the backbone of Luke’s theology, however, it is hardly reliable history. It is, in fact, so patently untrue...that we recognize it for the anti-Semitic lie that it is. Without that lie we would not have Lucan theology.” SLINGERLAND 1986, WILLS 1991, Different viewpoints with respective representants are listed e.g. TANNEHILL 1994:424-425.

⁴²⁶ See e.g. SLINGERLAND (1986) who explains the positive tone in the first part of Acts as the use of sources. WILLS’ (1991:631) comment it elucidating: “Most scholars agree on one point: the surface appears contradictory, yet it can all be understood when seen in the right perspective.” MATERA (1990) argues that the criticism is pointed against the Jewish leaders not Jews as a nation. TANNEHILL (1994:433): “Negative stereotyping, I have argued, is a reading strategy that is not required by the text of Luke, where there is enough shading and sufficient gaps to produce complex and open characters, if we respond with sympathetic imagination.”

⁴²⁷ TANNEHILL 1985. See also FUSCO 1996 and POWELL 1991:110.

⁴²⁸ While it is, in principle, still possible to maintain that the scenes are fictive and created for some other reason, the general accuracy in the second part of Acts, as demonstrated by HEMER 1989a, makes it unlikely, especially if a sufficient motive is not explicated.

reactions of the Jews, then why would he not leave a more unanimous impression in the last scene?⁴²⁹

Tannehill's suggestion that Israel's tragedy as the impression left by Luke suits well to the dynamics of the last meeting between Paul and the Jews in Acts. Paul as a Jew had hoped with other Jewish Christians that the whole of Israel would join the Messianic movement. When this did not happen it was seen as a tragedy since the early Christians had a strong identity of being what the prophets had written about and thus being the real Israel. For us this means that the historicity of the conflict scenes need not be doubted due to the theological motifs found in the book.

General Historicity

Even if the author was not motivated by anti-Judaism to create conflict scenes, it is reasonable to ask whether he was in a position to know about them. Talbert has produced a simple but useful theoretical framework for the inductive study of the question at hand.⁴³⁰ He begins by suggesting three levels for arguments about the historicity of Acts: i) contemporary colour, ii) historical sequence and iii) individual events and episodes. The contemporary colour means that no anachronism is found and the contemporariness of the author with the events described

⁴²⁹ I find FUSCO's (1996) explanation quite persuasive. He argues that Luke leaves space for the future of Israel even in the last chapter of Acts. When the description of Paul preaching to the Jews (16-25a) is read independently, it is rather neutral in tone. Many Jews believe and many do not. The reaction of Paul is stronger than what might be expected (25b-27). He refers to Isaiah (6:9-10), which was apparently widely used in Early Christianity to cope with the confusing fact that the whole of Israel did not accept Jesus as the Messiah. See Mk 4:11-12, Rom 11:8. Then he proclaims: "γνωστὸν οὖν ἔστω ὑμῖν ὅτι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἀπεστάλη τοῦτο τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ αὐτοῖ καὶ ἀκούσονται." It is certainly worth noticing that Paul's turning to the Gentiles with the gospel does not necessarily mean an absolute exclusion or rejection of the Jews. a) According to Paul himself he was appointed to the mission among the Gentiles by the leaders in Jerusalem (Gal 2:7). Still he acted within the Jewish community as can be reasoned from his biographical poetry in 2. Cor 11:24. b) In the narrative world of Acts the frustrated reaction to the "stubborn Jews" is already evidenced as early as in 13:46 (...οὐκ ἀξίους κρίνετε ἑαυτοὺς τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς ἰδοὺ στρεφόμεθα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη) and here at the very end of the book Paul is still preaching to the Jews. Thus, not too much should be read from the "turning to the Gentiles" theme in the end of Acts.

⁴³⁰ TALBERT 2003:197-217.

is confirmed by specific information, which would be hard to find much after the events.⁴³¹ The function of individual events and episodes is closely connected to the first category and needs not be further specified here.⁴³² The argument from the historical sequence assumes that a document is not historically reliable if it lacks a correct sequence of the events narrated. By inference, a likelihood of a document being historically trustworthy significantly increases if the events it relates to are given in their proper chronological order.⁴³³ As seen in the chart below, the historical sequence in Acts and the Pauline Corpus is remarkably similar.⁴³⁴

⁴³¹ As for this I regard HEMER (1989a) as an unavoidable starting point. For a briefing of the book with mostly positive comments see GASQUE 1989. See also fn.38 above. TALBERT 2003:201: "There are certainly points at which the contemporary colour of Acts can be challenged, but they are few and insignificant compared to the overwhelming congruence between Acts and its time and place." It has been correctly noted that the exact description of the milieu does not prove the historicity of the events narrated. However, the question concerning the source of the author's knowledge must be somehow settled. The longer the temporal, geographical and cultural distance between the author and the events narrated the harder it becomes to explain the contemporary colour of the story. Or, as noted by GASQUE (1975:193n94): "...the local and contemporary colour contained in the writers of fiction is that of the time and places in which they write." See also DUNN 2009:81.

⁴³² See TALBERT 2003:207-210.

⁴³³ TALBERT 2003:202.

⁴³⁴ The chart is modified from CAMPBELL 1955. Probably the most serious challenge to the historicity of Acts on this level is the possible discrepancy between the presentation of Paul's visits to Jerusalem in Galatians and in Acts. The basic suggestions for solving the dilemma are a) Galatians 2 = Acts 15, b) Galatians 2 = Acts 11, c) Galatians 2 = Acts 11 = Acts 15, d) Galatians 2 = Acts 18 and e) Galatians 2 = a visit nowhere mentioned in Acts. For a representative scholar for each view see TALBERT 2003:205. For another informative chart see DUNN 2009:78-79.

(Table 4)

MISSIONARY ACTIVITY	PAULINE CORPUS	ACTS
Persecution of Christians	Gal 1:13, 14	Acts 9
Conversion	Gal 1:15, 17a	Acts 9
To Arabia	Gal 1:17b	No mention
To Damascus	Gal 1:17c	Acts 9
To Jerusalem	Gal 1:18, 19	Acts 9
To regions of Syria and Cilicia	Gal 1:21	Acts 11:25
To Jerusalem after fourteen years	Gal 2:1,10	Acts 11 or 15
To Philippi	1 Thess 2:1-2, Phil 4:15-16	Acts 16
To Thessalonica	1 Thess 2:1-2 Phil 4:15-16	Acts 17
To Athens	1 Thess 3:1-3	Acts 17
To Corinth	2 Cor 11:7-9	Acts 18
To Troas	2 Cor 2:12	No mention
To Macedonia	2 Cor 8-9	Acts 20
To Corinth	2 Cor 12	Acts 20:2b-3
To Jerusalem	Rom 15:22-25	Acts 21
To Rome	Rom 15:22-25	Acts 28

This multiple attestation confirms the idea that Paul visited many cities where riots and conflicts allegedly took place. All in all this brief survey of the relevant features in Acts suggests that moderate optimism concerning the value of Acts in providing a one-sided and simplified, but at the same time in many respect a historical account of early Christian history, is legitimate.

Pauline Attestation of the Conflicts in Acts

The conflict between the Jews and Christ-believers is reflected upon only in passing by Paul in his epistles. It may be useful to divide these references into three categories: a) Paul's autobiographical remarks about persecuting the churches, b) Paul's reference to the persecution of Judean churches by the Jews and c) Paul's autobiographical poetry where he lists the punishments he has received from the Jews and others. There is also an interesting episode of Paul's escape from Damascus which is told both in Acts (9:23-25) and in Paul's second letter to Corinthians (11:32-33). This may have been due to the activity of the Jews in Damascus as hinted at by Luke. While Luke (Acts 9:22-25) and Paul (2. Cor 11:32-33) seemingly differ in the emphasis of the identity of those guarding the

city gates it is remarkable that such measures were taken to catch Paul.⁴³⁵ Stegemann and Stegemann regard Luke's version of the episode anti-semitically coloured and do not believe that the Jews of the city had anything to do with the episode.⁴³⁶ However, it may not be easy to find a sufficient motive to ἐφρούρει the gates, unless it had been done to please the influential Jews of the city.⁴³⁷

While the exact date of Paul's conversion can not be established, the period of 30-35 A.D. is suggested by the majority of scholars.⁴³⁸ He persecuted the followers of Jesus who had already spread to the Diaspora before his conversion, which can be seen in the fact that he was heading to Damascus at the time of his Christ-experience.⁴³⁹ According to his own testimony he was known and feared in Judean churches, and as pointed out above his violent mission extended to the Diaspora.⁴⁴⁰ Since the religious elite of Jerusalem had plotted to get Jesus crucified by the Romans, it is natural that this zealous Pharisee acted in a collaborative spirit with them when trying to outroot the stubborn messianic movement.⁴⁴¹ Thus it can be assumed with high likelihood that the very first years of the Christian movement was a period of intense conflict

⁴³⁵ HENGEL and SCHWEMER 1997:128 regard stories independent. While WALKER (1985:9) defends the view that Luke has modified Paul's reference to the occurrence in 2 Cor. 11:32-33.

⁴³⁶ STEGEMANN & STEGEMANN 1999: 341-342.

⁴³⁷ MARSHALL 1980: 174: "It is equally likely that the Jews of the city sided with the ethnarch or even enlisted his support in their hostility to Paul." Much in the same fashion CAMBELL 2002:299 and HENGEL & SCHWEMER 1997:132: "Here we cannot exclude the possibility that Paul and Acts are right, namely that the Jewish community authority and the Nabataean "consul" collaborated in an attempt to do away with this sinister person."

⁴³⁸ See an insightful discussion in RIESNER 1998:64-74

⁴³⁹ In Gal 1:17 Paul writes that he ἀπῆλθον εἰς Ἀραβίαν καὶ πάλιν ὑπέστρεψα εἰς Δαμασκόν. Damascus seems to have been some sort of starting point to his new career which suits well to the narrative of Acts.

⁴⁴⁰ HULTGREN (1976) has argued that what Paul was doing was not violent but only verbal. I find this difficult to believe. Would that trigger the reaction described in Gal 1:23? It is also utterly unlikely that a man who had received several violent beatings for his faith would describe a verbal conflict with the term καθ' ὑπερβολήν.

⁴⁴¹ DUNN (2009:337) defends the historicity of the Lucan claim that Paul had letter of commission (22:5) from the high priest.

with the religious elite of Jerusalem. The martyrdom of Stephen is dated into these early years, and is an indication of the severity of the conflict.

In 1 Thess 2:14-15 Paul refers to the difficulties of Judean churches and persecution by Jews.⁴⁴² The letter was probably written at the beginning of the 50s, and thus describes a situation some time in the period between 30 - 50 A.D.

When writing the Second Epistle to the Corinthians in the late 50s, Paul still clearly identifies himself as a Hebrew and Israelite.⁴⁴³ He further indicates that his ethnic identity is that of a Jew when he contrasts κινδύνοις ἐκ γένους and κινδύνοις ἐξ ἔθνῶν (2 Cor 11:26).⁴⁴⁴ Paul writes of having been flogged by Jews five times with 39 lashes. According to Josephus this penalty was “most disgraceful” and Mishna tractate *Makkoth* gives further description of this punishment, which sometime was even lethal.⁴⁴⁵ That Paul was punished by the Synagogue leaders is indicative of him still being within the Synagogue institution when proclaiming the gospel.⁴⁴⁶ Interestingly enough, Paul is silent about the reasons for these repetitive punishments. Was Paul persecuted by the synagogue leaders for the same reasons as he himself had persecuted Christians? The absurdity and offence of a crucified Messiah must have been one of the major reasons for Paul’s persecutive actions. At least this is what he implies in 1 Cor 1:23. Another serious possibility, and by no means excluding the former, is that his way of including the Gentile converts to the church without demanding circumcision and strict following of Jewish customs raised furious antagonism among the Diaspora Jews.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴² About the sometimes disputed authenticity of the passage see WEATHERLY 1991 and BOCKMUEHL 2001b.

⁴⁴³ See also DUNN 2009:103.

⁴⁴⁴ While the first statements of being Hebrew and Israelite could possibly be seen as a situational rhetorical device the way of identifying himself with the Jews in verse 26 is to my eye an expression of Paul’s subjective identification with the Jews. Cf. HULTGREN 1976:101.

⁴⁴⁵ *m. Makkot* 3.14.

⁴⁴⁶ See MILLER 2007.

⁴⁴⁷ For a good survey of the Paul’s possible motives to persecute the church see DUNN 2009:339-346.

Summary of the Conflict in Acts and Pauline Letters

As shown above the scanty and often implicit references by Paul to the conflict nevertheless fit well to the basic outline of the conflict in Acts. The early persecution of the followers of Jesus, “the churches of Judea”, continued in the same area as hinted in 1 Thess 2:14-16 and Acts 12:1-19. In the Diaspora setting, Paul’s autobiographical poem (2. Cor 11: 22-29) adds to the reliability of the picture given in Acts, where some Jews accept the apostle’s message and others ignite riots and persecutions.

On a methodological level it is reasonable to take an author seriously if he has repeatedly demonstrated historical accuracy and if a potential motivation for an essential creative contribution is contradicted by what the author has written. Consequently, since Acts is generally rather keenly rooted in history and no clear motive for creating the conflict scenes between the Jews and Christians can be traced in the book, it is meaningful to take it seriously as a source of information about the conflict between these two groups during the period it explicitly claims to be describing, i.e. 30-60 A.D. As shown above, the scanty and often implicit references by Paul to the conflict, nevertheless confirm the basic outline of the conflict as it is depicted in Acts. The early persecution of the followers of Jesus “the churches of Judea” continued in the same area as hinted in 1 Thess 2:14-16 and Acts 12:1-19. In the Diaspora setting Paul’s autobiographical poem adds to the reliability of the picture given by Acts, where some Jews accept the apostle’s message and others ignite riots and persecutions.

4.6.3. Parties in the Conflict

Who Were the Persecuted Christ-believers?

Who were the persecuted Christ-believers? There are implications for the existence of different sections and parties in early Christianity, and thus the concept “persecution of Christ-believers” needs elaboration. It is rather generally believed that Greek-speaking Jewish Christ-believers were the primary targets in the “great persecution” (διωγμὸς μέγας) mentioned in Acts 8:1.⁴⁴⁸ The Christ-believers in Damascus, where Paul

⁴⁴⁸ So e.g. MARSHALL (1980:151) calling the targeted Christ-believers as Stephen’s

was heading to when he experienced his conversion, were Hellenists, as was the first martyr, Stephen, whose death is described in Acts 7:59-60. Paul's frequent clashes with the Jews can also be categorised as a persecution of Hellenist Christ-believers. There is little doubt that at least some Greek-speaking Christ-believers were persecuted by the Jews during the period 30-60 AD.

But were only the Greek-speaking Christ-believers, or Hellenists, opposed by the Jews? There is a curious paradox in the Lucan description of a great persecution (*διωγμὸς μέγας*) in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). While he states that it concerned the church in Jerusalem and that all were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria, he also points out that the apostles remained in Jerusalem. It is not readily understandable why the leaders of the movement are left untouched when an attempt was being made to eliminate it.⁴⁴⁹ This dilemma has sometimes been resolved by assuming that it was only the Hellenistic wing of the early Jesus movement that was persecuted, possibly due to their anti-temple propaganda.⁴⁵⁰ The apostles, and thus quite naturally also the Aramaic-speaking section of the church, were left in peace because they attended the temple cult and did not differ significantly from the other inhabitants of Jerusalem.⁴⁵¹ It is indeed probable that the great persecution was ignited by the fervent and aggressive activity of a few Hellenist Christ-believers, but what I do not find totally convincing is the idea that the apostles were left untouched because of their positive attitude towards the temple cult. Neither would the conclusion that Paul consciously persecuted only the Hellenists be without difficulties. Reasons for this hesitancy are as follows:

associates in the church and DUNN 2009:274-278.

⁴⁴⁹ DUNN 2009:274.

⁴⁵⁰ HAENCHEN (1971:297) argues that Luke could not conceive that it [the Jerusalem community] fell into two distinct groups. However, Luke seems to be well aware of the language related division as Acts 6 demonstrates. Furthermore, if e.g. DUNN (2009:64-68) is correct in regarding Luke as Paul's travelling companion, the author actually visited pre-70 Jerusalem church which makes Haenchen repeatedly occurring "extreme" scepticism somewhat questionable.

⁴⁵¹ The attendance of the apostles and Hebrew Christ-believers in Jerusalem to the temple cult is implied e.g. in Acts 3:1, 21:17-26.

- 1) It is not mentioned that the apostles were not persecuted, but rather only that they did not leave Jerusalem. This may be explained, for example, by their having taken a lower profile for a while.
- 2) If the Hellenist deacons had had a high profile, it is understandable that they became the primary targets of Paul; but this may as well be due to the success of their activity as to their attitude towards the temple. It is natural that Greek-speaking Christ-believers followed these Greek-speaking figures, and that they were scattered because their leaders were. At the same time it is possible that those persecuting (like Paul) were in principle after the whole new movement.
- 3) Paul does not hint that he would have persecuted only a part of the church but τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ (Gal 1:13). For him James, John and Cephas were the pillars of the church and those with authority. I would find it somewhat contradictory if Paul had understood that he was after the Hellenistic wing of the church of God, but later pointed to the Hebrew leaders as those with most authority. Also the Judean churches, hardly consisting only of the Hellenists, understood Paul as having persecuted them (Gal 1:22-23).
- 4) In Acts 4:1-23 and 5:17-42 the apostles Peter and John are interrogated and put into prison by the Sanhedrin. For the author who finds no problem in describing the Christ-believers living in peace, the pressure to create a conflict-scene does not seem compelling.⁴⁵² And, Dunn succeeds in showing that the Lucan reconstruction of Peter's speech in Acts 2:14-36/39 is quite likely based on memories from the earliest period.⁴⁵³ This raises the question as to why the traditions about the opposition Peter faced

⁴⁵² See Acts 9:31.

⁴⁵³ For arguments see DUNN 2009:90-91. On page 91 Dunn concludes: "It remains unlikely that any initial preaching would have been so brief. But it is not an outline or a summary: it contains a complete and rounded argument. Consequently we may imagine Luke carefully inquiring of those who remembered the earliest preaching of the Jerusalem church and crafting the sermon from these memories and from emphases which had lasted from the earliest period of Christianity's beginnings in Jerusalem to his own day."

from the Jerusalem leaders would not be based on the memories of those present.

That the twelve, and the wing they represented, were not left untouched by those actively opposing the post-Easter Jesus movement is attested by the execution of James, the son of Zebedee (Acts 12:2), and the subsequent arrest of Peter. That the killing of James pleased the Jews is indicative of the existence of Jewish antagonism against the twelve and the Aramaic-speaking Christ-believers in Jerusalem. The killing of James, the brother of Jesus in 62 AD, shows that very likely the Aramaic-speaking Christ-believers were opposed and persecuted in Palestine.⁴⁵⁴ Against the background formed by these two executions it is possible that in the persecution Paul refers to in 1 Thess 2:14-15 the Aramaic-speaking Christ-believers were also targeted.

Hellenists as Persecutors

According to Acts the stoning of Stephen was agitated by men from the synagogues of Cilicians and Alexandrians (6:9), i.e. by so-called Hellenists.⁴⁵⁵ Paul, as a persecutor, can also be regarded as a member of this group due to his fluency in Greek and his Diaspora background. When Paul converted to his new faith he was chased by Hellenist Jews in Damascus. This opposition by the Hellenists continued right up to his arrest in Jerusalem sometime in 57-58 AD.⁴⁵⁶ The picture provided by Acts about the conflict in the Diaspora is a mixture of spontaneous hostile reactions against Paul's preaching and some more systematic conspiracies.⁴⁵⁷ That Paul was repeatedly flogged by the Jews with 39 lashes indicates that Synagogue leaders in the Diaspora were at least at times actively antagonistic towards the Christ-believers.

Pharisees as Persecutors

As for the Pharisees there is only one hostile Pharisee in Acts, namely Saul alias Paul, whose Pharisaic affiliation is attested also by himself

⁴⁵⁴ *Jos. Ant.* 20.9.

⁴⁵⁵ About these synagogues see especially RIESNER 1995.

⁴⁵⁶ See e.g. Acts 13:42-52, 14:1-2, 17:1-9, 10-13, 18:1-11, 28:17ff.

⁴⁵⁷ The conspiracies are mentioned in Acts 20:5 and 23:12. In Acts 17:10-13 it is told how Paul's Jewish opponents from Thessalonica went to Berea to agitate people against Paul and his companions.

(Phil 3:5). However, in the narrative of Acts he is keenly connected to the high priest, which is remarkable since Luke is well aware of the tension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Otherwise Luke handles the Pharisees in a rather friendly way in his second book. Saul's teacher, Gamaliel the Pharisee, raises his voice in favour of the Christians in the meeting of Sanhedrin (5:34), some Pharisees join the Christian movement (15:5) and in Jerusalem the Pharisees defend (23:9) Paul who identifies himself as a Pharisee (23:6). The non-hostile relationship between the Pharisees and Jerusalem Christians is also implied in the short remark of Flavius Josephus.⁴⁵⁸ He claims that it was the Pharisees who protested to Albinus about the stoning of James by the Sadducean high priest.⁴⁵⁹

The conflicts between the Pharisees and the Christ-Believers may have been more complex than the one between the Christ-believers and the Sadducees. While the majority of scholars have accepted the hypothesis that the Synoptic hostility against the Pharisees is mostly a post-70 reflection of the conflicts between the Pharisees-turned-rabbis and Christians, this viewpoint is not entirely convincing. As has been demonstrated it is possible that at least some of the traditions about the conflicts between Jesus and the Pharisees are derived mainly from actual events in Galilee, and subsequently remembered and transmitted by the twelve to the teachings in the early Christianity. When the main bulk of pre-Synoptic traditions was formed, these stories established their place without necessarily any direct sociological reaction to the prevailing situation in the life of the church. Within the current paradigm their presence in the tradition is explained better by inherited antagonism than sheer sociological reactivity. The negative role of the Pharisees in the gospel of Matthew can be explained within this hypothesis by noting that the gospel's strong appeal to Peter's authority created a challenge to those against Peter's moderate liberalism e.g. toward Gentile inclusion.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁸ *Jos. Ant.* 20.9.

⁴⁵⁹ The Pharisaic identity of this delegation is doubted by MCLAREN (2001) but it seems to me that BAUCKHAM (1999:222) is correct when claiming that Josephus undoubtedly refers to the Pharisees. See also MASON (1991:109).

⁴⁶⁰ Mt 16:16-19 is clear on this point. According to the first evangelist Peter was given the leadership role in the Church. It is also to my mind of relevance that in redacting Mk 7:1-23 Matthew (15:1-20) emphasizes that it is Peter (instead of the disciples in general) who asks the meaning of Jesus' words. RUNESSON (2008) has suggested that Mattheans were

These opponents of Peter were probably Christ-believing Pharisees, or at least closely affiliated with them.⁴⁶¹ It is of course also possible that Matthew had an axe to grind with the Pharisees for a reason unknown to us.⁴⁶²

Sadducees and (other) Jerusalem Religious Leaders as Persecutors

An important group of opponents of the early Christ-believers in the narrative of Acts are the religious leaders of Jerusalem, the same group which had given Jesus over to the Romans to be crucified.⁴⁶³ While the exactness in identification or demarcation of the actual groups was hardly the author's primary intention, it is evident that the Sadducean party, together with the High Priest who was one of them, played a major role.⁴⁶⁴ The highest Jewish legislative unit the Sanhedrin is also mentioned as one of the enemies of Christians (5:21). Since the Sadducean party was in the majority in the Sanhedrin it is reasonable to assume that they were among those "pleased" by the execution of James, the son of Zebedee, by Herod Agrippa I.⁴⁶⁵ It is hardly without significance either that all Synoptic gospels leave the Pharisees out of the picture when Jesus' actual for crucifixion is told. The role of the Pharisees in Jerusalem, at least from the Christian point of view, was not as critical as that of the Sadducees. It is quite likely, in the light of all existing evidence, that the conflict between the Sadducean dynasty ruling in Jerusalem and Christ-believers continued from the time of Jesus' crucifixion until the end of the Sadducean hegemony at the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.⁴⁶⁶ As for GS it is hardly an accident that those seen

Pharisees who criticized other Pharisees. However, the "Peter factor" does not fit into Runesson's hypothesis.

⁴⁶¹ See Acts 11:1-11.

⁴⁶² As pointed out by HARE 2000:266.

⁴⁶³ Acts 4:1-6, 5:21. For an elusive presentation of the identification of those responsible for Jesus' death see MATERA 1990.

⁴⁶⁴ Acts 5:17 "Ἀναστάς δὲ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς καὶ πάντες οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ, ἡ οὐσα αἴρεσις τῶν Σαδδουκαίων, ἐπλήσθησαν ζήλου" is indicative of the high priests inner group being at least mostly Sadducean.

⁴⁶⁵ MARSHALL 1980:207. But otherwise HAENCHEN (1971:221): "The Sadducees did not constitute an authority, therefore could arrest nobody...In reality, Sadducees' tenure of the highest offices, the character of the Sanhedrin was largely determined by the resurrectionist Pharisees: and behind the Pharisees stood the people." It remains a mystery where Haenchen derives this information.

⁴⁶⁶ See also ENSMINGER 1988.

as responsible for the bribery and invention of the rumour are not the Pharisees but the chief priests. Even though the Pharisees are suddenly introduced into the Passion story in the delegation to Pilate, they vanish away when the plot thickens. I find the presence of the chief priests and elders in the immediate context of Matthew's remark "Καὶ διεφημίσθη ὁ λόγος οὗτος παρὰ Ἰουδαίοις μέχρι τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας (28:15) strongly suggestive of the identity of the primary opponents of the Christian movement at the time of forming the story. As far as the origin of the story is dated to the period before 66 A.D., Acts is corroborative of this conclusion.

In Acts the Hellenists cooperate with the high priest and/or the Sanhedrin. The Hellenists who attack Stephen takes him to Sanhedrin (6:12) and in the Jerusalem episode (21:27) the chief agitators against Paul were Jews from Asia (Hellenists) and the high priest himself joins them. It seems, therefore, that the religious elite in Jerusalem and persecutors from Diaspora communities were to some extent collaborating in persecuting Paul. The same is implied earlier in the claim that Paul had a letter from the high priest to the synagogues of Damascus (9:2).⁴⁶⁷ Since the temple of Jerusalem was the centre of Jewry in the Second temple period this connection is quite natural.⁴⁶⁸

4.6.4. Matthew and Paul

In some presentations Matthew and Paul have been dichotomised as representing remarkably different factions in the post-Easter Jesus Movement. It is even argued that Matthew's gospel is a direct attack against the Pauline wing of the early Christianity.⁴⁶⁹ Should this be the case, we may question whether Acts and the Pauline corpus provide us with a meaningful starting point to draw conclusions over the conflicts

⁴⁶⁷ Whenever (and whoever) first told about this letter-writing clearly considered it plausible to say that the high priest had some sort of an authority position concerning the Jewish community some 242 km away. For the historicity of the remark see DUNN 2009:337.

⁴⁶⁸ For a good representation about the centrality of Jerusalem see BAUCKHAM 1995:417-427.

⁴⁶⁹ See especially SIM 1998 and 2007 for vigorous attempts to build this theory.

between Matthew and the Jewish leaders. On the other hand, if we are able to find the same basic elements of conflict in Matthew's gospel as we find in Acts and the Pauline corpus, it becomes more meaningful to speculate the type of the conflict in Matthew's context with the help of Lucan and Pauline descriptions.

While the sociological mirror reading of the gospel is - in most cases rather subjective speculation, we can reasonably assume that those parts where the evangelist's redactive contribution is evident, do not fight against his or his community's ideology.⁴⁷⁰ Especially so, if we can exclude the possibility that he is about to correct the erroneous understanding of the primary audience. Mt 28:16-20 is relevant to the current question. First, the high Christology is evident and thus the offence of the crucified Christ (1 Cor 1:23) operative among the Matthean Christians. Additionally, and more importantly, circumcision is not mentioned in the introduction of the post-Easter initiation rite in 28:19-20, which makes the identification of Matthew's gospel with anti-Pauline faction highly unlikely.⁴⁷¹ The Gentiles in the genealogy of Jesus⁴⁷² (Mt 1:1-17), the role of wise men from the East (Gentiles) in the birth story and finally the very command to disciple all the Gentiles (Mt 28:19) reflects a positive attitude towards inclusion of the Gentiles to the new Israel. That Jesus' circumcision is left without mention (contra Lk 2:21) is also indicative of an attitude similar to that of Paul as far as the Gentile mission is concerned.

Matthew, Paul and Peter

One distinguishable link between Matthew's gospel and Paul is Peter as a person and as a "remembered apostle". According to Acts (10, 11:1-18) Peter was associated with the inclusion of the Gentiles without

⁴⁷⁰ What naturally comes up in this reasoning is how we know what the ideology is if the text is not taken into consideration in reconstructing it.

⁴⁷¹ Contra SIM (2008), who sees the Great Commission as an anti-Pauline text. For Sim circumcision is such a self-evident rite for Gentiles joining the Church that the evangelist does not even mention it. But, from the very beginning the baptism was conducted to the circumcised, i.e. to the Jews. When the rite was established it would be very odd that no information about the new way to perform the baptism was given.

⁴⁷² The role of the women (some of them of Gentile origin) is especially interesting. For further elaboration and analysis see e.g. WEREN 1997, HUTCHISON 2001 and NOWELL 2008.

circumcision, and his liberal attitude towards eating together with the Gentile Christ-believers in Antioch (Gal 2:12) further confirms his basic stand in this heated issue. Peter's primary sphere of influence was among the Jews, (Gal 2:8) and it is readily understandable that a document, written for Jewish Christians and simultaneously positive toward inclusion of Gentiles without circumcision gives Peter a special position. Thus the position given for Peter in Matthean Sondergut (16:17-19⁴⁷³) is most indicative of the Petrine character of the gospel.⁴⁷⁴ Matthew's gospel is not an anti-thesis against Pauline Christianity, although its theology is partly different in emphasis, perhaps due to the Jewish character of the primary audience.

Matthew, Paul and Torah

It may be also useful to briefly comment on the alleged point of conflict between the Matthean and Pauline relation to Torah. In Mt 5:17-20 the Matthean Jesus affirms the relevance of Torah, which has been found by

⁴⁷³ Whether this goes back to historical Jesus or not is not of primary relevance in this context. For a detailed analysis of the authenticity (and a negative final verdict) see MEIER 2001:229-235, ROBINSON 1984 and (a positive verdict) DAVIES and ALLISON 1991:609-615.

⁴⁷⁴ That the rock refers to Peter is argued by numerous scholars. See FRANCE 1985:254, SCHNACKENBURG 2002:159, KEENER 1999:427, MEIER 2001:227, BLOMBERG 1992:252, WILKINS 2002:102-103, LUZ 1995:97. However e.g. GUNDRY 1994:330-336 does not regard "the rock" as a reference to Peter. So also HENGEL 2000:297.

What is essentially relevant in evaluating these interpretative options concerns the way Matthew has combined Σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς. and ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν with καὶ instead of δέ. Thus Jesus does not say "you are Peter but (δέ) on this..." as would be natural if the rock would be Jesus' words or Peter's confession. See KEENER 1999:427. Another detail defending the Peter-rock connection is the fact that the story would automatically create an association with Peter's special position and the riddle of Jesus among the hearers/readers. It is highly improbable that Matthew would not have been aware of this association and thus we can be sure that he did not want to avoid it. SIM (1998:198) states: "But it is certain that Matthew was motivated by the further consideration that his own community in Antioch was the heir to the Petrine tradition." But then, apparently because his *a priori* assumption of Matthew-Paul dichotomy demands it, he (1998:199) speculates: "Matthew apparently accepted the superiority of James over Peter. Had he not done so, then we would expect him to follow more closely Mark's rather unflattering depiction of Jesus' brother." I find it much more probable that Matthew omitted Mk 3:21 due to its somewhat derogatory potential concerning Jesus. Furthermore, Sim's reasoning is logically wanting. To omit an offence or a negative (if it was negative?) remark against someone does not make this superior to one explicitly mentioned to be the primary figure in the movement.

many to be in striking contradiction to Paul's liberalism (e.g. Rom 3:20 and Gal 2:19).⁴⁷⁵ It is evident that this way of dichotomising Matthew and Paul does not take into account the recent development in Pauline studies.⁴⁷⁶ Both Matthew and Paul considered Jesus to be the fulfilment of what was promised in the Scriptures, which also essentially formed a symbolic universe for the argumentation of both writers.⁴⁷⁷ What is more, the context of the Matthean saying (5:17-20) can quite naturally be taken as clarification of what is meant by keeping the Torah.⁴⁷⁸ It is remarkable that clarifications are in harmony with Paul's ethical teaching, which would be most awkward if the saying was anti-Pauline.⁴⁷⁹

Although Luke probably did not invent the conflict descriptions out of thin air, his descriptions of the conflicts between Paul and his Jewish opponents are subjective and one-dimensional. No counter-arguments

⁴⁷⁵ Some scholars, like VIVIANO (1990:5) regard this pericope (Mt 5:17-20) so clearly anti-Pauline that critical comments against this interpretation can safely be labelled as deriving from "a belief in the divine inspiration of scripture or from an impulse toward easy harmonization".

⁴⁷⁶ About Paul's view concerning Torah and Law see e.g. DUNN 1998:128-161. That the question of Paul's attitude toward the Law is not simply well echoed in the comment of RÄISÄNEN (1987:228): "In sum, I am not able to find in the relevant literature any conception of the law which involves such inconsistencies or such arbitrariness as does Paul's." See also BROOTEN 1990 and especially NANOS 2009.

⁴⁷⁷ See HAGNER 1997.

⁴⁷⁸ Inauthenticity of the saying should not be assumed without proper consideration of the arguments. That Jesus had to explicate his relation towards Torah during his ministry is quite likely, and acceptance of the Jewish symbolic universe (i.e. Torah) by Jesus is plausible as well. See e.g. BANKS 1974.

⁴⁷⁹ The Matthean Jesus explains his interpretation of the Torah with six introductory ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρέθη (though once only Ἐρρέθη δέ), which are not readily interpreted as countering Pauline "law-free-gospel". The first antithesis Οὐ φονεύσεις with its explication has no Pauline echo. The second Οὐ μοιχεύσεις is in harmony with Pauline gospel (see e.g. 1. Cor 6). The third command concerning the divorce is actually put milder with Matthew than with Paul! (cf. 1. Cor 7:10-11, though see the interpretation of INSTONE-BREWER 2002:189-204). The fourth command about the oaths could be seen as an antipauline statement since Paul repeatedly swears. Paradoxically enough, the apostle seems to be closer to the swearing praxis of the Torah. The fifth μὴ ἀντιστῆναι τῷ πονηρῷ is in harmony with Paul's teaching. The sixth command to love one's enemies is again in line with the teaching of Paul (See e.g. Rom 12:14). Within Sim's interpretational framework Matthew would refer to the Pauline antinomism and then explain this with statements that are essentially in agreement with the teaching of Paul! (See here also DAVIES 1989:334-336).

against the Jesus movement are elaborated on, and we are void of a contemporary (hostile) Jewish viewpoint of the conflict. This makes us hesitant to draw to detailed conclusions on the conflict dynamics on the basis of Acts. However, it is evident that the conflicts were frequent and that the question of Gentile inclusion provoked opposition from at least some Jewish leaders. Our brief analysis of Matthew's standing on these provoking issues demonstrated that it was generally similar to that of Paul. Matthew regarded the crucified Jesus as the Son of God (cf. 28:20), which was, according to Paul, offensive to the Jews. Furthermore, the Gentiles were included into the Church of God without circumcision, which in practice made Matthew vulnerable to the criticism directed at Paul in Acts 21:28.

The conflicts the first evangelist and his primary audience had with the Jews were in all likelihood not too different from the conflicts described in Acts and echoed in Paul's letters. This does not mean that the Matthean sphere of influence should be labelled (with an anachronistically sounding) Pauline, or that all differences between Matthew and Paul should be harmonized. Rather, we have examples of conflicts produced by theological theses found in Matthew's gospel, which makes us believe in the continuity of the conflict setting from Jerusalem in the early 30's to the time of writing Matthew's gospel.

4.7. Conflict History - Conclusion

When the early Christian community was formed soon after Easter, its core members very likely had a strong identity as enemies of the religious leaders. Thus, whatever took place after the death of Jesus need not be the only and direct reason for the conflict between the Jewish leaders and Christ-believers, but rather something that inflamed the already existing mutual antagonism. As far as the disciples of Jesus influenced the attitudes within the early Christian movement a certain amount of antagonism was probably spread among the Christ-believers. This mentality created a fertile soil for even minor conflicts to escalate, and to be interpreted as major acts of hostility.

As for the side of the Jewish leaders, in the light of the existing sources it seems that attempts to suffocate the post-Easter Jesus movement were made very soon after the alleged resurrection of Jesus. 1) According to Acts John and Peter were arrested soon after Easter for preaching the resurrected Jesus. 2) Paul persecuted the Christ-believers in Judea and elsewhere, probably on the recommendation of the high priest Caiaphas, 3) Stephen was stoned and a strong persecution of at least a part of the Jesus movement took place. 4) James, the son of Zebedee, was executed in the 40s by Herod Agrippa and 5) Paul was repeatedly punished by the Jews and he refers to the persecution of the Christ-believers by the Jews in Judea in his letter to the Thessalonians. 6) The numerous conflicts between Paul and Diaspora Jews in Acts are also noteworthy, and are likely to be reflective of historical reality. 7) James, the brother of Jesus, was killed by the Sadducean high priest in 62 A.D.

While it would be naïve and simplistic to claim a constant and universal conflict between the Jewish leaders and Christ-believers, it is evident that a plausible *Sitz im Leben* for introducing GS can be found from the very first public proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus to the beginning of the 60s. On the basis of both documentary evidence and reasoning with the help of social-scientific viewpoints we may rather safely suppose that the context for GS as a polemical production existed from the very beginning of Christian history. It is also notable that there seems to have existed a link between the Diaspora communities (and leaders) and the high priest. This could make the spreading of any rumour or more official counterpropaganda possible.

5.0. The Origin of the Empty Tomb Tradition

5.1. Introduction

Whatever the Guard Story (GS) is all about it is also a story about the empty tomb of Jesus. Thus the origin of the idea about a group of women finding the tomb is relevant when tracking the tradition history of the GS. In what follows we analyze three theories concerning the origin of the empty tomb story. The first is the idea according to which the story is a Markan creation. The second theory dates the origin of the story to the pre-Markan period regarding it as a late creation by an Early Christian. The third alternative is that the story originates from the Easter events i.e. that a group of women found Jesus' tomb empty a couple of days after the burial.

5.2. The Empty Tomb as a Markan Creation

John Dominic Crossan is a much admired and much disputed scholar whose innovative theories about the development of the early Christian belief in Jesus' resurrection have gained both popularity and antagonism among modern scholarship.⁴⁸⁰ His suggestion for the origin of the empty tomb story is the second evangelist's creative mind. The idea is shared by Adela Yarbro Collins who leans on the evidential force of Hellenistic parallels where the theme of an empty tomb allegedly plays an important role.⁴⁸¹ It is generally these two scholars who are the most noted representatives of the Markan creation theory.⁴⁸² As we analyze the

⁴⁸⁰ Crossan's theory is reconstructed here mostly on the basis of his representations in CROSSAN 1973, 1978, 1995, 1997 and 1999.

⁴⁸¹ COLLINS 1993.

⁴⁸² Also to be mentioned are HAMILTON 1967, GOULDER 2000:100-101, HOOVER 2000:137 and LÜDEMANN (2000:154): "In pointing out that women did not hand on the message of the resurrection to the disciples (v. 8) Mark implicitly identifies himself as the first one to tell the story of the empty tomb *-forty years* after the death of Jesus." In his

theory it is useful to begin with Crossan and then comment on Collins and others as their arguments bring something new and additional to Crossan's case. In order to evaluate Crossan's nuanced theory we need first to analyze his basic propositions, which he explicitly states as follows:

First, there are no versions of ET [*empty tomb*] before Mk. Second, those after Mk all derive from him. Third, the ET in Mk is completely consistent with and required by Markan redactional theology.⁴⁸³

We analyze these presumptions in reverse order beginning with the statement of ET being completely consistent with and required by Markan redactional theology.

5.2.1. Consistency with Markan Redactional Theology

According to Crossan the gospel of Mark is situated and actively participates in the inner strives of the early Christian movement.⁴⁸⁴ Mark 3:20-35 is thus interpreted as an attack against Jesus' family members and their status in early Christianity. The sociological background is the manifesto "against the jurisdictional and doctrinal hegemony of the Jerusalem church".⁴⁸⁵ Crossan's proof-texts are narratives and sayings where the disciples are depicted in a negative way.⁴⁸⁶ They are regarded as representative of the same hegemonic entity in Jerusalem as the family

most famous presentation Lüdemann (1994:115) basically defends Rudolf Bultmann's theory that there was a pre-Markan "apologetical legend" unit which the evangelist worked on. CARRIER (2005) also proposes one form of a Markan creation hypothesis. However, his total ignorance of Bolt's refutation of the theory decisively diminishes the value and persuasiveness of his article. MACK (1989:223): "As for the empty tomb story, that is best seen as Mark's own fiction, composed on the occasion of writing the gospel in the aftermath of the Jewish War, a narrative designed to merge the nonkerygmatic Jesus traditions with a martyrology derived from the kerygma."

⁴⁸³ CROSSAN 1976:135.

⁴⁸⁴ See especially CROSSAN 1973. Quite the same idea has been promoted by GOULDER 1991.

⁴⁸⁵ CROSSAN 1973:111.

⁴⁸⁶ E.g. Peter in Mk 10:28, James and John in Mk 10:35 and the inner circle sleeping in Gethsemane.

members of Jesus. Within this anti-Jerusalem interpretative framework the “absence of the Lord” in the empty tomb story is seen as a corrective to the emphasis of the resurrection.⁴⁸⁷ Thus for Crossan, Mark’s redactional theology requires an “absent Lord” i.e. Mark is arguing against the emphasis of others on a risen Lord by inventing the story of Jesus’ empty tomb.

The redaction criticism of Mark consists of two basic approaches; the first being the technical procedure to separate tradition from redaction.⁴⁸⁸ This is done by an analysis of the words, expressions, seams, inner tensions etc. in the text. The second approach deals with the attempt to find redactional intentions and ideological motives behind the text.⁴⁸⁹ The term “redactional theology” is sometimes used. It is widely known and easily demonstrated that any attempt to reconstruct Mark’s redactional theology and intentions is a most subjective endeavour.⁴⁹⁰ There are meaningful suggestions for a literary plot or general emphasis of the evangelist reconstructed by cautious combination of the two redaction critical approaches.⁴⁹¹ However, it remains to be seen if Crossan’s suggestion is to be counted among these.

Despite of their obvious shortcomings the disciples are chosen by Jesus, and Mk 16:7 indicates clearly that their position as those “to whom the

⁴⁸⁷ CROSSAN 1973.

⁴⁸⁸ See e.g. STEIN 1971.

⁴⁸⁹ About the grey area between strict editorial criticism and rhetorical analysis etc. see DONAHUE 1994. CROSSAN (1973) divides these approaches similarly to us.

⁴⁹⁰ As put by CROSSAN (1973:110): “In moving from redactional action to redactional intention the possibility of exegetical subjectivity is greatly increased...” The starting point of redaction critical approach to Mark has often been seen in MARXEN (1956) though earlier scholars had applied quite similar methodological tools. See e.g. LANE 1978 and MYLLYKOSKI 1997. Later Norman Perrin’s pupils and like-minded developed a school of thought with a heavy emphasis on Mark’s literal skills and creativity. See PERRIN 1977 and KELBER (ed) 1976. It is this school which is closest to Crossan. RIEKKINEN & VEIJOLA (1983:219) call this paradigm as “over-heated” referring to WEEDEN 1971 and PERRIN 1974. In a somewhat similar fashion MYLLYKOSKI (1997:103-105) points to the great variation. There are consensus themes as put by HARRINGTON (2006:67): “Nearly everyone agrees that Jesus’ central teaching in Mark’s Gospel is the kingdom of God.”

⁴⁹¹ See e.g. MOLONEY (2006) where e.g. Markan summaries are used to highlight his plot-development.

secret of the kingdom is revealed (Mk 4:11-12)" is to be continued. This theme of being appointed and chosen by Jesus is not seriously shattered by telling how the disciples slept in Gethsemane, were competing for status, failed in understanding the importance of the death of Jesus (which they later understood similarly with Mark as shown by 1 Cor 15:3-8). If the failure had been the core idea it would very likely have been found at the end of the story.⁴⁹² Surprisingly enough, Crossan tries to combine the numerous positive narratives to his theory by seeing them only emphasizing the failure. But with this method it is possible to label any description with both positive and negative details as an attack against the group described.

There is no significant way these "negative narratives" would have served the purpose of a supposedly anti-Jerusalem community. As already pointed out, the impression left after the scroll is closed, is the young man's command to the women at the tomb to go to Peter, which naturally confirmed his leadership status.

There is another theory to explain the occurrence of both positive and negative depictions of the disciples in Mark's gospel. For example Best has proposed that the function of the negative stories is pastoral, i.e., they were told to show that even those chosen by Jesus sometimes failed. Against this Crossan states:

My own adoption of the former alternative stems from one general and one particular consideration. I find it easier or more plausible to accept a real anti-Jerusalem dispute than to believe that Mark simply took the revered leaders of that church along with the respected relatives of Jesus as paradigmatic figures to illustrate a pedagogical warning.⁴⁹³

His counter-argument fails to convince. The negative narratives may have been included because they were originally derived from the very

⁴⁹² BEST (1978:556): "Whatever we decide, it is clear that Peter's name is retained or introduced by Mark, not in order to attack him, but in order to show special favour on the Lord's part towards him, presumably to balance the unfavourable impression created by the denial (if, of course, the reference in 16:7 is from the tradition, then it implies that this correction was already being carried out in the tradition)."

⁴⁹³ CROSSAN 1978:50.

disciples who were able to tell them without the risk of offending the church leaders i.e. themselves. If Peter had told about his denial of Jesus, it is no great surprise (with the element of drama which the failures of celebrities always carry) that the story was told in the communities and written down in the gospel.⁴⁹⁴ On the other hand, if there was such a strong stance against Peter in some communities, we could perhaps assume that some traces of this tension would have been left in the documents.⁴⁹⁵

5.2.2. Other Stories Derive from Mark

By stating that other ET stories derive from Mark, Crossan eliminates possible application of the CMA. Against this hypothesis it might be argued that i) John is independent from Mark⁴⁹⁶, ii) Luke has another empty tomb story in use,⁴⁹⁷ iii) Luke 24:12 and John 20:3-9 are based on

⁴⁹⁴ See EVANS 2001:463

⁴⁹⁵ The only group that Peter is actually told to have problems with seems to be the Pharisaic Christians of Jerusalem (Acts 11:2 and Gal 2:11-14). Mark with his liberal attitude to food laws and scores of anti-Pharisaic disputes hardly represented this group.

⁴⁹⁶ The scholarly world is divided on this issue and no appeal to the majority view is justified. CROSSAN'S (1999) primary evidence is the alleged repetition of Markan sandwich structure in John's passion narrative. This has been criticized in detail by BROWN 1994. While arguing that John knew Mark some scholars still maintain that the Johannine empty tomb story is mostly independent of Mark. See e.g. BARRETT 1978:561.

⁴⁹⁷ Did Luke know another version of the empty tomb story beside that of Mark? This sort of question is hard to resolve since the event described is likely to set limits to the differences. Thus it would be natural to find much common even in two independent versions. On the other hand, even if the language differed significantly it is possible that the redactor was active in polishing his source. *Generally* we may conclude that Luke used sources other than Mark and Q and these sources represent rather a broad spectrum of traditions from the parables to the nativity story. There are also tracks of independent oral sources in Luke's passion narrative. It is not untypical for Luke to combine the sources when describing an event as we see in his presentation of the temptation story (Lk 4:1-3/Mk 1:12-13/Mt 4:1-11). *Specifically* it is indicative that Luke identifies the women at the tomb differently from Mark, and suggests that he has known another version of the tomb. It is difficult to understand why he had changed Salome to Joanna and then mentioned that there were other women as well if he knew only the Markan version. There is surely a connection to the women mentioned in Lk 8:3 but the absence of Susanna is remarkable. Had Luke wanted to present the same women here as in 8:3 there was no reason to leave her from the list. Thus I suggest that Luke did know another

non-Markan tradition(s)⁴⁹⁸ and iv) Matthew 28:15 presupposes the polemic against the empty tomb which reflects the existence of this tradition,⁴⁹⁹ v) both Matthew and Mark has common Semitic source in use.⁵⁰⁰ While none of these potential counter-arguments are decisive, they are sufficient to show the relatively shaky ground of Crossan's second thesis. A detailed explanation for these above mentioned points should be given in order to justify the premise Crossan has presented.

If, for the sake of argument, we accept Crossan's opinion that John is dependent on Mark, some difficulties in this line of reasoning still remain. Let us imagine that the empty tomb story is based on an historical event and it became a part of transmitted traditions very early on. Ought not the version, which is independent of Mark, nevertheless have much in common with the Markan version of the story? In order to convince, Crossan should first provide a reasonable falsification criterion for his theory. What would these other empty tomb stories be like in the case of their being derived from a historical event? In this way Crossan's theory could cover whatever similarities or dissimilarities the two stories have, and thus fall safely outside of any kind of potential falsification. To sum up, it seems to me that Crossan presumes what remains to be proved.

5.2.3. No Versions of the Empty Tomb before Mark

While Crossan's two other statements have been rather general and difficult to prove or disprove due to their inherent subjectivity, this

empty tomb story where one of those finding the tomb was Joanna.

⁴⁹⁸ CRAIG (1992) has argued that Luke and John are not dependent on each other on this issue, which, if accepted, would decrease the persuasiveness of Crossan's hypothesis.

⁴⁹⁹ It is impossible to tell how much time we should assume between the writing of the gospels of Mark and Matthew. Crossan's theory presumes that there was so much time that the empty tomb story found its way to the ears of anti-Christian Jews who created a counter-version of the claim and that the pre-Matthean tradition maker answered this with the story of the guards at the tomb.

⁵⁰⁰ WINGER (1994) has argued that the time expression in Matthew 28:1 goes back to the Aramaic tradition which is translated a little differently in Mark. This suggestion is worth serious consideration. Another scholar suggesting Matthean independence is WENHAM 1973.

statement may be falsifiable by tradition critical analysis. The falsification criterion of Crossan's theory can be crystallized as follows. If there were signs of an earlier tradition in Mk 16:1-8 we could reject Crossan's theory *in toto*.

It has been noted by a number of scholars that a slight difference in the name lists of 15:47 and 16:1 indicates the use of two separate traditions.⁵⁰¹ Curiously enough, Crossan does not handle this argument in his standard presentations of Jesus' resurrection but in an article about another subject.⁵⁰² Admitting that his objections to the double source hypothesis are not "by any means unanswerable" he nevertheless sticks to an alternate explanation, which we will analyze next.

First Crossan asks "why did Mark want to conflate xv 47 and xvi 1 into xv 40 and thereafter show no interest in harmonizing xv 57 [probably meaning 47, *my remark*] and xvi 1 in line with this inaugural conflation?"⁵⁰³ I find the most natural explanation for this to be that the burial tradition and the empty tomb tradition which Mark had in use already included the names of the women. However, it is possible that there were no names of women watching the crucifixion mentioned in the tradition and Mark thought it meaningful to combine the lists in this "natural gap". He possibly took more liberties in a scene which probably included a rather large audience anyway, thus making the exact identification of the eyewitnesses less relevant. If the latter path of reasoning is followed we may suggest that Mark combined the groups in a place where the general impression of the tradition was more like "these and others" than "these". This may be further supported by the Markan expression "ἦσαν δὲ καὶ γυναῖκες ἀπὸ μακρόθεν θεωροῦσαι" which can be the traditional reading pointing generally to the presence of women at the crucifixion. The way Mark adds the list of women by using connective expression "ἐν αἷς καὶ – among them also" is harmonious with this line of reasoning.

⁵⁰¹ TAYLOR 1955:651-653, KRAMER 1970:147, BROER 1972:135-137, AEJMELAES 1993:78-125, MARJANEN 1995:507, EVANS 2001:530, MYLLYKOSKI 2002:62-63 and more in detail MYLLYKOSKI 1994:94-100.

⁵⁰² For his standard presentations see CROSSAN 1995, 1997 and 1999. The handling of the issue currently under study is found in CROSSAN 1973:105-110.

⁵⁰³ CROSSAN 1973:106.

Secondly, Crossan asks “if he [Mark] combined "Mary of Joses" from xv 47 with "Mary of Joseph [James⁵⁰⁴]" from xvi 1 in a rather mechanical way, might not the sequence "Mary of Joses and James" have been expected rather than the reverse. I do not consider this objection to have much merit. If Mark was conflating the name lists in 15:40 it means that he already knew what he was about to write in 15:47 and 16:1. Had he e.g. handled the empty tomb tradition after the burial tradition before writing 15:40, it is natural that the variant from the first was in his mind before the latter one. This is perfectly in line with the way the short-term memory functions. Another possibility is that James and Joses were known among the Markan primary audience (or community), James being older or otherwise more important than Joses. These possible explanations demonstrate that Crossan’s objection does not count as a proper argument.

The double-source theory has also been countered by Adela Yarbro Collins who suggests that what Mark was attempting to achieve by changing the name lists was simply stylistic variation and the avoidance of monotonous repetition.⁵⁰⁵ This explanation has some serious problems:

First, if Mark was trying to “avoid monotonous repetition” it is all but incomprehensible that he would repeat the names of the women in two consecutive verses. As we study Markan style it becomes obvious that he does not repeat name lists of several people, but uses the word *αὐτὸς* or writes the following verbs in the third person plural.⁵⁰⁶ This creates a problem for Collins’ argument for stylistic motive. Why would Mark

⁵⁰⁴ I assume that “Joseph” is a typographical error and “James” is meant.

⁵⁰⁵ COLLINS (1999:33): “But the differences may be explained perfectly well as stylistic variations that avoid monotonous repetition. It is the wording of the reference to the second woman that varies. In the second of the two instances, the reference is shortened, first in one way, then in another. Such shortening is understandable, given the lengthiness of the full reference in the first instance (15:40). Thus these differences are not evidence for the use of a source in 16:1-8.”

⁵⁰⁶ In Mk 1:16-18, 1:19-20, 5:37-38, 9:2-10, 10:35-45 (the names are repeated when the reference group changes and it is necessary to name James and John again, otherwise they are referred to with the third person plural or with the respective pronoun), 14:32-4 and 16:1-8.

suddenly make the move to find stylistic variation when he has not done it before, and does not do it in 16:1-8?⁵⁰⁷

Second, if Mark was writing under the inspiration of a creative burst he could have done more than changing the genitive structure of the name Mary.⁵⁰⁸ He names Salome in 16:1 indicating that he considered it possible to mention such names that were not found in 15:47. If this kind of alteration was within the limits of his editorial policy it is difficult to see why he would avoid monotonous repetition solely by a blurry change of a genitive before the name. Certainly he did not consider it necessary to call the mother of the sons of Zebedee first “the mother of John” and then “the mother of James”.

It is also evident that both 15:42-47 and 16:1-8 are based on independent traditions, and not only one of them. If one of them had been Mark’s invention we could have expected to find the very names of the pre-Markan tradition in it. Had e.g. 15:42-47 been tradition-based and 16:1-8 Mark’s creation it is probable that he would have referred to the names in 15:47 as “they” since this is his style elsewhere in the gospel.⁵⁰⁹ Some scholars have argued that Mark has derived all the lists from a pre-

⁵⁰⁷ For insightful analysis of the problem at hand see MYLLYKOSKI 2002:62-63.

⁵⁰⁸ So also correctly MARJANEN 1995:507.

⁵⁰⁹ MYLLYKOSKI (2002:63) suggests that the names of 15:47 were originally at the crucifixion scene and are located to their current context by Mark. I find this unlikely. If he was able to change the traditional name list of 15:40 then why could he not do it in 15:47, which was, according to Myllykoski’s hypothesis, his own redactional addition? If a somewhat rough imagined reconstruction is allowed, we should visualize a situation where the audience of Mark is silent when he changes the names of the women watching the crucifixion, but which would react negatively if the new created list of women watching the burial had been the same as in 16:1. For me this does not make much sense. With Myllykoski somewhat similarly LÜDEMANN (1994:111): “However, it is to be doubted whether the women from 15.47 were connected with the tradition of the burial of Jesus. Rather, Mark found their names in the passion tradition and put them at this point in order to make a better transition to 16.1-8.” I disagree. Mark’s motive was hardly to create a better transition since in that case the simple “they” would have done it much better. What I found a bit disturbing in Lüdemann’s general approach when writing my Master thesis of his theory of Jesus’ empty tomb was the seemingly arbitrary shifts from conservative Mark to hyper-creative Mark. He presumes Mark who was able to create stories *de novo* or all but totally change the tone of a tradition and then, when it curiously happened to match up with his hypothesis, Mark is strictly limited by the traditions he uses. See KANKAANNIEMI 2005.

Markan passion narrative.⁵¹⁰ This would actually only shift the combination of the traditions back to the phase when this passion narrative was formed. The lists as an argument against the theory of Mark having created the empty tomb story would still stand.

5.2.4. Motive for Creation

Collins makes a great effort to show similarities between the empty tomb story and Hellenistic translation-stories which reflect the idea of immortality.⁵¹¹ She begins with examples from Sumerian flood stories, Akkadian Gilgamesh-epos and translation stories of the Hebrew Bible obviously aiming to show the all-human nature of the empty tomb story. Finally she mentions heroes Hyacinthos, Asklepios, Kleomedes of Astypalaia⁵¹² and Heracles as the closest parallels to the Markan story.⁵¹³

If the global occurrence of the translation idea is related to the creation of a story about an empty tomb then this “globality” could be extended to Jerusalem at the 30s, as well as to whatever the location of Mark when he wrote the gospel had been.⁵¹⁴ At least the Hebrew Bible was in active use in the early communities, thus creating an ideological atmosphere for inventing an empty tomb story. This viewpoint only gains importance when Collins defends her way of seeing Greco-Roman influence in the gospel by stating that the language is connected to cultural milieu in which the text was written.

It could be objected that it is hard to find much influence of Greco-Roman literature in Mark. The first response that must be made to such an objection is to remind the objector that the Gospel of Mark was composed

⁵¹⁰ So. e.g. PESCH 1977, CRAIG 1985 and GUNDRY 1993.

⁵¹¹ The idea was first brought forward by BICKERMANN (1924) but gained more influence only later when e.g. HAMILTON (1965) reproduced his ideas. About the research history see BOLT 1996.

⁵¹² But see BOLT (1996:36): “The stark difference from Mark 16 is obvious: Kleomedes does not die, and he has no grave. Rather than being an ‘empty grave’ story, this is clearly a variant upon the normal translation story.

⁵¹³ COLLINS 1993:126.

⁵¹⁴ The global nature of the idea of disappearance is seen e.g. in the story from Tibet which ALLISON (2003:310-311) cites.

in Greek. This simple fact speaks volumes about the cultural milieu in which the text was written. One does not learn and use a language without being influenced by the culture of which it is part. Similarly, one does not address people competent in a certain language without drawing upon the thought-world for which that language is a vehicle.⁵¹⁵

A great number of Christians in Jerusalem in the 30s spoke Greek, thus being, according to Collins' reasoning, under the influence of Hellenistic translation-stories.⁵¹⁶ The decisive question here is why it should be Mark who has been influenced by these allegedly almost globally occurring stories.⁵¹⁷ It is important to distinguish between the use of the parallelism as an argument i) for the theory that Mark created the ETS and ii) against the historicity of the empty tomb story. As for the latter function the parallelism has been called a "formidable" argument against the historicity of the empty tomb.⁵¹⁸ The basic point is that people seem to invent stories about disappeared bodies and empty tombs. However, even if this is accepted there is no methodologically justified way to conclude who would have been most likely to invent such a story and where. The more the globality of the theme is emphasized, the more difficult it gets to exactly locate the origin of the story with the theme.

The critics of the popular theory of *theios aner* parallels of the Synoptic Jesus, have pointed out that many of the alleged parallels are not actually as close as often argued.⁵¹⁹ The same seems to apply to the parallels between Markan ETS and the Hellenistic translation and disappearance stories. The significant differences between the empty tomb stories of the

⁵¹⁵ COLLINS 1993:130-131.

⁵¹⁶ This conclusion is not dependent on our stand in the much discussed question about the influence and presence of Hellenism in 1st century Palestine. As told in Acts the so called Hellenists spoke Greek. About this definition see especially MARSHALL 1972/73.

⁵¹⁷ This applies also to an article written by SMITH (2003) where he builds a highly conjectural idea that Mark combined disappearance story and the idea of resurrection. To start (as Smith does) with Mesopotamian translation stories without any elaboration on the details of alleged parallels does not convince and sounds odd in an article where Bolt's refutation of parallelism is referred to.

⁵¹⁸ So ALLISON 2005:311.

⁵¹⁹ See BLACKBURN 1992 and KOSKENNIEMI 1998. For a list of scholars arguing against *theios aner* hypothesis see EVE 2002:14-15.

Heroes and that of Jesus, is demonstrated in a convincing manner by Peter Bolt.⁵²⁰

5.2.5. Conclusion

It has been shown that the empty tomb story is very unlikely a Markan creation. This is seen particularly in the differing name lists (15:40, 47 and 16:1), which indicate the use of sources. John Dominic Crossan's three theses concerning the story are shown to be highly subjective without evidential force. As for a possible motive for creating the empty tomb story, it has been suggested that Hellenistic parallels provided the ideological background and inspiration for the author of the gospel of Mark. This hypothesis was also found wanting as far as the evidence for the theory is concerned. The possible motive applies as well to other situations and times in early Christian history. Furthermore, the differences between the Markan story and Hellenistic parallels are finally too great to provide support for the parallel-hypothesis.

5.3. The Empty Tomb as a Late Pre-Markan Creation

The theory that the empty tomb story was created and launched decades after Easter, but before Mark wrote his gospel, has gained some following among scholars. This has been defended using Paul's silence on the empty tomb and the Markan words according to which "the women told no one". It has also been pointed out that Jesus was either not buried or that he was buried in a common grave so that the empty tomb story meets the criterion of implausibility. In what follows we analyze each of these arguments in turn.

⁵²⁰ See BOLT 1996. So also EVANS 2001:533.

5.3.1. Paul's Silence on the Empty Tomb

One argument frequently presented for the theory that the empty tomb story was created relatively late, is Paul's alleged silence about it. Even a cursory survey of the secondary literature on the subject demonstrates that the question of Paul's awareness or ignorance of the empty tomb of Jesus is a heatedly discussed topic. What we now attempt to find out is whether the argument is valid or not. Thus we move the discussion about the Paul's possible knowledge of the tomb to another chapter where the link between the concept of resurrection and an empty tomb is examined in more detail. That Paul does not mention the empty tomb story in a way in which he refers to the appearances of Christ i.e. by explicating the events is not disputed. A point sometimes missed even in some scholarly works is that a possible reference to an empty tomb is not synonymous with knowing the empty tomb story. Thus it cannot be excluded *a priori* that although Paul had not been aware of Mary Magdalene finding the tomb empty, he still reasoned that there must have been an empty tomb left behind when Jesus was raised.⁵²¹ The argument under study is based on the assumptions that the best explanation for Paul's silence is ignorance, and that he would have known the story had there ever been one. The latter assumption is reasonable, although it has not gone unchallenged in the history of scholarship. In what follows I try to compare three explanations: a) he does not know about the empty tomb story, b) he does not need it in his argumentation, c) he wants to avoid it for some reason.

Paul Did Not Know

Since nowhere does Paul explicitly mention the empty tomb, it is possible that he simply did not know about it. For many scholars this logic is sufficient, while some others elaborate the claim by pointing out that Paul certainly used it in 1 Cor. 15, thus giving a specific context where the story would fit in. As for the silence in general it is indisputable that Paul did not write everything he knew.⁵²² Suffice to

⁵²¹ Credit is to be given to LÜDEMANN (1994) for understanding this.

⁵²² This is closely connected to the complex question of Paul knowing Jesus traditions and his possible ways of using them. BULTMANN (1951:33-37) was very sceptical to the idea of Paul being interested in, save knowing about, the earthly Jesus. More recently quite similar scepticism is has been shared e.g. by WALTER 1985 and NEIRYNCK 1986.

note that he only mentions the tradition about the Last Supper (11:23ff.) in First Corinthians, and had that letter not been preserved, it could be maintained that Paul had not had any idea e.g. about Jesus being betrayed. Consequently, sheer silence can hardly be used as an argument for ignorance. The situation changes radically if a clear motive for the inclusion of a tradition can be demonstrated. The decisive question is what part of Paul's argumentation in 1. Cor. 15 would have been advanced by the reference to the empty tomb of Jesus. 1) An empty tomb is a poor proof for Jesus' resurrection and it is questionable whether the Corinthian faction denied the resurrection of Christ. 2) For some reason Paul does not use Jesus' appearances as a point of comparison to the new body of resurrected Christians, although he himself had seen an appearance of Christ. The question is why he would have used the empty tomb story? Consequently, it is questionable whether a good motive can be found for Paul to include the empty tomb story in his argumentation in 1. Cor. 15.

Paul Did Not Need

The claim, that Paul did not need the empty tomb story or any reference to it in 1. Cor 15, can be defended by a comparison to another contemporary author i.e. to Luke who surely knew the empty tomb story, but does not so much as allude to it in Acts.⁵²³ I consider this to be a weighty argument. For one thing, it shows that a first-century Christian author can write a whole book without mentioning the empty tomb story even if he is very well aware of it and even if he writes of it in another context (Lk 24:1-12). In addition, almost one third of Acts consists of speeches, thus giving more than a glimpse of the early Christian

However, numerous scholars have suggested that the apostle is more familiar with the Jesus traditions. For a moderately optimistic view see e.g. ALLISON 1982 and HOLLANDER 2000 and optimistic view STANLEY 1961, KECK 1989, HOLTZ 1991, KIM 1992 and 2002, WENHAM 1994, RIESNER 1997, DUNN 1998, BEDARD 2006. The history of the question is surveyed e.g. by WEDDERBURN 1988, BARCLAY 1993 and FURNISH 1994.

⁵²³ LEHMANN (1969:59): "Nicht gerechtfertigt wäre es aber nun, aus diesem Befund zu schließen, Paulus habe das leere Grab in keiner Weise vorausgesetzt. Der Grabesbericht selbst hat keine unmittelbare kerygmatische Aufgabe. So ist es auch verständlicher, daß weder in 1 Kor. 15, 3ff. noch in den Missionsreden der Apg. (2, 29-32; 13, 29-37) das leere Grab als ein Zeugnis für die Auferstehung erscheint.

proclamation.⁵²⁴ The speeches had a touch of Luke's redactive hand in them, and had he thought that the empty tomb story somehow improved the credibility of what was being preached we would expect to have found the story in the speeches.⁵²⁵ The speeches probably reflect the echoes of actual Early Christian preaching during the first three decades of Christian history.⁵²⁶ As already pointed out above it is rather difficult to define where in his argumentation Paul might have needed the story of the empty tomb. Thus this explanation for Paul's silence about the empty tomb appears at least as valid as the previous one.

Paul Wanted to Avoid

Could it be that Paul wanted to avoid the use of the empty tomb story although he knew it? Some possible motives for this are: 1) The women were playing the main role in the empty tomb story and Paul did not

⁵²⁴ PERVO (2006:304) counts that there is direct speech in 516 of 1002 verses in Acts.

⁵²⁵ To follow the much-referred statement of Thucydides (*The History of Peloponnesian War* 1.22.1) Luke could have thought that the empty tomb was something that was by his opinion demanded of the orators in the speech occasions. About the comparison of Thucydides' definition see e.g. BRUCE (1974) but otherwise PORTER 1990.

⁵²⁶ Of course the question as to how much the speeches of Acts actually reflect the history and how much Luke's creative mind, has been a subject of a vigorous discussion during the last hundred years or so. An insightful viewpoint to the relationship of Acts to the Greco-Roman history writing is given by GEMPF 1993. Quite often the complex issue is resolved in an overly simplistic manner. E.g. HAENCHEN (1971:448) comments the verses 15:16-18 and states: "It is not James but Luke who is speaking here." But, the use of expressions "ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ' αὐτούς" in the speech of James in Acts 15:17 and "τὸ καλὸν ὄνομα τὸ ἐπικληθὲν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς" in the epistle written in his name (Js 2:7) can hardly be accidental especially when the other common expressions are taken into account. Js. 1:27 – Acts 15:14 ἐπισκέπτομαι, Js 5:19 – Acts 15:19 ἐπιστρέφω, Js 1:27 – Acts 15:29 (δια)τηρέω and Js. 1:16, 19, 2:5 – Acts 15:25 ἀγαπητός. What makes the similarities worth mention is the relatively short passage in Acts where they occur. This suggests that the author of Acts has combined a source connected to James with his editorial touch. For similarities between Peter's speeches in Acts and 1Peter see KISTEMAKER 1990:36. About Stephen's speech SCHARLEMANN (1978:55) points out: "...in the speech accredited to Stephen no less than twenty-three words occur which are not found elsewhere in either Acts or the rest of the New Testament." "Even more remarkable," he wrote, "is the absence of such Lucan traits as *an* with the optative, *de kai*, *egeneto* with the infinitive, *en toi* with infinitive, *kath hemeran*, *kai autos*, *onomati*, *pas ho laos*, and the indefinite *tis* with a noun and *to* or *ta* before prepositions." The similarities between Paul's Miletus speech and 1 Thessalonians are demonstrated by WALTON 2000. About Miletus speech see also HEMER 1989b.

want to bring forward this somewhat embarrassing fact.⁵²⁷ 2) He had seen the risen Lord, but had not visited the tomb and therefore felt more comfortable in focusing on the appearances. 3) The empty tomb would only have confirmed the absurdity of the resurrection idea in the mind of some Corinthians who had already asked: “Πῶς ἐγγείρονται οἱ νεκροί; ποίῳ δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται”. The idea of an empty tomb may have been at the very root of the problem due to the idea of a rotten corpse crawling from the tomb. 4) The avoidance was a stylistic choice since explicating the empty tomb, which was *sine qua non* of the resurrection, would have been tautological.⁵²⁸

Paul’s ignorance of the empty tomb tradition cannot be demonstrated on the basis of his silence in his letters. The motive for potential inclusion is hard to demonstrate, and only part of what Paul knew about the life and death of Jesus is explicitly seen in the letters. Since we have a clear evidence of contemporaneous “educated silence” in the works of Luke, the argument analyzed here must be rejected as invalid.

5.3.2. And the Women Told No One

The assumedly late origin of the empty tomb story has been derived from the reaction of the women as described in Mk 16:7. According to Mark the women οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν εἶπαν which is seen as an explanation provided for the audience to account for the fact that they had not heard the story before.⁵²⁹ We have already seen that Mark is not the first to tell the story of the empty tomb of Jesus. Thus the meaning of the phrase cannot be absolute. If the words are interpreted in such a rigidly literal fashion as proponents of this theory suggest questions concerning Mark’s knowledge of the story should arise. If they never told anybody, then how could Mark know about the event?⁵³⁰

⁵²⁷ That Mary Magdalene is omitted from the list of witnesses in 1 Cor 15:3-8 might be suggestive of this. See KARTZOW 2010:11-12.

⁵²⁸ So e.g. WRIGHT 2003:321.

⁵²⁹ So e.g. BULTMANN 1931:308.

⁵³⁰ Actually LÛDEMANN (2001:114) has proposed that Mark implies himself being present at the tomb and thus being able to tell the story.

It is more probable that Mark's purpose was to tell that the women did not start the public proclamation, but rather only told the disciples what had happened.⁵³¹ In Mk 1:44 the healed leper is told μηδενὶ μηδὲν εἶπης ἀλλὰ ὕπαγε σεαυτὸν δεῖξον τῷ ἱερεῖ which clearly shows the non-absolute meaning of the similarly constructed phrase καὶ οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν εἶπαν.⁵³²

5.3.3. No Known Tomb of Jesus

One line of argumentation for the late but pre-Markan origin of the empty tomb story is based on the claim that the burial location of Jesus was not known and thus there could not have been an early story of anyone finding the tomb empty.

Is there reason to doubt the historicity of Markan burial story to such an extent that the plausibility of the early origin of the empty tomb story could be legitimately questioned? In other words, was there ever a known tomb of Jesus which could have then been found empty? As we proceed in an attempt to find an answer to this question we handle the details of the story only when it has something to do with this question. When the basic story-line of existing sources are rejected or significantly modified it is inevitable that suggestions abound, the majority of which fly safely above the radar of potential falsification. We concentrate on three alternative theories which could effectively support the later creation theory if they are demonstrated to be correct. The first one of these is the *no burial* theory made famous especially by Crossan. While this theory lacks concrete document-based evidence, its popularity justifies its share of attention.⁵³³ More serious challenges are presented by

⁵³¹ CATCHPOLE (2002:22): "In the mind of Mark, therefore, the idea of keeping totally silent is, first, antithesis of widespread public proclamation and, second, not exclusive of communication with certain specified individuals." See also SYNGE 1975:73, GRAHAM 1991:154, AEJMELAEUS 1994:78, SABIN 1998:160-163, WRIGHT 2003:630 and ALLISON 2005:303-304.

⁵³² See MALBON 1986:118. GUNDRY's (1993:1013-1014) criticism against Malbon succeeds to show few differences but I think that Malbon's central idea is not greatly changed. See also ALLISON 2005:303-304.

⁵³³ There are numerous alternative theories provided in a collection of essays edited by PRICE & LOWDER 2005. While being hesitant in labelling any study or scholar as too

Lüdemann who argues that the location of the *tomb was unknown* and Myllykoski who suggests that Jesus was buried in *a common grave for criminals*.⁵³⁴ Firstly we analyze the arguments and essential viewpoints for the non-burial hypothesis and then do the same with the common grave and unknown tomb hypotheses. Secondly the arguments for what we called a document-based theory, i.e. that Jesus was buried in a private tomb by Joseph of Arimathea, are presented to enable the comparison of different viewpoints. Finally an answer is given to the question as to whether the arguments presented should cause us to doubt the early origin of the empty tomb story.

No Burial

Arguments for the non-burial hypothesis are rather scarce and crystallized primarily in the claim that the normal procedure in Roman Empire was to leave crucified bodies to rot on the cross for days to come.⁵³⁵ Crossan regards Joseph of Arimathea as a Markan invention, who was cleverly created to act as the perfect figure between the Jews and Christians.⁵³⁶ The theory has faced harsh and poignant criticism.⁵³⁷ The Jews were exceptionally uncompromising when it came to burying the dead, and thus the situation in other parts of the Roman Empire cannot automatically be extended to Palestine.⁵³⁸ Exceptions to the Roman non-burial policy are known even outside Palestine, which further diminishes the persuasiveness of Crossan's hypothesis. And, as the remains of crucified Yohanan found at the Giv'at ha-Mivtar indicate, at least some crucified criminals in Palestine in the 20s were given a private burial. Crossan's subsequent counter-argument pointing to the

ideologically motivated this particular book reminds me of apologetical works of fundamentalist Christians who reject the historical-critical method in order to reach the predestined results.

⁵³⁴ Of course the proponents of similar theories are numerous. I have chosen Lüdemann because of his reputation as a resurrection scholar and Myllykoski because of the high level of his scholarship.

⁵³⁵ For a list of primary sources see BROWN 1994:1207-1208.

⁵³⁶ CROSSAN 1999:19-22. For a history of scholarship concerning the scepticism about Jesus' burial see LYONS 2004.

⁵³⁷ For a profound refutation of Crossan's theory see especially EVANS 2005aFit. EDDY (1995) also provides good critical insights.

⁵³⁸ For numerous examples of the importance of burying the dead for the Jews see EVANS 2005a:234-239, KEENER 1999:691-694 and BROWN 1994:1209-1211.

fact that only one crucified and buried individual (out of thousands) has ever been found fails to convince.⁵³⁹ It has been argued that usually it is impossible to make a difference between a crucified and non-crucified skeleton. In the case of Yohanan the reason for finding the nail, which pierced the man's ankle, was a piece of wood, which had attached itself to the hook-like point of the nail.⁵⁴⁰ Due to this incident the nail could not be drawn off and it remained as evidence of the cruel fate of Yohanan. An argument, which is based on "what is always done", loses its persuasiveness when the existence of exceptions to the rule is demonstrated.⁵⁴¹ Further, Crossan's theory is forced to deal with exceptionally strong multiple attestation to the burial (all the Synoptics, John, possibly independent tradition in Acts and finally the very old formula cited by Paul in 1 Cor 15:3b-8). Moreover, Mark seems to take the burial as a self-evident fact, which might be unexpected if crucified criminals had always been left hanging on the cross.⁵⁴²

The attempts to explain Joseph of Arimathea as a fictive character fail to convince. It is difficult to understand why Joseph of Arimathea would have been invented in the first place.⁵⁴³ Firstly, practically all names in Mark's gospel have good claim of being historical, and while exceptions are not to be ruled out *a priori* this does suggest that Joseph was a historical person.⁵⁴⁴ Secondly, it has been pointed out that Arimathea is a place with no theological or traditional significance, so that something else would possibly have been used as an attribute of a created figure.⁵⁴⁵ Thirdly, there is an evident tension between the role of Joseph as a member of the Sanhedrin on one hand and his act of benevolence on the other. This results in the ambiguous expressions used by the evangelists

⁵³⁹ CROSSAN 1995:168.

⁵⁴⁰ ZIAS & SEKELES 1985:191, EVANS 2005a:246–247, ALLISON 2005:361–362.

⁵⁴¹ See also LYONS 2004:36.

⁵⁴² BROWN (1994:1207): "Mark gives no hint that there was anything extraordinary in the fact that Jesus was buried, and so presumably information about ordinary attitudes of this issue would be pertinent."

⁵⁴³ See also O'COLLINS & KENDALL 1994.

⁵⁴⁴ So ALLISON 2005:355-356.. See especially BAUCKHAM 2003:44-60. AUS (2008:162-168) has made an interesting attempt to show that Joseph of Arimathea is a figure created on the elements found in Jewish traditions. With due respect to the innovativeness of his suggestion, I find his explanation utterly speculative.

⁵⁴⁵ So e.g. BROWN 1994:1240. See also LYONS 2004:32.

to describe him. For Mark (15:42) he is a Sanhedrinist who ὃς καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν προσδεχόμενος τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, for Luke (23:50-51) he is ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ δίκαιος who προσεδέχετο τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ with explanatory οὐκ ἦν συγκατατεθειμένος τῇ βουλῇ καὶ τῇ πράξει αὐτῶν. John (19:38) calls him as μαθητῆς τοῦ Ἰησοῦ κεκρυμμένος δὲ διὰ τὸν φόβον τῶν Ἰουδαίων. Matthew (27:57) interprets the benevolence as a sign of discipleship. The reactions of the evangelists are good indications of the ambiguity of the Markan description. If there is any tendency to be traced it is the need to explain and somehow alleviate the role-act disconcordance imbedded in the Markan tradition. It seems reasonable to me to presume that neither Mark nor a pre-Markan Christian would have created such a hard to define character as Joseph of Arimathea in a key position.⁵⁴⁶

Unknown Tomb

Lüdemann has argued that there was not a tomb known to be Jesus' to be found in the first place, and thus the empty tomb story must be fictional. He writes:

We can only conjecture the precise place of the burial of Jesus. The hypothesis that he was buried in the family tomb of Joseph of Arimathea comes to grief on the tendency of the early Christian accounts, which betray knowledge of a dishonourable burial of Jesus, or fear one. The assumption that Jesus was buried in a cemetery for those who had been executed, a Jewish practise, is almost impossible, because Jesus had not been executed by Jewish authorities.⁵⁴⁷

Lüdemann's argument is based on an assumed evolution of the burial story from a hostile and dishonourable act to an honourable and friendly entombment. I find this line of thinking methodologically problematic. Furthermore, the actual data does not seem to support Lüdemann's interpretation. Methodologically it is questionable to extrapolate the tendency from Mk to Lk or Mt to match up with the tendency from a pre-Markan burial story to Mark's version when the pre-Markan version is not known. As a matter of fact there is one consideration which works against this conjecture. If Mark's version is of such a nature that all the

⁵⁴⁶ So also ALLISON 2005:354-355.

⁵⁴⁷ LÜDEMANN 1995:23

other evangelists think it necessary to improve and embellish it, is not this an indication of the story's embarrassing nature? If so, who would invent a story that so desperately needs improvement? In Lüdemann's redaction critical paradigm there are no remarkable constraints hindering the author from free creativity. Then why did he not create a properly embellished story if he was under pressure to embellish the dishonourable burial to an honourable one? It is also not without significance that there is actually no such clear tendency to be traced, but only the reactions to Markan (or in John's case possibly to a pre-Markan) version.⁵⁴⁸

Common Grave

Myllykoski admits to the burial, but argues that Jesus was probably buried in the grave of criminals.

It is reasonable to assume that Joseph of Arimathea had something to do with the burial of those crucified so that later Christians could imagine that he took care of the body of Jesus. Since there is some evidence of burial of the criminals crucified by the Romans, Jesus may have been buried like any one of them.⁵⁴⁹

There probably was a burial place for executed criminals who were denied the proper burial by family members.⁵⁵⁰ There is also early documentary evidence of a graveyard for foreigners in two separate traditions describing Judas' death.⁵⁵¹ In Myllykoski's hypothesis, which, unlike Crossan's, cannot be rejected as implausible in the Jewish environment, Joseph would have been involved in putting Jesus' corpse

⁵⁴⁸ I have analyzed the alleged development in detail elsewhere. See KANKAANNIEMI 2005.

⁵⁴⁹ MYLLYKOSKI 2002:82.

⁵⁵⁰ Tractate Sanhedrin VI. 5b: "Furthermore, any one who allows the dead to remain overnight transgresses a negative command; but if it has been allowed to remain for purposes of honour, to bring wrappings or a coffin, there is no transgression. Criminals were not buried in their fathers' burying places; but two burying places were prepared by the court: one for the stoned and burnt, and one for the decapitated and strangled. 6. When the flesh had been consumed, the bones were gathered and buried in their proper place. The kinsfolk came and saluted the witnesses and the judges, to show that they bore no ill-will, since the trial was just. They did not make (open) lamentation 1 for the criminal: they mourned, but only in their own heart." transl. By Herbert Danby 1919.

⁵⁵¹ Matt 27:3-10, Acts 1:16-19.

into the common grave. On the other hand the buried body of the crucified Yohanan shows that this is not the only plausible option in first century Palestine. In what follows I bring forward a few critical considerations concerning Myllykoski's theory.

First, as for the finding Jesus' tomb empty in general, I am not convinced that the identification of Jesus' body would have been impossible even if he had been buried in the common grave. As a matter of fact *Sanhedrin* VI:6 implies that the bones could be identified later.⁵⁵² There remains, therefore, a theoretical possibility that the women followers of Jesus saw the burial in the common grave and then visited the site afterwards but did not find Jesus' body. Unfortunately we do not exactly know what the difference between private tombs and those given to the bodies of dead foreigners and executed criminals was. Thus the argument "Jesus' tomb could not be found empty because he was buried in the common grave of criminals" fails to convince until this question is resolved.

Secondly, since the primary apologetical and theological task in the early Christian theologising seems to have been demonstrating the continuum between the Holy Scriptures and the things which happened in Jesus' life, it would be quite surprising that the burial in the common grave of criminals was not interpreted as a fulfilment of Isa 53:9.⁵⁵³

Thirdly, why would Joseph of Arimathea have been remembered and mentioned if he had simply put Jesus' body into the common grave for criminals? The act would not have been seen as benevolent, but rather only a necessary duty to be performed by an observant Jew. The idea that Joseph had been in charge of putting criminals into the common grave and somehow a Christian had later discovered his name and made him bury Jesus in a private grave in his story stretches the very limits of credibility. Why Joseph? If he was a man known to bury people in common graves it would have sounded odd that he would do something different to Jesus. The association to common grave would be disturbingly strong if "the common grave man" had played a major role

⁵⁵² "When the flesh had been consumed, the bones were gathered and buried in their proper place". About the practise of the second burial see especially MCCANE 1990.

⁵⁵³ καὶ δώσω τοὺς πονηροὺς ἀντὶ τῆς ταφῆς αὐτοῦ according_to LXX. So e.g. ALLISON 2005:363.

in a private burial. If it was only a sporadic act of a Torah-concerned individual it was something that every good Jew was expected to do and thus there would have been no reason for regarding the act as particularly benevolent. I do not consider this to be a sufficient reason to guarantee the conservation of the name in tradition. It is more probable that something unexpected in Joseph's act inspired Jesus' followers to remember his name, and the private burial by a Sanhedrinist matches well with this "unexpected".

Fourthly, there are named eyewitnesses to the burial mentioned in the oldest document. Myllykoski's and also Lüdemann's argumentation is dependent, even to the point of potential falsification, on their judgment of 15:47 as a redactional (and fictional) addition. According to them there were no women watching the burial. We have already seen that to regard 15:47 as redaction is not the most natural interpretation of the varying name lists in 15:40-16:1. This leads us to tradition historical consideration of the burial story and the names attached to it. In order to persuade the majority of the critical scholars the proponents of "the unknown location of the tomb" or "the common grave" hypotheses should be able to provide reasonable arguments for the essential non-historicity of the story, otherwise the hypothesis is bound to be read into the category named poignantly by Dale Allison as "unsubstantiated conjectures that are potentially endless".⁵⁵⁴

Private Burial

The claim that Mary Magdalene and some other women were watching Jesus' burial sounds plausible. The crucifixion was very much a public demonstration and thus it is obvious that watchers-by felt it safe to be around. That there were women sympathizers watching the crucifixion and the subsequent burial is most probable. i) It is what is told in the documents;⁵⁵⁵ ii) women were possibly not considered to be a similar

⁵⁵⁴ ALLISON 2005:355. This should in no way interpreted as a general estimation of Myllykoski's and Lüdemann's works. Myllykoski, in particular, provides scores of insightful viewpoints, profound research historical presentation and sharp analysis of various alternative interpretations.

⁵⁵⁵ Whatever is thought about literal and naïve reading of the texts it should never be forgotten that they are finally the primary evidence we analyze in order to find echoes of historical events. What bothers me e.g. in reading Crossan's reconstructions of Early

potential threat to executors as male followers.⁵⁵⁶ This diminishes somewhat the force of the potential argument that they would be elsewhere due to a fear of getting punished or because they were not allowed to enter the area, and ii) Given that they were watching the crucifixion it would be odd that none of them would follow those taking care of the burial. Motives for following are not hard to find; sheer human curiosity being one good candidate. Visiting the graves of loved ones is such a global phenomenon that one motive for following the burial may simply have been to acquire knowledge about the location of the tomb for later visits.

Would a first-century Christian create a burial story and set the women to watch and witness the burial? It seems that the presence of the women in the story emphasizes their eyewitness role.⁵⁵⁷ This brings forward the question as to why the women were used instead of more appreciated male witnesses. To assume that there were no men present in Mark's story fails to convince. In the Markan story Peter had been following Jesus to the high priest's yard (14:54) and Simon Cyrene was at the site of the crucifixion "ready to be used as an eyewitness for burial".⁵⁵⁸ The women did not actually participate in the events in 15:42-46, and their presence in the verse 47 seems to answer the question "and how is this known?", a relevant question considering the fact that those burying Jesus were not disciples or otherwise present in the early Christian communities.⁵⁵⁹ Thus, I find it improbable that 15:42-47 had been an

Christian history is his negligence of documents and his heavy use of unsubstantiated theories. The overheated version of redaction criticism can easily turn the documents into wells of words waiting for a clever scholar (like Crossan) to bend them to whatever happens to suit his or her purposes best.

⁵⁵⁶ As pointed out by MARJANEN 1995.

⁵⁵⁷ See BYRSKOG 2000:73-81.

⁵⁵⁸ Mark clearly assumes that his readers know Alexander and Rufus, Simon's sons, which sets the historicity of the role of Simon in the Passion narrative "beyond reasonable doubt". See BYRSKOG 2000:37. FUNK et al (1993:154-155) suggest that Simon was a fictional creature to demonstrate how Simon Peter had failed, and another Simon must take his place. LYONS 2006:141 claim that it cannot be decided whether Rufus and Alexandros actually are real people known to Mark's recipients is astonishing. I am left wondering whether any conclusion whatsoever can be drawn on the historical events if the burden of proof is made that heavy.

⁵⁵⁹ The eyewitness role of the women is emphasized, correctly I think, by BYRSKOG 2000:73-81 and BAUCKHAM 2006:48-51.

independent tradition, to which the fictional eyewitnesses were attached later. Should the need for fictional eyewitnesses have occurred later, they would in all likelihood have been men. This creates a serious problem for both the hypotheses of Lüdemann and Myllykoski.

We have seen no ground in the arguments against the essential historicity of the burial of Jesus by Joseph of Arimathea in a tomb, which could later be identified.

5.4. The Early Origin of the Tradition

5.4.1. No Women as Witnesses in a Created Story

One of the most important reasons why the majority of scholars tend to regard the empty tomb story as basically historical is the presence of women as the finders of the tomb.⁵⁶⁰ In the cultural climate where early Christianity originated and grew, the testimony of a woman was substantially inferior to that of men. Thus the argument lies in the premise that nobody would have created a story with such a poor evidential power when its persuasiveness could have been so dramatically improved by simply changing the identity of the finder of the empty tomb.⁵⁶¹ The argument can be divided into three assumptions.

Assumption 1: If the story was invented its purpose was to convince the audience about the fact of the empty tomb of Jesus.

⁵⁶⁰ The claim of majority is based on the study conducted by HABERMAS (2005) who concluded that approximately 75% of scholars believe in the basic historicity of the empty tomb story.

⁵⁶¹ This idea in various forms is found e.g. in NAUCK 1956, MOULE 1968:9, KRAMER 1970, BODE 1970:240, LANE 1974:589, LADD 1975:90, STEIN 1977:26, CRAIG 1981:192, OSBORNE 1984:200, PERKINS 1984:94, GUNDRY 1993:995, AEJMELEUS 1994:84, WITHERINGTON 1995a:323, DAVIES & ALLISON 1997:661-662, WEDDERBURN 1999:57-61, KEENER 1999:698-699, BYRSKOG 2000:73-75, CATCHPOLE 2002:200, EVANS 2001:531, BLOMBERG 2002, ALLISON 2005:326-331, WRIGHT 2003:607-608, DUNN 2003a:833.

Assumption 2: A man would be a better and more convincing witness for the invented claim than a woman.

Assumption 3: There would have been no reason not to introduce a man to the story as a finder of the tomb.

The sceptics of the argument have focused mainly on the third assumption and maintained that the innovative tradent had restrictions, which kept him from adding men as discoverers of the empty tomb. Gerd Lüdemann, following Bultmann, accepts the first assumption but suggests that the women were already present in the Passion narrative, and thus the empty tomb story could have worked as an explanation of how they had come to faith, and moreover that the male disciples had already fled and thus could not be used as witnesses to the empty tomb. He also criticized the second assumption by stating that the women's testimony was not so weak in the Greco-Roman world as in the Jewish culture. This last argument implicitly means that the testimony of a woman was more or less equal to that of man in the Greco-Roman setting. It hardly makes any difference to the main argument if the status of a woman's testimony is weak in the Greco-Roman world and even weaker in the Jewish cultural milieu. Myllykoski approaches the dilemma from a totally different angle by questioning primarily the first assumption. He suggests an explanation in that the women had been looking for the body of Jesus and this futile searching became the starting point for the legendary tradition of the empty tomb. He also refers to the possibility that nobody was trying to convince anybody "in terms of legal proceedings".⁵⁶²

⁵⁶² MYLLYKOSKI (2002:49): "Those who follow the traditional arguments may ask with Stephen T. Davis: 'If the story [of the empty tomb] is an apologetical legend invented by later Christians, why is it that the story is made to hang so crucially on the testimony of women, whose evidence was not legally admissible in Jewish proceedings?' It is not difficult to imagine a quite plausible, but equally unverifiable counterargument: women might have been looking for the body of Jesus, and their quest and personal experience became the starting point for the legendary tradition of the empty tomb. It is not necessary to imagine here an intention to convince anybody in terms of legal proceedings."

Assumption 1: Invented to Convince

If the story of the finding the tomb empty is fictional it is logical to assume that there is a reason for creating it. One popular suggestion is that the corporeality or concreteness of Jesus' resurrection is emphasized by the story. Whatever the theological message the originator tried to convey it must have been important to get his audience to believe that the story was true, otherwise the theological point would have lost its force. Myllykoski challenges this and ponders whether the women could have been searching for Jesus' body and when they did not find it the story of an empty tomb began to take shape. I find this suggestion problematic mainly for two reasons. First, if Jesus had been buried in a common grave of the criminals, as Myllykoski suggests, it is probable that the location was known for the public and thus Jesus' body would have readily been found by anyone interested. Secondly, with due respect to using historical imagination, the idea that a failure in finding a tomb would grow into a story where the women find the tomb empty fails to convince. There should be some reason for developing the story and telling it, which takes us back to the need of convincing someone with the story. Whether the intention was to convince someone "in terms of legal proceedings" or not, is not relevant as far as the originator of the tradition has tried to convince someone of the truthfulness of the story. If the value of woman's testimony was inferior to that of a man in the legal context, it is a reflection of a broader cultural phenomenon and the presence of a woman as a witness unexpected.

To summarize this assumption it can be stated that if someone had created the story of the women finding the tomb empty, he surely had a reason for doing this. That this reason included the need to *convince* his audience of the factuality of this new piece of information is inevitable. This need to convince means that having convincing witnesses would be most helpful. However, if the story was told because it was more or less what had actually happened, it is understandable that no efforts are made to prove the fact which itself requires an explanation. The lack of these efforts in the Markan empty tomb story is striking. The first curious fact in the story is the lack of scriptural references which otherwise abound in the Passion story.⁵⁶³ This absence of biblical allusions is a

⁵⁶³ NAUCK 1956:249-250.

rather serious challenge to the claim that the story is an apologetical legend.⁵⁶⁴ The originator of the tradition does not depict the actual resurrection i.e. Jesus coming out of the tomb, which would have answered many potential questions for good. Neither is the corporeality of the resurrected emphasized which, while it may not totally exclude it does seriously question the hypothesis that the concreteness of the resurrection was at stake. The general impression in the story is that the empty tomb has no factual value, and requires an explanation, which makes the reconstruction of *Sitz im Leben* for the creation of the story difficult.⁵⁶⁵ Thus, it seems that convincing someone about the empty tomb was not the motive for telling the empty tomb story for the first time.

Assumption 2: A Man is a More Convincing Witness than a Woman

A man would be a better and more convincing witness for the invented claim than a woman. To my knowledge, no scholar has argued that the testimony of a woman would have been in every respect equal to that of a man in the first century. However, it has been maintained that the difference in the value of the testimonies between men and women was less decisive after all. Lüdemann, for example, has argued that the status of a woman's testimony was not as bad in Greco-Roman as in the Jewish context.

To begin with, it is necessary to point out that Lüdemann's idea of implying that the empty tomb story was created in Greco-Roman context is a disputable choice on its own right.⁵⁶⁶ Neither is it as clear as

⁵⁶⁴ Some scholars have pointed to the presence of an angel as a legendary feature in the story. See e.g. GOULDER 2000:100. But even this is a feature that explains the emptiness of the tomb instead of proving its factuality.

⁵⁶⁵ LANE (1974:587): "The emptiness of the tomb possessed no factual value in itself. It simply raised the question, What happened to the body?" See also AEJMELAEUS 1994:89, MARXEN 1968:25 and CATCHPOLE 2000:202.

⁵⁶⁶ Many scholars have argued for the existence of Semitic features in the empty tomb tradition which, if accepted, would speak for Palestinian origin of the tradition. In this case it is the Jewish context which should rule the discussion. ALLISON (2005:328) argues: "Surely the story of the empty tomb arose in Jewish-Christian circles. Mark 16:1-8 speaks of the Sabbath and alludes to the Decalogue's injunction against doing business then (vv. 1-2). It seems to refer to the sort of round stone used to close some tombs around Jerusalem (vv. 3-4...). It reflects the Jewish tradition of imagining angels to be

Lüdemann claims that the women's testimony would have been much more appreciated in the Greco-Roman world than in Palestine.⁵⁶⁷ The relatively high number of Gentile women who voluntarily converted to Judaism in the Greco-Roman world suggests that their status was hardly much worse in the Jewish culture than in the surrounding Greco-Roman context.⁵⁶⁸ The term "Greco-Roman world" may also be a little problematic in this particular case since scholars specialized in gender issues of that time regularly argue that the status of women in Rome was remarkably different from that of Greece.⁵⁶⁹

It is illustrative to read what a contemporary of Socrates, Xenophon, writes concerning the intellectual capacity of a woman.⁵⁷⁰ When watching a skilled girl dancing, Socrates states that woman's nature is not inferior to man's, only to get Antisthenes to ridicule him for the difficult character of Socrates' wife. It is evident that Socrates' comment: "ὥστε εἴ τις ὑμῶν γυναῖκα ἔχει, θαρρῶν διδασκέτω ὅ τι βούλοιτ' ἂν αὐτῇ

young...It designates Jesus as "the Nazarene"...It shows an interest in Galilee (v. 7). And it uses the language of resurrection for his vindication: "He is risen" ..."

⁵⁶⁷ E.g. STARK (1995:234): "In Athens, women were in relatively short supply due to female infanticide, practiced by all classes, and from additional deaths caused by abortion. The status of Athenian women was very low. Girls received little or no education. Typically, Athenian females were married at puberty and often before. Under Athenian law a woman was classified as a child, regardless of age, and therefore was the legal property of some man at all stages in her life. Males could divorce by simply ordering a wife out of the household. Moreover, if a woman were seduced or raped, her husband was legally compelled to divorce her." On the other hand e.g. in Sparta women's position was remarkably higher than in Athens. However, according to SEALEY (1990:6) we have more information about Athens than about any other Greek city. While often thought as having things better than the Greek the Roman women had their problems with status as well. COTTER (1994:367): "In the matter of public presence, Roman culture did not allow women to call attention to themselves. In legislative and juridical assemblies women were excluded from any leadership role and any role that would bring attention to themselves. In this aspect, Roman conventions were no different than what one could find anywhere else around the Mediterranean." See also SAWYER 1996:17-31. BYRSKOG (2000:74) states after actually going through primary sources: "Their [the women] situation might have been somewhat better according to Roman law, but again, only in exceptional circumstances."

⁵⁶⁸ See LIEU 1998. STARK (1995) argues with good bases that among the Christians women enjoyed of an exceptionally high status. See also KEE 1992.

⁵⁶⁹ See e.g. SAWYER 1996.

⁵⁷⁰ Xenophon Symposium 2.9.

ἐπισταμένη χρῆσθαι” implies that he is, against the prevailing culture, positively oriented toward the women’s abilities. However, Antishtenes’ question: “Πῶς οὖν, ἔφη, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὕτω γιγνώσκων οὐ καὶ σὺ παιδεύεις Ξανθίππην” indicating that in real life even Socrates lives according to stereotypical sex roles, i.e. he left his wife without education.

The suspicion concerning the intellectual capacity of women even by such an equality-oriented writer makes it hard to believe that someone from this cultural climate would choose female witness to convince others of the reliability of his report had male witnesses been available. In the Roman context there was a clear division between a women’s influence in domestic vs. public life. Since the latter was a world mostly out of reach of women it is to be expected that a created story meant for the “public use” would not include, at least exclusively, female witnesses.⁵⁷¹

Since many features in the story speak for a Jewish-Christian context, it is meaningful to analyze the status of a woman’s testimony in the Jewish culture as well. The often-repeated statement that “women’s testimony was of no value in the Second temple Judaism” is slightly simplistic, and ignorant of the complex sociological dynamics always imbedded in gender issues and roles.⁵⁷² There are numerous examples of women’s valid testimony in rabbinic literature.⁵⁷³ On the other hand statements despising the word of a woman are not lacking either.⁵⁷⁴ While Josephus

⁵⁷¹ See e.g. COTTER 1994:367.

⁵⁷² So CRAIG (1985), O’COLLINS & KENDALL (1987:631) and DAVIS (1993:73) who may not give a totally correct estimation when neglecting the chance of female testimony *in toto*. It is also evident that JEREMIAS’ (1958:232-250) viewpoint that the female testimony was accepted only in rare cases may be exaggerated. For a brief bibliographical survey of recent studies of the status of woman in Judaism during the Late Antiquity see BASKIN 2003:49-50.

⁵⁷³ E.g. M. Sheb. 3.10-11, M. Sanhedrin 3.3, M. Yeb. 13:13, M. Nebarim 11.10 (9 cases where woman’s vow is valued and binding. M. Sot 9.8, M. Sot. 6.4. See WITHERINGTON 1984:9-10 and BYRSKOG 2000:73-75.

⁵⁷⁴ E.g. M. Yeb. 15:1, 8-10; 16:7, Ketub. 1:6-9, T. Yeb. 14.10. BAUMGARTEN (1957: 267-268): “In the Mishna, too, the disqualification of women was not specifically codified, but referred to indirectly as a matter of common knowledge (cf. Rosh ha-Shanah 1.8). There is no evidence, so far as I know, of women acting as witnesses in criminal cases in any ancient Jewish source.

writes of an actual case where a woman testified in a court, his general attitude is well crystallized when he writes: "From women let no evidence be accepted, because of the levity and temerity of their sex".⁵⁷⁵ Although the question is somewhat more complex than is sometimes implied, it is evident that a woman's testimony was considered to be significantly less reliable than that of a man.

The reference to the legal context has been criticized since the Early Christians were not going to court with the story.⁵⁷⁶ It is true that the presence of the women in the empty tomb pericope should be analyzed within a larger framework in relation to the social location of a woman in the Judaism in Late Antiquity.⁵⁷⁷ The criticism misses the mark, however. The legal context surely reflects the general values and models prevailing in the deep layers of the surrounding culture. It is even possible that in the legal context the attitude towards an otherwise despised witness is somewhat higher than in less organized and official situations. In many cases the supply of witnesses in the court is restricted by numerous factors. This makes the choice of a woman witness understandable only if there were no other people around, and that this is generally known. The situation is different when someone is creating a story and the restrictions are much looser or next to non-existent. The fewer the restrictions, the more freedom there is in choosing the optimal witness. Both in the Greco-Roman and Jewish context the testimony of a woman was considered to be remarkably lower than that of a man. What still remains to be explored briefly in this respect is the context of the Early Christian movement.

Whatever the origin of the empty tomb story it is certain that it was first formulated and told in the context of the Early Christian movement.

⁵⁷⁵ *Jos. Ant.* 4.8.15.

⁵⁷⁶ SETZER (1997:261): "Discussions of whether or not women's witness was legally valid seem out of place since this is hardly a legal context." So also MYLLYKOSKI (2002:49) "It is not necessary to imagine here an intention to convince anybody in terms of legal proceedings."

⁵⁷⁷ ELDER (1994:220): "Social location is defined as the subject's relationship to external aspects of reality within her community that shape, determine, and define her status and influence within that community."

Thus our primary task is to evaluate its birth and expected reception⁵⁷⁸ within this ideological environment. We have seen above that the social location of a woman was relatively low in the ancient Mediterranean world, but it has been claimed that the position of women in Christian congregations was remarkably better than elsewhere.⁵⁷⁹ The positive attitude of Jesus towards women is noticeable, and this likely left its marks on the later development of the Christian movement as well.⁵⁸⁰ There were, for example, numerous female leaders in the early Christian congregations.⁵⁸¹ Demographic estimates of an exceptionally high relative number of women in Christian congregations speak for Christian churches being status-elevating entities for women.⁵⁸² Because of their number it is reasonable to assume that they also provided means for maintaining the congregational operations, which naturally provided

⁵⁷⁸ Expected reception can be defined as what the originator of the story expected as a reaction from his audience when first hearing about the empty tomb.

⁵⁷⁹ The status of women in the Early Christianity has been a heatedly discussed topic during last decades. For those arguing for a positive status see e.g. BOUCHER 1969, RADER 1984, SCHÜSSLER-FIORENZA 1986, D'ANGELO 1990, THORLEY 1996. BELLAN-BOYER 2003, BEAVIS 2007. A close connection to the modern day ideological phenomena makes an objective evaluation only more challenging. E.g. KRAEMER (1999) attempts to show that Jesus' relation to women did not differ from that of Judaism of his day but despite of her making good observations the case as a whole is plagued by an explicit ideological concern to show that "Judaism is not inferior to Christianity". For like-minded scholars see e.g. LEVINE 1994 and SETZER 1997:269. For good observation about the ideological biases see ILAN 1995:23. I find the fierce discussion on the "Christian feminist anti-judaism" a little disturbing since both sides reflect their analyses against the modern ideological background. For an illustrative example of the discussion see e.g. LONG 1991, PLASKOW 1991, SIEGELE-WENSCHKEWITZ 1991, WACKER 1991, VAN DIJK-HEMMES 1991.

⁵⁸⁰ See an analysis of gospel material in WITHERINGTON 1984. Important points are summarized in THEISSEN & MERZ 2001:203-207. In Luke 10:38-42 Mary is *πρὸς τοῦς πόδας τοῦ κυρίου* which very likely indicates a similar rabbi-student situation as in Acts 22:3 and *ἤκουεν τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ*. See e.g. MARSHALL 1978, WITHERINGTON 1984:100-116, SCHÜSSLER-FIORENZA 1986, WALL 1989, D'ANGELO 1990:78, GREEN 1997:435 and HEARON 2004:392. It is likely that Jesus taught women to be his disciples much in the same manner as men, especially if we assume that Jesus gave private teaching to his disciples preparing them for mission and then in public and more general teaching for the crowd as hinted at in Mk 4:10-12.

⁵⁸¹ For a good analysis of women's leadership status in Pauline congregations see COTTER 1994. See also LUTER 1996.

⁵⁸² About these estimates see STARK 1995.

them with indirect (and direct) power.⁵⁸³ The idea of radical equality as expressed in Gal 3:28 and the charismatic nature of the worship giving space for ecstatic proclamation of both sexes were obviously important factors in creating a rather liberal atmosphere for women in the congregations. This leads us to the question, sometimes ignored in the discussion, concerning the status of a female witness. Even if the culture in general was suspicious of a female testimony, is it not plausible that it was more highly valued in more equality-minded Christian communities?

Against the above-described general atmosphere it is understandable that traditions with a positive (sometimes even quite radically so) attitude towards women were preserved in Christian communities. On the other hand, it is striking that Mary Magdalene is not mentioned in the list of the eyewitnesses of the risen Christ in 1. Cor 15:3-8. The reason for this omission quite probably has something to do with the low value of a woman's testimony in general, or with the hesitancy in giving a woman such an important status as her name in the list would doubtlessly have provided.⁵⁸⁴ Since women had important positions in the early Christian movement, and the experience of Mary is described in Matthew (28:9) and John (20:14), it is more likely that the poor value of her testimony outside the Christ-believing communities was the reason for the omission.⁵⁸⁵ Against this background it would be awkward that someone creating a story would add a woman as a witness in a context where otherwise women's testimony was omitted from the "official" resurrection tradition.

Things that had happened could be told in narrative texts even though they did not exactly promote or match up to the ideals of the community, but these were not included in more official confessions with a strongly apologetic tone.⁵⁸⁶ The gender dynamics, agelessly prevalent in human

⁵⁸³ However, this was in all likelihood case in the Pharisaic movement as well. See ILAN 1995.

⁵⁸⁴ An insightful sociological analysis of the social location of a woman is provided by MENÉNDEZ ANTUNA 2007:582-592.

⁵⁸⁵ See also BOVIN 1984.

⁵⁸⁶ This decisive distinction is totally missed by CROSSLEY (2005:184) in his attempt to explain the women's presence in a created story. He writes: "What we should not forget

cultures, conferring status and position on women in a “domestic, ingroup scene” but withholding it when it comes to relationships with outgroups, appears to have prevailed in the early Christian movement. Consequently, had someone created the story of an empty tomb in the communities where this formula created the core of the whole belief system, it could be expected that the names of those allegedly finding the empty tomb of Jesus would have been taken from the list found in 1. Cor 15:3-8. Crossley has argued that the significant role of the women in Jesus’ ministry would have made their testimony acceptable to some. This viewpoint is certainly sufficient for explaining why the women were at the tomb and possibly why the event was remembered and spread but it does not mean that someone would have created a story with second-class witnesses. Had the tradition been invented to promote “a feminist agenda” and to bring prestige for these women, it is curious that they are submitted to male disciples (see v. 7) who become the recipients of the appearance of the risen Christ.

Despite attempts to argue the contrary, the absence of Mary Magdalene from the old Christian resurrection tradition is very hard to combine with the idea that the finding of Jesus’ empty tomb by women would have been created by an anonymous Christian long after Easter.

The embarrassing nature of the story is also demonstrated elsewhere. We can detect a more or less implicit tendency to defend and explain the presence of women’s testimony in early Christian traditions and writings.⁵⁸⁷ Every evangelist focuses on male confirmation in addition to

is that women had been given a notably significant role in Jesus’ ministry which may have made their testimony more acceptable for some.” This explains exactly the opposite. Since the women had that role in Jesus’ ministry their testimony was believed and harboured in subsequent traditions. But if someone had created the story *ex nihilo* he would have chosen men in order to convince as many as possible. I believe that women’s testimony was no more acceptable than men’s for nearly anyone in the Early Christian movement or elsewhere. See also WRIGHT 2005:221.

⁵⁸⁷ SETZER (1997:264): “In spite of their unanimous transmission of the tradition of women’s witness, in other ways the evangelists or the pre-Gospel traditions mute the women’s role and discredit their witness, a tendency continued in later documents like *Epistula Apostolorum* and certain church fathers.” About the ways how each synoptic evangelist is trying to legitimize the embarrassing fact of female testimony see BYRSKOG 2002:194-197.

telling of the event at the tomb. Mark submits the women to male disciples by putting the angel/young man to instruct the women to go and tell the disciples about Jesus' coming appearances. Luke (24:12) and John (20:2-10) add the visit of male disciples to the tomb, and Luke writes interestingly and perhaps in a somewhat defensive tone (24:11) that *καὶ ἐφάνησαν ἐνώπιον αὐτῶν ὡσεὶ λῆρος τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα καὶ ἠπίστουν αὐταῖς*". Thus women and "idle talk" (*λήρος τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα*) were associated with each other in Luke's mind. Later Luke defends the female testimony by stating "*καὶ ἀπῆλθόν τινες τῶν σὺν ἡμῖν ἐπὶ τὸ μνημεῖον καὶ εὗρον οὕτως καθὼς καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες εἶπον αὐτὸν δὲ οὐκ εἶδον*". Matthew has Roman soldiers and high priestly nomenclature admitting the emptiness of the tomb and thus does not leave the fact to be proved by the women only.

Even if women had - for some unknown reason- been presented as the witnesses in a created story, it is interesting that Mary Magdalene is the one chosen as the primary witness.⁵⁸⁸ The traditional description of Mary as a demonised person and her status as an "independent" woman made her a questionable figure in the Mediterranean shame-honour context.⁵⁸⁹ The little we know about the anti-Christian polemics against the Christian resurrection claim demonstrates the weakness of Mary as a witness. Celsus, writing in the latter half of the second century ridicules the resurrection faith as follows:

But who saw this? A hysterical female, as you say, and perhaps some other one of those who were deluded by the same sorcery, who either dreamt in a certain state of mind and through wishful thinking had a hallucination due to some mistaken notion (an experience which has happened to thousands), or, which is more likely, wanted to impress the others by telling this fantastic tale, and so by this cock-and-bull story to provide a chance for other beggars.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁸ For a bibliographical list about the studies written about Mary Magdalene see e.g. HEARON 2004:2-4. Other important works include e.g. O'COLLNS & KENDALL 1987 and SETZER 1997.

⁵⁸⁹ About the definitions of "Honour" and "Shame" in the Mediterranean context see e.g. NEYREY 1998:14-34. See also critical insights from DOWNING 1999 and elucidating article by CROOK 2009. For an application of honour-concept see e.g. BARTCHY 2002.

⁵⁹⁰ CHADWICK 1953:112.

It is very likely that Celsus here refers to the description of Mary Magdalene as demonised (Lk 8:3) since the context is about magic. Mary is curiously enough not defined by any man, which is probably due to her status as an outcast from the community.⁵⁹¹ The singleness, at least in Roman context, would not probably serve an apologetic purpose.⁵⁹² Those possessed were excluded from the normal sphere of communication and acceptance.⁵⁹³ In Mary's case the possession had been very severe as indicated by the number of demons mentioned.⁵⁹⁴ While legends portraying Mary Magdalene as a prostitute do not have much historical support, it is obvious that she had been seen as a sinful woman on the basis of her status as possessed. Too close a connection between Mary and Jesus could be interpreted as shattering Jesus' status as a prophet as seen in Luke's narrative about Jesus at the house of Simon (7:36-50).⁵⁹⁵ While there is no direct communication, save physical

⁵⁹¹ About the habit to define a woman by a male relative or husband see e.g. (based on burial inscriptions) HACHILL 2004:311-338.

⁵⁹² SAWYER (1996:21): "Female emancipation in the late Republic and early Empire period certainly enabled women to cultivate and develop interests outside the home, although they always operated from that context. But we must bear in mind that the convention whereby a young woman would move from the household or family of her father to build one for herself and her husband remained static. The concept of a single woman existing outside of a domestic context only crept into the social structure of the Roman world in any discernible way with the emergence of Christianity and the cultivation of the 'celibate woman'." See also MENÉNDEZ ANTUÑA (2007:575): "...las mujeres que no tienen hijos o esposo se consideran peligrosas y amenazantes."

⁵⁹³ About possession as social phenomenon see GUIJARRO 2002b and TWELFTREE 1993. I am in disagreement with the theories of CROSSAN (1994:88-89) and HOLLENBACH (1982) who leans on LEWIS' (1989) theory of the possession as a way to project political rebellion. Cf. STRECKER 2002. This anthropological approach to the phenomenon is too simplistic. About the possession and anthropology see BODDY 1994. Furthermore, as SANDERS (2002) convincingly argues the presence of "Roman Colony" in Galilee is questionable starting point to explain the dynamics met in the gospels. See also CHANCEY 2002.

⁵⁹⁴ EVANS 1990:123.

⁵⁹⁵ Could the expected audience react to the Mary Magdalene as a witness in a way Simon the Pharisee does when seeing a sinful woman at Jesus feet in Lk 7:36-50? The details of the story are disputed, including whether the woman was a prostitute or not and whether her act was interpreted (primarily?) sexually. See e.g. COSGROVE (2005) who interprets the woman's act as a sign of grieving and GREEN (1997:309-310) for a defence of a more sexually imbedded viewpoint. Despite the hesitancy of many scholars to draw this conclusion, it is likely that the woman is a prostitute and thus her very status makes Simon doubt whether Jesus can actually be a prophet due to his apparent failure to see

contact (cf. John 20:17), and other women are around at the time, it would have been an extraordinary detail to invent in the moral culture of early Christianity. Again there would have been other candidates to choose from, i.e., other women with remarkably better status available among the female followers of Jesus. Why not make Joanna the wife of Chuza, Salome or Mary, the mother of James and Joses, the leader of the group, and leave the Mary Magdalene out of the picture? It is difficult to escape the conclusion that she was actually the primary witness to the empty tomb, and that this piece of information was attached to the story from the very beginning so keenly that no later tradent or evangelist felt it appropriate to exclude her.⁵⁹⁶ No intelligent apologist, whether Roman, Greek or Jew, would create a story with the status of Mary Magdalene as a primary witness.

Assumption 3: No Man Available

Whatever the status of a female witness, it has been claimed that the anonymous creator of the empty tomb story did not have much choice. Speaking for many, Lüdemann argues that the male *disciples had already fled and thus could not be used as finders of the empty tomb*. This argument is somewhat problematic as well.⁵⁹⁷ It is written in Mk 14:50 that “καὶ ἀφέντες αὐτὸν ἔφυγον πάντες, but few lines later it is told how Peter, nonetheless, followed Jesus ἀπὸ μακρόθεν (14:54) – just like the women at the cross were watching ἀπὸ μακρόθεν how Jesus was crucified (15:40).⁵⁹⁸ Thus it was not impossible to give a male disciple a role in the event even after it was said that all had fled.⁵⁹⁹ Mark tells about the male disciples’ “comeback” in 16:7, which also shows that at least for him they were still in Jerusalem.⁶⁰⁰ Luke and John wrote about the male disciples

that fact. So GREEN 1997:309-310 and CORLEY 2003:70. Even if she was “another kind of a sinner” as e.g. REID (1995:42-46) suggests, the very social connection with a sinful woman is seen as problematic for a prophet.

⁵⁹⁶ As put by COLLINS & KENDALL (1987:634): “What should strike the reader of this schematic presentation is the fact that Mary Magdalene is mentioned in five out of the six Gospel narratives and, when mentioned, is always the first person named. Is this merely accidental or were the Gospel writers recognizing her importance?”

⁵⁹⁷ For criticism see also ALLISON 2005:329-331, WEDDERBURN 1999:53-57. 59-60.

⁵⁹⁸ See. BECKER 2007:13.

⁵⁹⁹ I wonder if to my eye the hyperbolic expression “all” and “every” should always be taken so literally as many scholars tend to do.

⁶⁰⁰ As 16:7: “εἶπατε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ Πέτρῳ ὅτι Προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν

who ran to the empty tomb after having heard of it from the women; and Matthew also states that the male disciples were in Jerusalem (28:7-8). Thus it was not a problem for these Christian authors to introduce male disciples to the narrative after they “had fled” in Gethsemane. What is more, and has already been hinted at above, not even a male disciple made for the most convincing candidate for finding the tomb empty. Instead, Joseph of Arimathea would.⁶⁰¹ It is interesting that the roles of the one taking care of burial and those finding the tomb empty are as they are in Christian tradition. The burial should have been performed by the disciples, as was the case with John the Baptist (Mk 6:29), and the persuasiveness of the extraordinary claim of an empty tomb would be significantly increased by the introduction of this Sanhedrinist as a witness. At it is, the roles are far “from optimal”, hardly a choice made by an Early Christian who was freely creating material.

5.4.2. No Preaching without an Empty Tomb

One of the most important arguments for the early origin of the tradition about the empty tomb of Jesus is the empty tomb as *sine qua non* for the preaching of Jesus’ resurrection.⁶⁰² The opponents of the Christ-believers could have easily demonstrated that Jesus’ corpse was still in the tomb and thus their preaching would have been shown to be absurd, goes the argument. The argument is here divided into parts in order to make the analysis little easier.

- a) Christ-believers began preaching the resurrection of Jesus in Jerusalem soon after his death.
- b) The resurrection as a concept required an empty tomb.

Γαλιλαίαν” indicates Mark does not assume that the disciples are in Galilee at the time of women finding the tomb. Otherwise the use of the verb προάγω would be incomprehensible. The command Peter and others to go would be impossible also if they had already left Jerusalem and were heading to Galilee. How could the women have caught the disciples before Galilee?

⁶⁰¹ So also e.g. MUNRO 1982:235.

⁶⁰² ALLISON (2005:321-326) considers this argument to be the second most convincing for the empty tomb of Jesus.

- c) There were people both motivated and able to check whether the tomb actually was empty.

All the premises are rather evident in the *prima facie* reading of the canonical gospels and Acts, but have faced their share of criticism in the history of scholarship. Whether the falsification of the premises has succeeded is naturally crucial for the persuasiveness of the argument currently under study. It also becomes evident that the premises may be divided into softer and more absolute versions. For example, if premise b were shown to be incorrect there is still, what I call a softer version of the premise, the task to show that Christ-believers and their opponents in Jerusalem held such a concept of resurrection that an empty tomb was needed. When it comes to premise c it is useful to analyze the reactions on a broader scale by taking the different interest groups – the converts, the disciples and the opponents – under scrutiny. While I find this categorisation useful, and proceed in applying it in what follows, it is difficult to get Paul to fit nicely into any of them. Thus Paul's understanding of the resurrection is handled separately at the end of this subchapter.

The First Premise

Very seldom has any historian or an exegete doubted the Jerusalem origin of Christian preaching soon after the death of Jesus. The recent challenges to this view only show the desperation of any attempt to deny the fact, which is strongly attested in Acts and Pauline letters.⁶⁰³ The faith in the resurrection of Jesus was a shared belief in the pre-Pauline Christian movement, as can be reasoned e.g. from the very fact that the experience of "seeing the risen Christ" converted Paul and from the old tradition (1. Cor 15:3-8) he had received.⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰³ See e.g. SMITH 2005.

⁶⁰⁴ See also PETERSON 2005:5-6. As put by PERKINS (1998:442): "Our brief survey demonstrates that there is no element of early Christian belief in Jesus of Nazareth that is not marked by the "resurrection." Even the radical discipleship depicted in the sayings source (Q) depends upon Jesus' challenge to social and familial ties, a challenge which culminates in his own empty tomb." ALLISON (2005:244): "Even if some of Jesus' followers did not have a resurrection-centred theology...proclamation of his eschatological resurrection must go back to people who knew Jesus himself and were part of the earliest Jerusalem community, and this is all that matters for the present discussion." DUNN 2009: 212: "It is beyond dispute that the core claim of the first

The Second Premise

All four canonical gospels attach the empty tomb to the resurrection, thus showing that at least 30-50 years after Jesus' death the Christ-believers seem to have been rather unanimous about the close bond between the two concepts. In order to criticize the argument currently under study effectively, one should be able to demonstrate that such concepts of resurrection that did not require an empty tomb did exist, and secondly that it is meaningful to regard the Christ-believers and their opponents as representing this sort of thinking. The latter presumes also a meaningful explanation for the process leading from the "tombless" understanding of Jesus' resurrection to the one found in the gospels.

There are various ideas about the post-mortem life among the Jews of late antiquity.⁶⁰⁵ What is relevant for the task at hand is to decide whether it would have been possible to speak about the resurrection (ἀνάστασις, ἐγείρω ἐκ νεκρῶν) of Jesus on the third day assuming that his body was still in the tomb. The scholarly world has been divided on this issue; some claiming that the resurrection does not necessarily need the empty tomb as a prerequisite, while many arguing exactly the opposite.⁶⁰⁶

A simple procedure here would be to point the texts where non-physical resurrection is found and then evaluate the relationship of their author(s) to the Christian movement. For example, if it could be demonstrated that the Galileans had essentially a non-physical understanding of the resurrection in the first century, it could be suggested that the Galilean

Christians is that God had raised Jesus from the dead. Whatever we make of the resurrection narratives in the Gospels, no one can realistically dispute that, at least from very early days after Jesus' crucifixion, individuals believed that Jesus had appeared to them, alive from the dead. It is equally evident that such experiences convinced them that in Jesus resurrection had happened."

⁶⁰⁵ See e.g. CAVALLIN 1974 and WRIGHT 2003:85-206.

⁶⁰⁶ No tomb needed is argued e.g. by GRASS 1956, MARXSEN 1990, SANDELIN 1977, LÜDEMANN 2000, OBERLINNER 1982:164-165, GOULDER 2000, MYLLYKOSKI 2002, CROSSAN 1998 and CROSSLEY 2005. The opposite opinion is represented e.g. by WITHERINGTON 1998b, FULLER 1971, LADD 1975, CRAIG 1985, AEJMELAEUS 1994, WRIGHT 2003 and ALLISON 2005.

origin of the early Christian leaders speaks for this understanding of resurrection being rooted in the conceptual world of the movement.

Many critics of the essential ET-resurrection connection are quick to note that the idea of a non-bodily resurrection was common in Jewish texts but are slow to provide exact passages.⁶⁰⁷ Sometimes the variety of the views concerning life after death is confused with the variety of the views about the resurrection.⁶⁰⁸ The examples usually cited in the literature to prove the existence of the “resurrection without an empty tomb” are Jubilees 23:26-31⁶⁰⁹, 2 Baruch⁶¹⁰, Solomon’s Psalms 3:11-12⁶¹¹ and 4Ezra 7:32⁶¹². It quickly becomes evident that there are not many undisputed examples to prove the existence of this definition of the resurrection. In his recent massive monograph on Jesus’ resurrection Wright denies that there are any. The rich array of critical book reviews exploring Wright’s theses has not produced many counters to this claim.⁶¹³ While this does not resolve the question once and for all it is certainly suggestive of the direction the analysis of the argument should lean towards.

⁶⁰⁷ E.g. LÜDEMANN (2000:44): “ There were various notions of resurrection around, one of which was bodily.” The only actual reference he provides is to Jubilees 23:26-31. PERRIN (1977:81-86) does not even touch the question of the resurrection and the fate of the body.

⁶⁰⁸ E.g. PERKINS (2004:414) claims misleadingly: “[Wright] rejects the evidence that first-century Jews envisaged other modes of eternal life with God, such as astral immortality, transformation into the glory of the heavenly Adam, or incorporation into the ranks of angelic beings.” What Wright rejects is not the idea of other modes of eternal life but rather the use of the concept resurrection in these cases. I thank Dr. Wright for kindly confirming my conclusion in a private communication.

⁶⁰⁹ Referred to by LÜDEMANN (2002:54) but rejected as having nothing to do with the resurrection by PERKINS 1984:41-42.

⁶¹⁰ Referred to in CARNLEY (1987:52-53) but refuted in AEJMELAEUS 1993:49-59.

⁶¹¹ Referred to in PERKINS (1984:52) but see WRIGHT 2003:528-531.

⁶¹² Refuted in CAVALLIN (1974:80-85) and in BAUCKHAM 1998c:281-282.

⁶¹³ It is interesting that none of the three critical review articles published 2005 in the *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* provide examples of non-physical resurrection which would challenge Wright’s main argument. See BRYAN 2005, CROSSLAY 2005 and GOULDER 2005. Neither is any example pointed out in following book reviews of ANDERSON 2003, BARTHOLOMEW 2004, BOCKMUEHL 2004, KIRK 2004, LAGRAN 2004, MCKNIGHT 2004, OSBORN 2004, PERKINS 2004, POWELL 2004, THISELTON 2004 SMITH 2005, TIETJEN 2005, RODGERS 2006 and WELKER 2007.

The Reaction of the Converts

The first group whose reactions we attempt to reconstruct are those of the early converts to the Jesus movement. Unfortunately we do not have access to their understanding of the resurrection and all we can do is to make educated guesses as to their motives to check the tomb. While Luke's numbers of converts in Jerusalem (2:41, 4:4) have been doubted, there must have been a sufficient number converts to raise opposition and outright persecution.⁶¹⁴ The case of Stephen and the activity of Saul together with the traditions preserved in Acts 1-5 are unanimous when it comes to the existence of the persecutions, and it is reasonable to assume that a certain minimum of converts is needed to ignite them.

The exact content of the conversion to a follower of Jesus is not easily defined. A religious conversion is a multi-faceted phenomenon, which despises simplistic one-factor explanations and the extant sources are not specific about the details of interest for the later students of the subject. However, my assumption is that the early converts were mostly convinced by the charismatic activity like healings and exorcism since this is what the existent sources tell us, and is the phenomenon is supported by modern analogies from the third world.⁶¹⁵ If exceptional

⁶¹⁴ So e.g. SETZER 1994:167. There is hardly anything inherently impossible in these figures as pointed by REINHARDT 1995. A typical argument against this is that of HAENCHEN (1971:188): "...people should realise how hard it is – without a microphone! – to make one's voice carry to 3,000 men in the open, and it is impossible to speak in solemn cadences under such conditions..." But, unaware of this George Whitefield allegedly preached to the crowd of some 30,000 people in Cambuslang in 1742. 3,000 men readily fit into an area of 20x20m and when the huge stone walls of the temple area help in acoustics even "solemn cadences" are hardly too much of a challenge.

⁶¹⁵ The role of the charismatic activity in the early Christian movement is shown by Paul's references to miracles in his own ministry (Rom 15:19, 1Cor 2:4-5, 12:4-10, Gal 3:5, 2Cor 12:12) and also in his indirect reference to the miracles performed by his opponents (2Cor 11-12). Acts also strongly emphasizes the role of the miraculous in the spread of Christianity. In modern day studies especially on charismatic Christianity in the third world the decisive role of "signs and wonders" in conversion processes has been repeatedly confirmed. HERSKOVITS 1971:290, CHIA 1998, ANDERSON 1999, SUICO 1999, HONG 2000, SELEKY 2001, BAL KRISHNA 2001, WIYONO 2001, GEORGE 2001. The central role of exorcism is pointed out by e.g. MCCLUNG 1988, DE CARVALHO 2001, ANDERSON 2006. While building analogies between modern day samples and those of biblical times is often risky, there are numerous remarkable similarities in the Early Christian communities and modern third-world Charismatic and Pentecostal movements. These similarities hopefully justify the point I have made here.

miracles had taken place, according to the converts' epistemological interpretation, it is easy to understand that Christian preaching was found convincing and attractive. However, it is possible that no convert was interested in the evidence of the resurrection beyond what was said by those claiming to have seen the risen Jesus.⁶¹⁶

The Reaction of the Followers

After accepting the first premise we may presume that the idea of Jesus' resurrection originated among the group of Jesus' followers in Jerusalem. The decision of Jesus' followers to apply the concept of resurrection to describe Jesus' post-mortem fate needs an explanation. The idea of a dead person appearing to the living ones was by no means unfamiliar for the Jews, although no resurrection term seems to have been used. As Wright puts it, "such visions meant precisely, as people in the ancient and modern world have discovered, that the person was dead, not that they were alive."⁶¹⁷ At least in the Pharisaic belief system these saints were living an interim life between the death and resurrection, and thus any appearance of a dead person could easily be interpreted as a visit from the interim state. Already in 1 Samuel (28:3-25) the witch of Eend-Dor is able to cast a spell over the prophet Samuel to speak to Saul from the world of the dead. In the transfiguration story Moses and Eliah appear to Jesus and three of his disciples, but they are not mentioned has

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- Animistic world-view where Altered State of Consciousness is typical and normal. (About ASC in New Testament see e.g. PILCH 2002.)
 - The idea of separation and partial isolation from the surrounding religious culture.
 - Hierarchy not based solely on existing cultural structures but on charismatic abilities.
 - Active evangelising and vigorous attempts to convert.
 - The growth of the movement takes place without political or military devices.
 - The expectancy of immediate end of the world/parousia is prevailing in the movement's theology.

⁶¹⁶ I think that CROSSAN (1998:47) makes a good point about this conversion process, although in a slightly different context: "The docker at Corinth believed in the resurrection because, having heard Paul, he was able to experience the empowering presence of Christ in his own life. Resurrection was the way Paul explained it."

⁶¹⁷ WRIGHT 2003:691.

having been resurrected.⁶¹⁸ If there was not an empty tomb, real or supposed, it is challenging to explain the choice of this concept as a description of what had happened to Jesus after his death.

If Jesus' predictions concerning his own resurrection are not accepted as authentic, the dilemma of the origin of the idea becomes all the more challenging.⁶¹⁹ Even if these predictions are accepted as authentic, it is not entirely clear that Jesus' appearance would have been interpreted as a sign of the resurrection because it could still be seen as referring to the state between the death and resurrection.

In his critical review of Wright's book James Crossley suggests that the ideological background of the resurrection belief is found in the need for the vindication of a martyr-like figure of Jesus.⁶²⁰ Since the resurrection was a form of vindication it was only natural to apply the concept to Jesus. It may very well be that vindication was desperately needed, especially after the shameful death of Jesus as crucified, however, it is hardly unreasonable to suppose that Jesus' very followers had to believe in this vindication as well. They could have interpreted the appearances e.g. so that Jesus is in the "chamber of soul" or in Paradise, and thus taken this as a sure sign that he was to be risen in the final resurrection. The problem is that the disciples interpreted Jesus' resurrection as already having taken place. Furthermore, we are back in the very dilemma we are studying: could the resurrection as vindication be believed and proclaimed without the empty tomb?

As the conceptual context of the resurrection faith is explored it is useful to cast a glance at an interesting example of an application of the resurrection concept in Galilee. It has been pointed out that no

⁶¹⁸ See also BOCKMUEHL 2001a:111-114.

⁶¹⁹ The history of scholarship is not void of attempts to meet the challenge. E.g. MARXEN (1990:73) claims that visions of Jesus occasioned faith and the Early Christians reasoned that if someone can occasion faith he could not be dead. Then they took over the familiar concept that God is the one who raises the dead, and this resulted in the idea of the resurrection of Jesus. BRYAN (2005:167-169) suggests that a transposition to heaven could have generated the resurrection belief without an empty tomb.

⁶²⁰ CROSSLAY 2005. See also WRIGHT's (2005), to my mind successful reply to Crossley's criticism.

resurrection in the middle of the time, i.e. before the end-time resurrection, is known in Jewish literature.⁶²¹ While this is certainly very rare, there are actually a few cases, which have been brought forward in the discussion after the publication of Wright's monograph.⁶²² Bockmuehl claims that the story where Jesus is thought to be the resurrected John the Baptist breaks the alleged silence.⁶²³ According to Mark both Herod and some others said that Jesus could be John, and used very clear resurrection language Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτίζων ἐγήγερται ἐκ νεκρῶν (Mk 6:14). This tradition shows that the idea of a resurrected individual might not have been totally unfamiliar to the Galileans in the 20s. It has been argued that this story indicates that no empty tomb was needed for the resurrection concept to be applied.⁶²⁴ This argument fails to convince for following reasons: I) Jesus was flesh and bone and his whereabouts were rather easily known. If the empty tomb was an inseparable part of the resurrection concept, there would be no need to check the tomb to be sure that resurrection had taken place. It is to be noted that Jesus was not appearance-like figure easily taken as a ghost or an angel. The only thing to be revealed by checking the tomb was whether it was John or not. If John the Baptist had appeared to Herod's court in luminous form from the world of dead it is quite clear, if the trend in the Jewish literature is followed, that no resurrection language would have been used. It seems to have been the very bodily nature of Jesus existence that gave rise to the use of resurrection language.⁶²⁵ ii) Whatever picture we reconstruct on the basis of this enigmatic piece of tradition it is quite clear that the idea of the John *redivivus* was not

⁶²¹ This has been done e.g. by CRAIG 1985.

⁶²² There is a clear example of a resurrection in the middle of time in *Testament of Job*. See 9:6-12.

⁶²³ BOCKMUEHL 2004:500. MCKNIGHT 2004 refers to the *Testament of Job* where the children of Job are possibly depicted as resurrected. Although the words ἀνάστασις or ἐγείρω are not used, it is said that they are shining with crowns in the head and Job says that their bones are no longer found under the ruins of the house.

⁶²⁴ See ALLISON 2005:326.

⁶²⁵ ALLISON (2005:326): "Apart from the fact that we have no evidence one way or the other about what the few purveyors of this ill-informed piece of superstition thought about John's tomb, if anything, the decisive point is this. If some really did regard Jesus of Nazareth as John risen from the dead, then they were identifying the Baptist with a body that was out and about in the real world: the wonder-working Jesus was not a disembodied spirit. The risen John, identified with Jesus, was walking flesh and bones, and precisely that circumstance may have encouraged the terminology of resurrection."

proclaimed or a part of a theological program, but more like a conjectural reaction to the message preached and the unexpected wonders performed by Jesus of Nazareth. This makes the post-Easter situation and the John *redivivus* tradition remarkably different.

The Reaction of the Opponents

The group with the most obvious reason to bring forth the body of Jesus and thus dispute any claim of an empty tomb was the religious elite of Jerusalem; the Sadducees being the most prominent single party within the coalition against Jesus Movement. Another party, the Pharisees, was absent from the synoptic passion stories, but obviously they were not totally passive in the post-Easter opposition of the rekindled Jesus movement.⁶²⁶

It is logical to assume that the opponents of the Christians interpreted the resurrection proclamation within their own existing interpretational frameworks, and also by reacting to the peculiarities of the Christian claims. Although the dominant party i.e. the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead it is reasonable to assume that their definition of the word was quite similar to that of their “archenemies”, the Pharisees.⁶²⁷ I find it difficult to imagine that the Sadducees would have created and elaborated an independent definition of the resurrection only to reject it as absurd. Surely, as any religious dispute shows, an enemy’s idea may be caricatured and made way more absurd than what it actually might have been. However, the basic idea very likely remained the same, and whatever bias the Sadducean version took it is probable that corporeality and crudeness of the resurrection was emphasized because it made the idea easier to oppose and ridicule.

This leads us to the question of the Pharisaic understanding of the resurrection. Could a first century Pharisee conclude that someone had risen from the dead if his body was still in the grave? We have already

⁶²⁶ For example Paul identifies himself as a Pharisee and a persecutor of the Church.

⁶²⁷ MANTEL (1973:55): “The division of Judaism during the latter part of the Second Temple into two main streams, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, is well attested not only by Josephus and Talmudic Literature, but especially by *Megillat Ta’anit*, whose list of Pharisaic festivals includes seven—six which celebrate various victories over the Sadducees.”

noted how difficult it is to find clear examples of such an understanding. However, it is useful to evaluate what we do know about the Pharisaic understanding of the resurrection, and then possibly draw more solid conclusions from that.

Josephus describes the Pharisaic belief by presenting a cardinal example of the resurrection as life after life-after death:⁶²⁸ the soul of a righteous waits for the day of resurrection, when a new body is given to it. Thus there are two modes of post-mortem existence, one as some sort of a disembodied spirit and the other as a resurrected bodily person. Now, a question can be asked whether this “another body” was somehow connected to the earthly and buried one, or whether God was supposed to create a totally new body for the soul without using the old body. But the context is eschatological end-time resurrection and thus what is left from the old body are few bones at best, and thus the setting differs remarkably from the situation where the body has not yet decomposed as in Jesus’ case. It needs to be explained what sort of an appearance would assure a Pharisee that the resurrection had happened, instead of the soul having “normally” survived the death. The narrative of the appearance of Christ to Paul does not seem to bring forth the resurrection interpretation in Acts 23. The episode is located in Jerusalem and describes either the real or assumed reactions of the Pharisees, which makes it interesting for our study.

In the story of Paul’s imprisonment in Jerusalem Luke adds an explanatory remark (Acts 23:8) that Sadducees do not believe in the resurrection, angels and spirits, while the Pharisees believe in each of them.⁶²⁹ Daube has made a plausible suggestion that what is at stake here are a) belief in the resurrection and b) belief in non-bodily after-life as an

⁶²⁸ War 2.8. As translated by WRIGHT (2003:177): “[the pharisees] hold that every soul is immortal, but that only the souls of the virtuous pass on into another body, while those of the wicked are punished with an everlasting vengeance.”

⁶²⁹ Is the story historical? Even if the author of Acts had been an anonymous Christian in the 80s or 90s the narrative is not irrelevant as a source telling of the Pharisaic beliefs. However, if Luke was Paul’s travelling companion and the famous we-passages are based on actual eyewitnessing from the author’s part, the value of this episode as a source for Pharisaic belief is strengthened.

angel and spirit.⁶³⁰ The Sadducees very likely believed in the existence of the angels of Lord since these are regularly met in Torah.⁶³¹ What they denied was any form of life after death. After having told about his conversion-vision and subsequent mission Paul identifies himself with the Pharisees and claims to be accused because of the resurrection. This makes some of the Pharisaic scribes wonder if an angel or spirit has spoken to him. They do not regard the appeared entity as “resurrected” but post-mortem i.e. an angel or a spirit, in much the same way as in Acts 12:15 where gathered Christians thought Peter was “his angel”.⁶³² Earlier in his speech Paul did not mention the interpretation according to which the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth was that of a risen one. The reaction of the Pharisaic scribe in Jerusalem, as Luke describes it, supports the presumption that a Pharisee in Jerusalem would hardly find the concept of resurrection applicable on the base of a luminous appearance only.

The debate on the resurrection between the Sadducees and Jesus (Mk 12.18-27 and parr.⁶³³) is also suggestive of the Pharisaic understanding of the resurrection if we accept the reasoning according to which the Sadducees reflected the concepts supported by their opponents i.e. the Pharisees. Their criticism is centred on the marital life in life after the resurrection, which indicates rather resuscitation-like understanding of *ἀνάστασις*.⁶³⁴ It could be asked whether those who speculated on the marital duties of the resurrected would have accepted an idea of a resurrection without an empty tomb.

⁶³⁰ DAUBE 1990.

⁶³¹ And this is the only place where their denial of the angels is mentioned according to DAUBE 1990:493.

⁶³² VIVIANO (1992:498) argues: “To arrive at this understanding, one has to take the two nouns *ἄγγελον* and *πνεύμα* as standing in apposition to *ἀνάστασις*, and to translate “the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection either as an angel (i.e., in the form of an angel) or as a spirit (i.e., in the form of a spirit) but the Pharisees acknowledge them both” the angel and spirit would refer to the resurrection. Accordingly, it should be translated as “did not believe in the resurrection of an angel or a spirit”. But if this was Luke’s idea it may be asked why he did not use genitive form to get his message understood.

⁶³³ About the historicity of the incident see e.g. MEIER 2000 and EVANS 2001:251-252.

⁶³⁴ See TRICK 2007:255 and DONAHUE (1982:576): “We would suggest that the evangelist joins vv 26-27 to an earlier scholastic debate which affirmed the church’s defence against often crass Sadducean objections to the resurrection.”

It seems to me that the little it is possible to say about the prevailing idea of the resurrection as a concept among the leaders of Jerusalem suggests the empty tomb to be a prerequisite of the resurrection claim. This is seen in the “crude” understanding of the resurrection body reflected in the Sadducean criticism against the idea and in the fact that the Pharisees readily interpreted the luminous appearance as a sign of a post-mortem appearance, but not as a sign of a resurrection.

Paul and the Nature of the Resurrection Body

But what about Paul? It is undoubtedly Paul’s emphasis on transformation of the earthly body to a new spiritual resurrection body in 1 Cor. 15 that has primarily fuelled speculation about the resurrection without an empty tomb in the scholarly disputes of the topic. Paul was a Pharisee who had studied in Jerusalem, and in all likelihood lived there in the beginning of the 30’s. He must have been familiar with the Christian preaching already before his conversion, due to the interrogations of the persecuted Christians, and some time later he knew and had connections with the Christian leaders in Jerusalem. This all makes Paul, an opponent, a convert and a follower, an important source of knowledge as the solidity of the present argument is scrutinized.

We have already seen that Paul’s silence about the empty tomb tradition does not count as a convincing argument for the view that there was not such tradition at the time he wrote. Another, and to my mind more poignant question, is whether Paul’s understanding of the resurrection body excluded the idea of an empty tomb. Did Paul visualize a situation where the old fleshly body was in the grave and a new resurrected body was in some sort of a heavenly realm?⁶³⁵ What did he think had

⁶³⁵ AEJMELAEUS (1993:258) criticizes SANDELIN (1977) and writes: “The idea of creating an eternal body for Jesus in such a manner that the earlier body would be left almost untouched in the grave and, in principle, for anyone to see, is plainly absurd. [transl. mine].” Absurdity of the thought is also emphasized by MÁNEK 1958:278. But Mánek (1958:279) also claims: “Paul does not know life without the body.” This is not correct as can be seen in 2 Cor 12:1-4. I do not find Sandelin’s proposal “absurd” since Mark and other Synoptics could envisage Elijah and Moses in bodily enough a form to have the disciples suggest that they build them shelters (Mk. 9:5). Had these saints lived some thousand years in the body they appeared in it is not hard to imagine that they could do so “forever”.

happened on the third day when God had raised Jesus from the dead?⁶³⁶ The question inevitably leads us back to the exegetical minefield of *cruces interpretum*, namely to 1 Corinthians 15. Despite the divergent viewpoints in numerous questions there is a wide consensus on the basic division of the chapter into the reference to the past teaching found in verses 1-11 and argumentation against the claim that ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν from verse 12 forward. When Paul established the Christian congregation in Corinth in A.D. 50-52 he taught them the resurrection formula and since the concept was probably unfamiliar to many gentile converts, he very likely elaborated on it.⁶³⁷ After Paul had left Corinth the Christians were influenced by ideas different from Paul's and the letter is aimed at correcting the situation.⁶³⁸ His on-the-spot teaching together with these "influences" had resulted in a situation where some denied the resurrection of the dead. In v. 12ff. Paul tries to correct this with argumentation where the difference between the earthly and heavenly body is emphasized. Thus, it would be misleading to juxtapose his teaching too closely on the first stage to that on the second. In order to cast light on the first stage teaching we briefly analyze the expressions ὅτι ἐτάφη and ὅτι ἐγήγερται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ. We will also pay attention to the probable arguments against the resurrection as they were reflected in Paul's text, especially in 1. Cor 15:35.

⁶³⁶ It is not important here where the concept "the third day" originated. For different suggestions see WOLFF 1982:162-165.

⁶³⁷ I find HENGEL'S (2000:145-153) argumentation persuasive when he argues that short statements require narratives to elucidate their meaning. Consequently the idea, presented e.g. by WILCKENS (1968:55-56) that Hellenistic Christians were interested in short confessions instead of narratives is problematic.

⁶³⁸ Numerous suggestions have been brought forward as for the nature of this influence. However, I find the studies proposing that the wisdom philosophy from Alexandria (represented in Philo's texts) was the major source of these ideas convincing. See e.g. SANDELIN 1976 for 1 Cor 15 and STERLING 1995 for a good overview of the Alexandrian influence on the 1 Corinthians as a whole. As put by SELLIN (1986:290): „Die ursprünglich heidenchristliche korinthische Gemeinde ist wahrscheinlich sehr bald, nachdem Paulus sie verlassen hatte, unter den theologischen Einfluss alexandrinisch-jüdischen Pneumatikertums geraten. Es liegt nahe, dass hier die Person des Apollos (1Kor 1-4; Apg 18,24-19,2) eine massgebliche Rolle spielte.“, I would, however, hesitate in labelling everything as Alexandrian influence. See e.g. HULTGREN 2003 for good insights on rabbinic influence on Paul in 1 Cor 15:44-49.

Many scholars have seen a reference to the idea of an empty tomb in the second *ὅτι* -clause in 1.Cor 15:4 while other regard it as only a confirmation of the death of Jesus.⁶³⁹ While it may be somewhat speculative to argue that there must be a narrative of the empty tomb behind *ὅτι ἐτάφη*, it is more likely that there is some sort of an idea about the empty tomb imbedded in the expression.⁶⁴⁰ I find the function of the *ὅτι ἐτάφη* as a sheer confirmation of the death of Jesus as is usually argued by those denying any connotation whatsoever of the expression with the empty tomb slightly problematic.⁶⁴¹ Against whom would this confirmation be needed?⁶⁴² The suggestion according to which *ὅτι ἐτάφη* works as a bridge between the death and the resurrection sounds more reasonable to me, particularly if the short formula is derived from the respective narratives.⁶⁴³ The very next *ὅτι*-clause brings us to the heart of the problem. What did Paul and his Corinthian audience think had happened on the third day when Jesus was raised from the dead? Either they visualized the body of crucified Jesus coming from the grave or God creating a new body for the departed soul/spirit of Jesus while his corpse was left wherever it had

⁶³⁹ CONZELMANN 1975:255 argues that there is no allusion to the empty tomb. WEDDERBURN (1999:87) scorns any attempts to derive the empty tomb from the tradition as desperate. So also KREMER 1997:324, SEGAL 1998:415 and OBERLINNER 1982:163-164. Many scholars see a reference to an empty tomb narrative here. FEE (1987:725) argues that this is the majority view, and refers to the studies of SIDER 1977, STEIN 1977 and CRAIG 1985. The most profound defence for this view may be HENGEL 1999. See also DUNN 2003a:828-841 and WRIGHT 2003:321.

⁶⁴⁰ SCHRAGE (2001:35): "Aber auch sachlich bleibt zu beachten, dass zwar für die meisten Juden und so vermutlich auch für paulus eine Auferweckung von den Toten nicht ohne die Voraussetzung eines leeren Grabes zu denken ist (was im übrigen noch nichts über dessen historische Realität aussagt) und auch der Makrokontext eher dafür spricht."

⁶⁴¹ E.g. BORCHERT 1983:403.

⁶⁴² For different challenges concerning the reality of Jesus' death see THISELTON 2000:1192-1193. LÜDEMANN (2000:53) argues that there could be docetic views in Corinth. Elsewhere he writes (1994:38): "We can assume that all the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus. At any rate this thesis is probable for I Cor .15.3b-5." Paul does not mention burial elsewhere when writing about the death of Jesus. See e.g. Rom 5:8, 14:15, 1 Cor 8:11, Gal 2:21, 1 Thess 5:10.

⁶⁴³ MÜLLER (2008:203): "Dabei soll die Begräbnisaussage nicht nur die Realität des Todes Jesu bestätigen, die ja von niemandem bestritten wurde. Sie hat eine Art Brückenfunktion zwischen der Todes- und der Auferweckungsaussage."

been buried. Now, it could be a mistake to search for an answer to this question in what Paul writes e.g. in 15:36-54 because that is how Paul attempts to correct the Corinthians' misunderstandings. Certainly Paul had not explained this to them when teaching about Jesus' resurrection on the first occasion. It is more meaningful to focus on 15:35, the so-called second *refutatio*, which is of primary importance for the exegesis of the whole chapter.⁶⁴⁴

The double question Πῶς ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί; ποίῳ δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται elucidates the reasons for the scepticism amongst the Corinthians. Whether the questions (or only one of them) are actually made by some Corinthians or whether they should be seen as Paul's rhetorical device is a disputed issue.⁶⁴⁵ However, the questions are something that Paul sees as the main obstacle to belief in the resurrection.⁶⁴⁶ The question ποίῳ δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται derives from a rather concrete understanding of the bodily resurrection.⁶⁴⁷ Now, after hearing that Jesus was buried and rose on the third day the *Auferstehungsleugner* wonder about the form of the body "coming" (from the grave). Had the teaching emphasized the creation of a new heavenly

⁶⁴⁴ As put by HORSLEY (1998:208-209): "Paul speaks directly to the crux of the Corinthians' scepticism." PADGETT (2002:159): "Paul begins with a question that gets at the heart of the Corinthian problem with the notion of resurrection of the dead: "How are the dead raised, and what kind of body (σῶμα) do they come with?" This question sets up the entire passage, and is the focus of Paul's argument. He is concerned with the nature or "physics" (φύσις) of the resurrection body."

⁶⁴⁵ The disputed status of the questions is especially noted e.g. by SCHRAGE (2001:270) and CONZELMANN (1975:280). The actual nature of the question is defended e.g. by GROSHEIDE (1953:380) "But some will say: this sounds as if the apostle refutes an objection which he anticipates rather than a real one. On the other hand, thou foolish one in vs. 36 makes sense only if the thought of vs. 35 was actually expressed" and THISELTON (2000:1261): "Although the objection is genuine and not merely a rhetorical device, this use of πῶς "often introduces a rhetorical question that calls an assumption in question or rejects it altogether". Otherwise e.g. COLLINS 1999: 562-563.]

⁶⁴⁶ Thus correctly SANDELIN (1976:19) who points out that "Obwohl man aber hinter den Fragen "Wie werden die Toten auferstehen? Mit was für einem Leib kommen sie?" keine konkreten Fragen der korinthischen Auferstehungsleugner zu sehen braucht, jedenfalls Licht auf das Problem werfen, wie Paulus die Leugnung der Auferstehung in Korinth verstanden hat."

⁶⁴⁷ PLUMMER (1911:368): "The ἔρχονται seems to imply a rather crude idea of the resurrection, as if they were seen coming out of their graves. Yet such a conception is almost inevitable, if resurrection is to be pictured to the imagination."

body, it is difficult to understand how this sort of question could have been stated in the first place. On the other hand the scepticism against the idea of a dead body coming from the tomb is easy to understand, and it caused also some speculation among the rabbis.⁶⁴⁸

It is generally assumed that Paul wrote his first letter to the Thessalonians while teaching the church in Corinth. This makes the comparison of that letter with the first part of 1 Cor 15 interesting since the tone of the live teaching in Corinth was in likelihood quite similar to that in 1 Thessalonians.⁶⁴⁹ Even many who see the empty tomb as unnecessary in 1 Cor 15, believe that in 1 Thess Paul's understanding of the resurrection required an empty tomb. This has actually led many to suggest that Paul's understanding of the resurrection changed from a more concrete understanding to a more "spiritual" one during the 50s.⁶⁵⁰ I consider this to strengthen the conclusion drawn here that both Paul and his audience assumed that the resurrection language meant an empty tomb in Corinth A.D. 50-52. In summary, Paul's teaching on resurrection in Corinth A.D. 51-52, if not explicitly including a story of the finding of the empty tomb, then at least clearly presumed its existence.

Thus we do not have any good reason to doubt that the empty tomb was an integral, even if secondary, part or prerequisite for the proclamation of Jesus' resurrection in the time period A.D. 30-50. The relationship of the second stage teaching (12ff.) to the concept of an empty tomb is

⁶⁴⁸ See e.g. *Tractatus Sanhedrin* 11.

⁶⁴⁹ So correctly LÜDEMANN (1980:199): "I must remind you that an eschatological teaching like that preserved in I Thessalonians 4 was part of Paul's first preaching in Corinth."

⁶⁵⁰ LÜDEMANN (1980:199): "We have seen that in I Thessalonians the resurrection of the dead Christians meant being restored to the body prior to death, i.e., made like the survivors." About the idea of the development see FURNISH 1970, MEANS 1980-81, GILLMAN 1985, MEYER 1989 and LONGENECKER 1998. In 1Thess 4:17 the Christians will be with the Lord after the resurrection (καὶ οὕτως πάντοτε σὺν κυρίῳ ἔσόμεθα) but in Phil 1:23 Paul writes τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἔχων εἰς τὸ ἀναλῦσαι καὶ σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι clearly referring to the idea that he immediately goes to be with Christ after the death. Now, it may be asked how the dead will be raised to be with the Lord if they already are σὺν Χριστῷ. WRIGHT (2003:226, 367) suggests that Paul represented Pharisaic life-after-life-after-death type of thinking, where the spirit leaves the body after death and in the resurrection this spirit will be united with a transformed body.

somewhat different from what was analyzed above. Has Paul changed his idea of the resurrection while being away from Corinth, or as a reaction to the counter-arguments such as the questions in 15:35? It has been suggested for example that verse 15:50 excludes any idea of an empty tomb.⁶⁵¹ However, the exact meaning of “σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομησαὶ οὐ δύναται” is not entirely clear. Does the expression Τοῦτο δέ φημι conclude what was said earlier, or does it start a new entity where the transformation of living ones in parousia is handled, or is Paul referring to both directions?⁶⁵² Elsewhere in the NT the expression σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα is used synonymously with a human being (Mt 16:17, Gal 1:15-16).⁶⁵³ However, it is impossible to interpret 1 Cor 15:50 in the same way so that that “but this I say, no human being will inherit the kingdom of God”. What connotations this expression carried in this context may not be as clear as the exegetes sometimes seem to presume, and as an isolated saying it can be used in both a framework of continuity and discontinuity. However, it seems to me that Paul’s elaboration of the resurrection body in v. 36ff. does not exclude the idea of Jesus’ empty tomb mainly for following three reasons:

Firstly, Paul’s speculation on the nature of the resurrection body is an answer to a seemingly crude understanding of the resurrection, or resuscitation represented by the Corinthians. Thus, it is likely that he emphasizes the elements of discontinuity more than if he had written generally about the resurrection. This is typical for a polemical situation.

⁶⁵¹ LÜDEMANN (2000:44-45) writes: “Now one could, of course, say that a Jew at that time would immediately think of bodily resurrection and that therefore the tomb must have been empty. But it’s not that simple. There were various notions of resurrection around, one of which was bodily. But Paul himself distinguishes between two notions of body in 1 Corinthians 15: (1) the body that is flesh and blood and cannot inherit the kingdom of God and that will perish and (2) the body that is spiritual and that every Christian will get. So 1 Corinthians 15 is itself a witness to the fact that Paul obviously did not know anything about the empty tomb and that he did not need it for his conception of resurrection.”

⁶⁵² This latest option is suggested by JOHNSON 2003:179.

⁶⁵³ About the two occurrences in Ben Sira (14:18, 17:29-32) JOHNSON (2003:181) concludes: “In both of the occurrences in Ben Sira, then, the phrase σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα is a reference to frail, *living* people and, especially in the latter text, the aspect of humanity it emphasizes is its nondivinity.”

Secondly, the other Christians were able to combine the existence of the empty tomb with an idea of a non-earthly resurrection body.⁶⁵⁴ Synoptic evangelists have preserved the tradition where Jesus says that those resurrected are like angels in heaven, not marrying or being given to marriage (Mk 12:25, Mt 22:30, Lk 20:35-36). Luke describes the resurrected Jesus as able to disappear suddenly, and John's Jesus comes through walls or a closed door at will. Furthermore, when Jesus appears to Paul (Acts 9:3-7, 22:6-11, 26:13-19) the impression given is not that of a resuscitation of a crucified and tortured person but rather fits well to the Pauline description of the resurrection body in 1 Cor 15:36ff.⁶⁵⁵ These examples demonstrate that, in the minds of early Christians, the body that left the tomb could have been thought to have changed dramatically into a luminous heavenly figure.⁶⁵⁶

Thirdly, Paul's use of the metaphor of a seed in verse 36-38 may be easier to understand if the old body disappears, as does the seed when it dies i.e. transforms into a plant. While the metaphors are not to be extended beyond their contextually legitimate meaning, it might be questioned as to whether Paul or anyone else could have thought of a plant having come out of a still existing seed.⁶⁵⁷

How does this interpretation of Pauline material on the resurrection relate to the argument according to which the proclamation of Jesus' resurrection in Jerusalem required an empty tomb? We have attempted

⁶⁵⁴ See also the Testament of Job where kings gave an order to dig up the bodies of Job's dead children. Job points out that the search is futile because the children are "in the keeping of their Maker and Ruler" (9:8). After that they look at the East and see Job's dead children "with crowns near the glory of the King, the Ruler of heaven" (9:12-13). The vision like appearance with seemingly transformed essence of their bodies is combined with the idea of an empty tomb.

⁶⁵⁵ It is indicative that e.g. BORG (1999:123) uses these very visions as a proof that no physical body is needed in the resurrection appearance. In the same context Borg argues that Paul argued for a non-physical understanding of the resurrection. Against Borg's somewhat simplistic treatment of the subject see GUNDRY 1994.

⁶⁵⁶ See also JOHNSON 2003:191-192.

⁶⁵⁷ AEJMELAEUS (1993:259): "Whatever was thought about the relationship between a seed and plant in ancient Greece, the seed died and disappeared before the plant came up in all its glory. Ancient gardeners could hardly, even in rare exceptions, have assumed that the seed is separate and to be found, after it has produced, in one way or another, a seedling.."

to reach the Pauline understanding of the resurrection when he first arrived at Corinth and introduced the famous resurrection formula to the new converts. This understanding is important since we have good reason to assume that it echoed the Jerusalem context. Although we do not possess much direct material of the original teaching on the resurrection in Corinth, we can suggest an approximation of it by analysing the subsequent reactions by the Corinthians and Paul. The strong emphasis on transformation implies that the idea harboured by the Corinthian party was cruder and more resuscitation-like than what Paul thought appropriate. Had Paul's original teaching included a strong transformation element, say the idea of God creating a totally new body for the resurrected dead, this reaction by the Corinthians would not be readily understandable. And it is unlikely that Paul would have corrected their false understanding by a sheer repetition of what he had taught earlier. This leads me to conclude that a) Paul's teaching on resurrection took for granted the existence of an empty tomb at least before his elaboration of the concept sometime between 50-56 A.D., and, b) Paul's previous understanding reflected the general tone of the understanding of both the Christians and their Jerusalem opponents in the first two decades of the history of the Jesus movement.

All in all, it is challenging to figure out the development from a more spiritual understanding of the resurrection to a widespread association of the empty tomb to the resurrection concept within the early Christian movement which spread from the Jewish to the Gentile sphere.⁶⁵⁸ The tendency in Paul's resurrection understanding seems to have been from a very concrete to more transformation-oriented. In Acts 17:32 the scornful reception of the concept ἀνάστασις very likely crystallizes the general way of thinking in the Hellenistic setting.⁶⁵⁹ Why would the resurrection become more concrete when Christianity spread from a Jewish to a more Gentile setting?

The Motive and Ability of the Opponents to Check the Tomb

It is rather evident that the opponents of Christian movement were sufficiently motivated to bring forth the body of Jesus if they had been

⁶⁵⁸ So e.g. WITHERINGTON 1998b:136 and WRIGHT 2003:606.

⁶⁵⁹ See also CROY 1997 and LÜDEMANN 2002b:123-125.

able to do so. At least part of the reason behind the crucifixion of Jesus had been to eliminate his influence on people, and when this influenced continued after Easter the body of Jesus would have provided a falsification of the new message. But would the corpse have been recognizable once the Christians started preaching? For example Myllykoski has argued: "...meaningful debates about the empty tomb must have taken soon after the burial, because the body that the Jewish leaders possibly could have produced would have become unidentifiable in less than about eight weeks.⁶⁶⁰ However, the Christians began to believe in the resurrection within the timeframe when Jesus' body would certainly have still been identifiable, and as we have already noted they needed an empty tomb to conceptualise Jesus' post-mortem existence with the term resurrection. Furthermore, to show only that Jesus' tomb was "occupied" would have effectively nullified the resurrection talk, and it is not as self-evident as Myllykoski assumes that a body could not be identified after eight weeks. However, the decomposition time of a human body varies numerous factors and whether Jesus' buried body could be recognized after eight weeks probably depended on such things as the burial rites, the environment, the temperature, ante-mortem dehydration etc.⁶⁶¹

5.5. Conclusion

The story about Mary Magdalene finding Jesus' tomb empty with some other women is very likely based on an actual historical event. That women had been introduced as witnesses in an apologetic legend is not credible, and it is nigh well impossible to understand how the concept resurrection would have begun to be used and preached if the tomb had not been known to be empty. Two alternative theories were found wanting as the arguments presented for them were analyzed.

⁶⁶⁰ MYLLYKOSKI 2002:49–50.

⁶⁶¹According to so called Casper's dictum: "'... at a tolerable similar average temperature, the degree of putrefaction present in a body lying in the open air for one week (month) corresponds to that found in a body after lying in the water for two weeks (months), or lying in the earth in the usual manner for eight weeks (months)'.“ Cited in GENNARD 2007:10. For factors influencing the decay of a human body see e.g. HENDERSON 1987.

6.0 The Guard Story

As we move on to analyze the pre-Matthean GS it becomes necessary to explicate the parameters within which the analysis proceeds. In the first part of the study it was shown that the arguments often presented against the historicity of the GS are rather shaky. This encouraged us to proceed in an attempt of a fresh study on the subject. In the second part it was concluded that the Matthean Guard story is based on a pre-Matthean tradition. When the conflict between the Jews and the Christ-believers was studied, it was affirmed that the period 30-60 A.D. was a time of intense and continuous conflict between the religious elite of Jerusalem and the Christ-believers, the conflict being strongly rooted in the pre-Easter antagonism between the Jesus group and the religious leaders. As for the content of the conflict it is beyond reasonable doubt that the resurrection of Jesus formed the core of the early Christian proclamation from the very beginning, and thus very likely played a part in the conflict as well.⁶⁶² The tradition about the women finding Jesus' tomb empty was found to be most probably based on a historical visit of the women to the burial site.

In what follows we attempt to define the term apologetical to elucidate the conflict rhetoric and the formation of the GS. A critical overview is also cast over the dialogical models, which, it may be suggested to describe the conflict behind the GS. Thereafter the GS is divided into the theft accusation (TA) and the role of the guards in the story is analyzed separately. The questions to be handled are primarily: a) when was TA first presented?, b) did the original TA include guards or was the guard a

⁶⁶² Proclamation in the context of conflict is closely related to apologetics. Early Christian apologetics is ably crystallized by FERGUSON (1962:195-196): "(1) The early Christian proclamation centered in the great doctrines—God as Creator, man as an accountable creature, Christ as the Son of God raised from the dead. (2) The early Christians chose to fight their battles, therefore, on the central issues—the Messiahship and idolatry—dealing with that which was specifically called in question. (3) The early preachers appealed to the Scriptures and, where not to its exact quotations, then to its meanings and teachings. (4) This appeal to the Scriptures was to the Scriptures as a whole, with a balanced perspective of their great central affirmations. As the apologetic avoided the lesser doctrines, so it did not spend time quibbling over isolated passages. (5) The defence of Christianity built on the highest categories of contemporary thought, whether special revelation in the Scriptures or general revelation in nature."

Christian addition to the story?, c) at which phase did the Christians produce the pre-Matthean GS as an answer to the TA?, and d) in the light of the previous considerations, how was the GS formed?

6.1. Elements of an Apologetical Narrative

There is a rather universal agreement among scholars that the Matthean GS is an apologetical story. By the term “apologetical” the reactivity of the story to the Jewish theft accusation is implied. However, some are not convinced of this, or regard it as only a secondary function. For example Hoffman sees the Guard story as a sign of rejection of Israel.⁶⁶³ For him it is not so much about the emptiness of the tomb or countering the rumour, but rather demonstrating how the church has replaced Israel.⁶⁶⁴ According to Brown the GS has a polemical bent, since it refutes a story circulating among the Jews about the disciples stealing Jesus’ body.⁶⁶⁵ Brown distinguishes between polemics and apologetics seeing signs of both in the GS.⁶⁶⁶ However, he regards these functions as secondary and suggests: “The more fundamental thrust was an apocalyptic eschatological dramatization of the power of God to make the cause of the Son successful against all human opposition, no matter how powerful.”⁶⁶⁷ For Kratz the story “hat deutlich apologetischen Charakter” but he also emphasizes its character as a *Befreiungswunder*.⁶⁶⁸ Koester suggests that Matthew has used an epiphany story

⁶⁶³ HOFFMANN 1988.

⁶⁶⁴ HOFFMANN (1988:451-452) concludes: “Die eigentümlichkeiten der matthäischen Ostergeschichte stellen nicht apologetische Abstrusitäten dar, sondern erweisen sich als zentrale Elemente seiner die Gesamtdarstellung des Evangeliums leitenden Geschichtsreflexion, deren bestimmenden Thema der Weg der Heilgeschichte von Israel zu der Kirche aus allen Völkern ist.”

⁶⁶⁵ BROWN 1994:1309.

⁶⁶⁶ BROWN (1994:1309): “The polemic element may represent the latest and final stage of the use of the guard story, developed at the period when Jewish polemic had begun to describe Jesus as a “deceiver” (27:63: *planos*) and when in the Matthean area there was an ongoing struggle between Christian missionaries and Jewish teachers of Pharisaic persuasion...”

⁶⁶⁷ BROWN 1994:1312.

⁶⁶⁸ KRATZ 1973:72-76.

apologetically.⁶⁶⁹ Schaeffer also sees pastoral interests behind the Matthean narrative.⁶⁷⁰

The analytical value of the term apologetical is unfortunately poor without proper elaboration.⁶⁷¹ In principle it could be maintained that whatever is said in a conflict situation, believing that it advances one's agenda at the expense of the hostile party, may be called apologetics. When analyzing the GS our primary interest is focused on the use of a narrative as apologetics. This excludes many examples of apologetical discussion from being very suitable points of comparison.⁶⁷² Since the GS is most certainly a story told from the eye of the conflict, we start with a loose definition, apologetics being in this case "a narrative used in conflict rhetorics". Hopefully in the process of elaborating the definition, we are able to enrich the understanding of the nature and origin of this enigmatic but fascinating story.

6.1.1. Audience and Function of the Argumentation

Apologetical argumentation may be directed at least to three different sorts of audiences; each of them having some special characteristics.⁶⁷³ These audiences may be categorized as i) a hostile outgroup, ii) a neutral outgroup and iii) (somewhat tautologically) a positive ingroup.⁶⁷⁴ First, there may be direct apologetical arguments directed to the hostile outgroup. A description of this sort of argumentation may be seen e.g. in Acts 22:1-23 where Paul is defending his faith before the Sanhedrin. Secondly, there are apologetical attempts to persuade a more or less

⁶⁶⁹ KOESTER 1980:129-130.

⁶⁷⁰ SCHAEFFER 1991:504-505.

⁶⁷¹ As pointed out by GUERRA (1988:252) the terms "apology" and "apologetic" go without exact definition in scholarly literature.

⁶⁷² The most prominent example is Justin's *Dialogue* where the apologetical discussion is reconstructed and a division to an argument and a counterargument can be easily made.

⁶⁷³ The sensitivity of apologetical argumentation to the social context is well illuminated by WILKEN 1970.

⁶⁷⁴ While "a hostile ingroup" could perhaps be seen as a category of its own I prefer to regard it as a hostile outgroup. Thus e.g. Peter and Barnabbas were in the same ingroup with Paul before the delegation from James but then moved to a hostile outgroup in a famous Antiochian conflict.

neutral audience of one's ideology as e.g. in Acts 2:14-40,⁶⁷⁵ and finally one important function of apologetical rhetoric is to strengthen the ideology of the ingroup i.e. people having a similar mindset.⁶⁷⁶ The prayer of the early Christians in Acts 4:24-30 has clear marks of authenticating the experience within the Scriptures, and thus reassuring the ingroup members of the existence of a divine plan behind the observed reality.

The severity of the cognitive dissonance quite probably depends on which group the audience is associated with.⁶⁷⁷ If a new *cognitio* is a part of accepted data in one's immediate social context, the relative price of accepting the *cognitio* is significantly lower than in a situation where a new *cognitio* is taboo or otherwise problematic for one's social identity. Interestingly enough, the idea of "God hardening the heart" may be seen as a religious solution to the dissonance arising from a situation where a hostile outgroup is not convinced of one's arguments.⁶⁷⁸ This may be given as a defence of one's arguments – they are logical and convincing but others do not believe because their hearts have been hardened. This leads to a situation where the hostile outgroup is only passively taken into consideration. Consequently, no efforts are made to convert them, but rather answers are proffered to the neutral outgroup in order to convert them, and to the positive ingroup in order to strengthen their faith and prevent possible counterconversion. But even here the arguments of the hostile outgroup cannot be entirely ignored. If the hostile outgroup influences the neutral outgroup with its arguments, this factor must be taken into account in the conflict rhetorics.⁶⁷⁹ The conflict

⁶⁷⁵ About the vague distinction between apologetical treatise and missionary preaching see MALHERBE 1970.

⁶⁷⁶ A point well-made in MEIER 2004:581.

⁶⁷⁷ FESTINGER (1957:3) defines the cognitive dissonance as follows: "1. The existence of dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance.

2. When dissonance is present, in addition to trying to reduce it, the person will actively avoid situations and information which would likely increase the dissonance."

⁶⁷⁸ An argument utilized by Paul in Romans 9:18 and in the plague narrative in Exodus. For a good representation of the idea of divine hardening in the Hebrew Bible see CHISHOLM 1996.

⁶⁷⁹ These dynamics are clearly seen in Paul's argumentation in Galatians. While regarding οἱ ἀναστατοῦντες as cursed (1:9) and wishing them to mutilate themselves (5:12) he still

scenes described in the narrative of Acts includes the following roles: i) positive ingroup A – the disciples and the followers of Jesus, ii) neutral outgroup B – the crowd, the people of Jerusalem, the pilgrims, iii) hostile outgroup C – the High priest and the Sanhedrin. Arguments were to some extent exchanged between groups A and C, but the arguments of C came to group A also through group B. In order to convince group B, the ingroup A somehow had to be able to counter the arguments which group C presented against it.

As a consequence of this an author may have more than one audience in mind even if he or she targets a certain group. The arguments presented in all three contexts are bound to be similar to some extent but preferences may affect the form of the argumentation. Even when arguments are handled with counterarguments in an ordered fashion, it is not always easy to define the primary audience. The case in point is Justin's dialogue with Trypho the Jew. No consensus on the primary audience has been reached; some regard the book as written for the Jews while others prefer the "preaching to the choir" option.⁶⁸⁰ This may lead to a hasty judgment of something "being an apologetical response to group x" a questionable and too simple a solution. To make the dynamics even more complicated it must be pointed out that to define when a narrative has an apologetical function to begin with is not always

takes great efforts to "rescue" his audience from the arguments of the hostile agitators.

⁶⁸⁰ MORALES (1984:881): "La práctica totalidad de los autores está de acuerdo en que las obras de Justino –incluido el *Diálogo* con el judío Trifón– se dirigen a un público pagano o de cristianos griegos." NILSON (1977:539): "Thus the *Dialogue* is written against the Jews, but not to them or for them." On the other hand Justin's knowledge of the things Jewish has been seen remarkable, possibly suggesting familiarity with Jewish thinking. See e.g. HIGGINS (1967:406): "The evidence assembled in this article will have shown that Justin has a good working knowledge of post-biblical Judaism such as to stand him in good stead in his controversy with a Jew who likewise knew no Hebrew and, like Justin, apparently used the Old Testament in its Greek form. Apart from his strange mistakes about Jewish sects Justin's errors are remarkably few." and AUNE (1966:183) points out: "It has been quite generally agreed that Justin's picture of post-Christian Judaism is surprisingly correct. The apparently casual remarks of Trypho reflect traditional sayings of Jewish rabbinical schools quite accurately." See also the discussion in BOYARIN 2001:456-461. The variety of scholarly judgments concerning Justin's Dialogue with Trypho the Jew reflects also some other challenges of interpreting an apologetical text. For TRAKATELLIS (1986) and BARNARD (1964:396) the tone of the book is friendly while RAJAK (1999:60) calls it vituperative.

easy. The same story may fit an apologetical purpose in one context, and fit another when it is told elsewhere.⁶⁸¹

6.1.2. Creativity in Apologetical Narratives

The nature of the conflict situation greatly affects the freedom of creativity of the hostile parties. If there is an immediate or even an indirect contact between the parties the creativity may be restricted by a factor we call "hostile correction". This means that the hostile party has an opportunity to correct the arguments if they are not true. As a rule of thumb it may be assumed that the shorter the social, temporal or geographical distance between the hostile parties the stronger the "hostile correction factor". Too "creative" polemical narratives may turn against the narrator if the criticized party succeeds in demonstrating the narrative to be baseless.⁶⁸² This means that when living at a short distance from the hostile and/or criticized party the narrator must take the probable response into account already before forming an argument. It holds that some elements of an apologetical narrative or a narrative in an apologetical setting are more flexible to change and more immune to correction than others. Bearing this in mind, when an apologetical story is analyzed it may be useful to divide the elements of the narrative into four categories: i) agreed neutral elements, ii) agreed unfavourable elements, iii) agreed favourable elements and iv) disputed favourable elements.

Agreed neutral elements are those facts which both parties share and which in themselves do not advance either cause. For example the death of Jesus on the cross may be taken as an agreed neutral element. Both the

⁶⁸¹ The case in point is the story of Judas' death (Mt 27:3-10). For the Christian audience it may function as a demonstration of the sad fate of a traitor (pedagogic) and before the general audience as polemical apologetics showing how corrupt the Jewish leaders are.

⁶⁸² It is also useful to take into consideration the findings in rumour research where it has become evident that a story (rumour) is often interactively corrected and sharpened during the re-telling process and does not simply grow unrestrictedly. See e.g. BUCKNER 1965. Of course, as put by KAPFERER (1992:53), rumours are often "spontaneous social products, devoid of ulterior motives and underlying strategies." which make them in some respects different to apologetical narratives.

Sadducees of Sanhedrin and followers of Jesus agreed that Jesus died on the cross. The ways parted only when the meaning of this death was sought. If both parties have reasonable chances of being aware of the truthfulness of the agreed neutral elements, it is rather likely that they actually reflect the history reality. "Neutral" means that no motivation is found for bending the truth in this respect.

Agreed unfavourable elements are those facts which a given party admits, although they are harmful to its cause or purposes. The logic has been already handled with the criterion of embarrassment and need not be repeated here.⁶⁸³ Who would lie to harm himself or herself? Thus we may assume that unfavourable elements are usually brought forward in an apologetical context by another party. It is also possible that the opposing party knows that these elements cannot be ignored due to the strong evidence for them.⁶⁸⁴ For example Craig has presented an argument that the fact of the empty tomb of Jesus was an agreed unfavourable element from the Jewish point of view and thus a strong evidence for the historicity of Jesus' empty tomb.⁶⁸⁵ According to his logic the Jewish opponents of the Christ-believers would have gained from denying the existence of the empty tomb but could not do it because it was generally known (agreed element) to exist. However, there is a chance that the opponent is using *reductio ad absurdum*, admitting some unfavourable elements only for the sake of argument.

Agreed favourable elements are those facts that advance a party's cause, but are still admitted by the opponent. The motive for including favourable elements to a story is naturally clear, and thus it is easy to understand why an originator of a narrative would create these elements out of nothing. It is here where the "hostile correction" plays an important role. Hostile correction is functional when the opponent is in a position to dispute the element if it is not true. This requires certain proximity to the event described socially, geographically or historically. It is crucial that there is "an informed agreement" if the hostile party

⁶⁸³ See 2.3.4. above.

⁶⁸⁴ In the narrative world of Acts the healing of a lame man is the case in point (Acts 4:14-16). For the Sanhedrin his healing is an unfavourable fact which cannot be denied due to the massive evidence for what had happened.

⁶⁸⁵ See e.g. CRAIG 1985.

admits something unfavourable to itself. Otherwise the agreement may be only “for the case of argument” à la *reductio ad absurdum*.

The fourth category includes disputed favourable elements that are immune to denial due to their “word-against-word” nature. For example, if Matthew created the story about resurrecting saints who came from the tombs and appeared to many in Jerusalem (27:52-53), at the time of writing the gospel it was nigh-well impossible to anyone to present any conclusive counter-evidence to this. No eyewitness is mentioned by name and the event is not even claimed to be universal. In most stories there are these sort of safe havens for creative elements. The elements of this category may be also greatly influenced by theological explanations given to the story in general. Thus the theological creativity is supposed to be the most prominent when the assumed risk of falsification is the lowest. In the lack of modern equipment for recoding, the exact words uttered are a good example of this category. Who can bring forward evidence that the given words were never uttered, if the original speaker or hearers are no longer available?⁶⁸⁶

6.1.3. The Associative Nature of Apologetical Arguments

Knowledge of the opponents’ exact arguments is not necessarily precise, especially in the second and third category. If the opponent is not present to correct his accusations it is easy to modify them to be more readily countered. Modification of the opponent’s argumentation may be either intentional or non-intentional. The arguments are heard and understood within an already existing mental framework and the roles in the religious conflict defined with the help of the holy tradition. When one identifies oneself as the representative of JHWH, it is evident that an opponent must be identified with the enemies of JHWH. This leads to a complicated picture of the hostile intragroup communication. Hostile rhetoric may be a counterargument, but it may also be an attempt to

⁶⁸⁶ However, it is possible that e.g. some teachings of Jesus were learnt by heart, so that at least to some extent the exact wordings were memorized. In these cases the wording could be (at least in principle) checked from a number of people who had heard the original teaching. But, in an apologetical and polemical situation this sort of affirmation is hardly a viable option.

strengthen the ingroup cohesion and identity. Consequently, labelling someone as an enemy of God is not necessarily due to the harsh action in real life but rather the application of biblical categories to the self-definition of a group in respect to outgroups. Against this background the division of the narrative thrust to these three categories suggested by Brown may be questioned.⁶⁸⁷ In the Jewish symbolic universe any demonstration of God's eschatological activity "to make the cause of the Son successful" would have been seen as most apologetical and polemical. It would show that the ingroup is right (apologetical) and that outgroup is wrong (polemical). What is more, a polemical statement is also apologetical because it shows that one's enemy is not accepted by God and implies that "God is on our side".

6.1.4. Dialogical Models – A Critical Analysis

Attempts to reconstruct the apologetical-polemical exchange have been made e.g. by Davies and Allison, as well as by Craig. Davies and Allison reconstruct the hypothetical dispute as follows:

One can imagine an exchange between Matthew and critical Jews:
 Matthew: Jesus rose from the dead and his tomb was empty (28:6).
 Opponent: did Jesus really die? Matthew: a Roman guard kept watch over him; surely he was dead before his body was released (27:36).
 Opponent: was there a mix up in tombs? Matthew: Christian women saw where Jesus was buried (27:61).
 Opponent: the disciples, seeking to confirm Jesus' prophecy of his resurrection after three days, stole the body. Matthew: the disciples had fled, they were nowhere near (26:56).
 Opponent: then someone else stole the body. Matthew: a large stone was rolled before the tomb; it was sealed: and Roman soldiers kept watch (28:62-6).
 Opponent: the soldiers fell asleep. Matthew: they were bribed to say that (28:12-15).⁶⁸⁸

Craig suggests a slightly simpler version of the dialogue.

Christian: 'The Lord is risen!'

Jew: 'No, his disciples stole away his body.'

⁶⁸⁷ See 5.1. above.

⁶⁸⁸ DAVIES & ALLISON 1997: 652–653.

Christian: 'The guard at the tomb would have prevented any such theft.'
 Jew: 'No, his disciples stole away his body while the guard slept.'
 Christian: 'The chief priests bribed the guard to say this.'⁶⁸⁹

The helpfulness of the imagined exchange between Matthew and critical Jews by Davies and Allison may be questioned. 1) There are many elements which were probably never disputed including "did Jesus really die?" and "was there a mix up in tombs?". These then are not favourable or unfavourable elements, but neutral agreed facts, which both sides and perhaps even the neutral third party knew. 2) The accusations and defences were probably not developed in a dialogical situation, but were made primarily among ingroup members. As already pointed out, it is reasonable to assume that the apologetical arguments were directed primarily to the own ingroup and the "neutral" audience from where support or converts were sought. This was done by forming narratives to tell what really happened. 3) If the dialogue had been developed with free creativity, as e.g. Allison⁶⁹⁰ argues, there should be quite a high level of "air-tightness" in the arguments presented. Whether this holds to be true or not, will be seen in the next subchapter.

Craig's version is simpler and catches the probable arguments of both sides more acutely. However, the second argument of the Christian "The guard at the tomb would have prevented any such theft" may not be as simple as Craig assumes. Craig regards it as an unfavourable element from the Jewish point of view, but whether it actually was remains to be resolved. In principle the second hypothetical reply of the Jew could have gone "No, his disciples stole away his body, ask the guards!" In this case the guards would be a favourable agreed element from the Jewish point of view.

There is still one critical consideration with regard to the dialogical models. When a narrative is put up to counter the outgroup, it is reasonable to assume that some possible counterarguments are thought about beforehand and taken into consideration when the story proper is developed. And, once launched the elements are not necessarily easily

⁶⁸⁹ CRAIG 1984:273.

⁶⁹⁰ See ALLISON 2005:312.

drawn back. It is also of some significance that a narrative has some extent of irreducibility i.e. it must include some elements in order to form a coherent whole. These elements are not only quick reactions to counterarguments, as could be the case in an actual and spontaneous dialogue. As in a game of chess attempts are made to predict the moves of the opponent. All these considerations make the analysis of an apologetical narrative rather challenging and whenever it is divided into parts the character of the narrative should not be forgotten. Bearing these considerations in mind we proceed to analyze the essential parts of the GS in order to understand the possible context of its birth and formation better.

6.2. The Accusation of Theft

The accusation that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus is referred to by Justin and later by Tertullian.⁶⁹¹ While the dependence of Justin on Matthew's gospel cannot be excluded categorically, it is quite likely that Justin knew of the rumour being actively circulated among the Jews of his day.⁶⁹² Justin writes:

But, as I said before you have sent chosen and ordained men throughout all the world to proclaim that a godless and lawless heresy had sprung from one Jesus, a Galilean deceiver, whom we crucified, but his disciples stole him by night from the tomb, where he was laid when unfastened

⁶⁹¹ Justin in *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, CVII, Tertullian in *On Spectacles*, 30.

⁶⁹² STANTON (2004:154): "Some of the phraseology of this alleged anti-Christian Jewish propaganda comes from Justin himself, some of it possibly from Matt. 28.13, 15. However, there are good reasons for supposing that here Justin may be drawing on an earlier source, for these Jewish allegations and not simply on New Testament passages. (1) At this point at least, Justin is not setting up Trypho as a straw man who lists Jewish objections in order to allow Justin to refute them one by one, for Justin does not respond to them anywhere in the Dialogue. (2) The reference to Christianity as a 'sect' is striking and unique in Justin: he uses the term elsewhere to refer to factions within Judaism (62.3; 80.4) and within Christianity (35.3; 51.2), but not to Christianity per se. (3) The reference to Christianity as a godless and lawless sect raised by Jesus does not come from the gospels, nor does the reference to the disciples as deceivers.

from the cross, and now deceive men by asserting that he has risen from the dead and ascended to heaven.⁶⁹³

The time period when Justin makes this reference is 135-155 A.D., and depending on our choice of dating the Gospel of Matthew we may suppose that the theft accusation (TA) has had a life span of more than 50 years at this point. Many commentators have also suggested that John 20:6-7 is an indirect reaction to the theft accusation.⁶⁹⁴ This would strengthen the viewpoint that there was one major objection to Jesus' resurrection among the Jews of the first and second century, namely the TA.

It is not without significance for the study of the conflict rhetoric that the TA seems to be the only Jewish counterargument against Jesus' resurrection during the first 100 years of Christian history. Thus it is reasonable to assume that it was regarded as quite effective by the Jews of the day.⁶⁹⁵ A crucial question is how quickly any counter-argument against the Christian proclamation was formed and voiced in the first place. Naturally the first thing to ponder is when the demand for the counter-argument first occurred. It may be useful to present various scenarios about what could have happened and analyze them respectively:

Option one. There was no any specific counter-argument against the resurrection claims of Christians. The TA was for some reason presented only decades later.

Option two: The resurrection claims were challenged immediately after being presented, but the way of explaining the empty tomb was not the TA but an argument unknown to us, perhaps similar to the version cited

⁶⁹³ *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, CVII.

⁶⁹⁴ See fn. 144 above.

⁶⁹⁵ It was -in all likelihood- considered to be the true version of what had taken place by many Jews. The somewhat simple and caricaturised description of the Jewish opponents in Early Christian literature is hardly sufficiently deep analysis of the actual attitudes of this group.

by Celsus that the gardener had taken the body away.⁶⁹⁶ The TA was formed only later.

Option three: The resurrection claims were challenged immediately after being presented with counterarguments, at least one of them being the TA.

Option 1 is improbable due to the intensity of the conflict. It is much easier to suppose that the opponents of Christianity had an answer to the Christian proclamation than assuming that they were simply silent. The trials depicted in the Gospels and Acts show that the Jewish authorities needed rationalization of the activities.⁶⁹⁷ This leads us to wonder how the first persecutions of the Christians were rationalized if their core belief – the resurrection of Jesus – had not been countered.

Option 2. Since the major reason for the belief in Jesus' resurrection was the claim that he had appeared to his followers, it is logical to assume that these claims were primarily attacked by the opponents of Christianity. This leads us into an interesting question. How, for example, did Paul answer the Christians he persecuted when the core of their faith was touched in interrogations? In all likelihood something similar to 1 Cor 15:3-8 was repeatedly brought forth in the interrogations by the Christians. It is likely that Paul and other opponents of the Christian faith took the alleged appearances to be a lie, since when experiencing one himself Paul had converted to the new faith. If he had had another explanation for the appearances to the disciples, it is not easy to understand why his personal experience of the appearance

⁶⁹⁶ Origen. *Contra Celsum* 2.59.

⁶⁹⁷ See e.g. Mk 14:55-56, Acts 6:11-16. To what extent the depictions are historical is not the question here. It may be as MATERA (1990:11) puts it: "The Markan passion contains important, historical traditions about the trial of Jesus, but it is the Evangelist who shaped and formed these traditions in accordance with his theological purpose." The point is that those accused of religious crime were given a hearing before the court. See also RIVKIN (1975) who demonstrates the existence of juridical constraints of Sanhedrin. Paul's punishments in the synagogues (2. Cor 11:24) indicate that some sort of official judgement had been given and thus verbal accusations presented. The Jews hardly whipped people haphazardly without providing a proper rationalization for the punishment. See also HORBURY (2006:43-66) for a good summary of expulsion practices in the second temple Judaism.

would have convinced him. Why not use the same rationalization he had used when dismissing the alleged appearances of Jesus to the disciples? But, while “they are lying, they never saw anything” was probably the primary counter-argument to the Christian resurrection claim, it did not cover the empty tomb. It is true that the role of the empty tomb should not be exaggerated in the early Christian resurrection proclamation, but the tradition is very old and a proper counter-argument had to take its existence into consideration.

Without the theft argument we are bereft of any other explanation for the empty tomb prior to Celsus’ reference to the gardener who had moved the body. Two considerations make this explanation unlikely in the intense conflict. Firstly, it leaves the disciples rather innocent; they have only erred, rather than been guilty of plotting or being purposefully deceptive. Secondly, for as long as the gardener was alive, he could, in principle, have been found and thus able to tell where the body was. As we have already argued above, there must have been enough motivation among the opponents of the Christian movement to show where the body was in order to diminish the credibility of the resurrection claim.

Option 3 has much to recommend itself. The idea of the disciples lying matches well with the idea of the disciples stealing the body of Jesus. When the appearances (major evidence) were countered by a reference to their lies, the question “what about the empty tomb?” was most naturally rationalized by the accusation of theft. Lying and stealing describes well the followers of a deceiver. Thus, the theft accusation was bound to arise as soon as the claim of Jesus’ resurrection was made. The knowledge that some women disciples had found Jesus’ tomb empty was spread among the followers of Jesus as can be assumed from the early origin of the empty tomb tradition. Furthermore, the proclamation of someone having risen from the dead demanded an empty tomb of some sort. To put it a bit differently – What else could the opponents of the Early Christians say given that the burial by Joseph and finding of the empty tomb are historical?

The empty tomb did not necessarily make the task of the religious elite harder when they attempted to suffocate the re-born folk movement. The empty tomb could be easily interpreted as a result from stealing the body

which, practically enough, cast a shadow of doubt on the integrity of the Christian leaders. The theft accusation automatically led those believing it to label the disciples as liars, and thus their alleged appearance experiences could be rejected. Furthermore, the miracles performed by the disciples were more easily categorized as the “work of Beelzebub” since the dishonest nature of the miracle-workers was demonstrated in the theft of the body. This aspect is not to be forgotten since in the Jewish mindset the miracles could function as a proof that JHWH was on the side of the miracle-worker. This meant that their proclamation of the resurrected Jesus had more appeal to the crowds when it was supported by miracles.

It is probable that the religious leaders of Jerusalem answered the claim of Jesus’ resurrection quickly by accusing them of stealing the body. This claim was spread from Jerusalem to Diaspora communities and was known by the first evangelist and later by Justin Martyr. As for the first century it is the only documented counter-argument to the Christian proclamation of Jesus’ resurrection, its explanatory power being rather strong as demonstrated above. Thus we conclude that the TA was made very early on.

6.3. Enter the Guards

The TA is certainly eligible without the presence of the guards. For example the Sadducees, who did not believe in the whole phenomenon of resurrection, could reason that if the tomb was empty someone must have taken the body away. And, who else could it have been but the followers of the crucified agitator? But just as in the trial of Jesus some witnesses would make the case remarkably more convincing. Thus, the guards played this role at least in the narrative world of Matthew. They (falsely, according to Matthew) claimed that they were at the tomb and that the disciples had stolen the body. On the other hand, the assumption that the guards were introduced to the dialogue by a Christ-believer to demonstrate that no theft could have taken place is also very common. Surely a Roman *custodia* was enough to keep a bunch of Galilean fishermen and peasants away from the tomb. Accordingly, the Jewish TA

is considered to have been simply that “the disciples stole the body” without any mention of the guards. This leads us to an interesting dilemma concerning the introduction or addition of the guards to the TA. We have two basic options to choose between.

Option 1: The guards were first mentioned by a Christian who formed the guard story to counter the TA.

Option 2: The guards were first mentioned as a part of the TA by a Jew.

6.3.1. Option 1 – Christian Addition

According to Craig, Davies and Allison and many others the function of the guards in the apologetical story is to demonstrate that the theft could not have taken place. The very reason why the guards were posted to guard the tomb in the narrative was to prevent the theft. Thus the idea is by no means implausible. However, while this was also my working hypothesis when I started studying the subject, I am not longer as confident any more. In what follows I present a few critical notions against the common idea that a Christian apologist would have added the guards to the story for apologetical reasons.

To begin with, a minor cause of astonishment is that the strength of the *κουστωδία* is not described, let alone emphasized. Had the *raison d’être* of the guards in the story been to demonstrate the absurdity of the idea that the disciples could steal the body, this modesty is somewhat astonishing. It would have served Christian interests to tell, and if possible to exaggerate, how strong the *κουστωδία* was.⁶⁹⁸

Secondly, if the guards in the story are of Christian origin and were made up to dispute the theft accusation in a direct dispute between the Jewish leaders and Christ-believers, it can be considered odd that the guards were sent to the tomb on the Saturday instead of on the Friday

⁶⁹⁸ The strength of the arresting party is at least implied in Mt 26:47, Mk 14:43, Lk 22:47, Jn 18:3. In Acts 12:4 the strength of the guarding unit is described exactly.

night.⁶⁹⁹ The time period from the burial to the third day is explicitly referred to by “ἕως τῆς τρίτης ἡμέρας” in the verse 27:64. The tomb is thus left without guards for the first night and morning. In a direct dialogical situation it would have been more natural to set the guards at the tomb immediately after the burial.⁷⁰⁰ This notion has been countered by Brown who suggests that the command to ἀσφαλίσασθε ὡς οἴδατε implies that the guards checked the tomb. Nonetheless, I remain somewhat sceptical to Brown’s suggestion. There is no reason for choosing the Saturday morning instead of the Friday night for the time of setting the guards, and apologetical argumentation in general tends not to leave too much hanging on the audience’s ability to catch innuendos.

Thirdly, a question of some interest is also why the tradent or the evangelist does not make the allegedly invented guards see the resurrection proper, but rather uses the angel to cause the earthquake and knock out the guards instead. In a direct dialogical confrontation where the creativity is not restricted, a story similar to that of the Gospel of Peter (GPet) could possibly have served the apologetical purpose better than the current one. In GPet the resurrection is witnessed by friends and foes alike, and the producer of the story did not shy away from adding theologically coloured sayings to the narrative. There seems to be a consensus among the early Christians that nobody actually saw the resurrection, but Matthew’s guards come close. What else could be the reason for moving the stone, but letting the resurrected Jesus step out from the tomb? If a Christian created the idea of placing guards at the tomb this earlier understanding (that nobody saw the resurrection) might not have been a hinderance as we can reason from GPet. Needless to say, this viewpoint may be vulnerable to criticism of being *argumentum e silentio*, but on the other hand we have an “unrestricted

⁶⁹⁹ So e. g. HAGNER 1995:863 and CARSON 1984:585.

⁷⁰⁰ The reason cannot be an attempt to show how hypocritical Jewish leaders break the Sabbath law as is suggested by. Quite the opposite; when the generally hostile attitude towards the Jewish leaders in Matthew’s gospel and in all likelihood also in the pre-Matthean GS is taken into consideration it is little astonishing that the Sabbath is not explicitly mentioned. In a direct dialogical situation more would probably have been taken out of the fact that the high priests went to the Gentile governor on the Sabbath day. While not as serious a challenge to the apologetical addition theory as the previous, it is interesting that the religious leaders plotting with a Gentile governor on the Sabbath day did not inspire more the (Jewish) Christian(s) who originally formed the story.

creative" version, in the form of the abovementioned GPet, to compare with.

Fourthly, the previous point, the essential difference between the "air-tightness" of Peter's and Matthew's Gospels as for the GS, leads us to wonder how much the originator of the pre-Matthean GS had to reflect Jewish counter-arguments. When GPet was written in the latter half of the second century there was no longer any chance to check the details of the story, and thus it was possible to add "disagreed favourable elements" to the story. Furthermore, it is quite likely that the GS in Peter's Gospel was indeed "preaching to the choir" i.e. written for the already believing audience. The Jews requesting the guard to be posted at the tomb are identified as elders, which may even be seen as the primary identification of Jewish leaders.⁷⁰¹ In the pre-Matthean GS the central role is given to the chief priests. This difference in identification of the Jewish leaders may reflect the actual situation at the time when the story was formed. If the pre-Matthean GS was put up during the Second Temple period it is natural that the chief priests were responsible for the plot as they were the most outstanding enemies of the Jesus movement at that time. During the latter half of the second century the term 'elders and scribes' described the leaders of Jewish communities in Diaspora well. If the pre-Matthean GS was formed during the Sadducean temple dynasty, the Christian originator of the tradition would have had to take the Jewish opponents into account more seriously. The knowledge of the events on Easter A.D. 30 had not totally disappeared from the common memories of Jerusalem chief priests, and thus the creativity of a Christ-believing apologist was somewhat restricted. In other words, the factor of "hostile correction" was operative in that context. If the guard at the tomb was a Christian invention, why did the Jewish opponents not

⁷⁰¹ It is interesting that when the priests and Pharisees are mentioned they actually confess that the crucifixion was wrong. When the story proceeds to the actual plotting it is the elders and scribes who are identified.

- Jews, elders, the priests (7:1) – lamenting.
- Scribes, Pharisees and elders (8:1) – lamenting.
- The elders (8:2) – asking guards to the tomb.
- The elders and scribes (8:4) – going to the tomb.
- The elders (10:1) – witnessing the events at the tomb and little later (11:1) taking counsel with the Romans about whether to report Pilate or not.

counter it by claiming that there were no guards anywhere near the tomb?⁷⁰²

Fifthly, the introduction of women as eyewitnesses to the episode is indicative of the confusing nature of the guards from the Christian point of view. There is an indisputable tension between the Markan empty tomb story and that of Matthew's (as shown earlier in this study). If the guards were a Christian invention, why could they not have been seen as a source of "correct" information? Had the Christian version been formed late, nobody could have demonstrated that there were no such guards to corroborate what the Christian version claimed. In the present narrative the testimony of the guards is hostile to the Christian agenda; it is a thing to be explained. To maintain that the guard is a Christian invention would mean that a Christian created the group of imaginary hostile third party (Roman) witnesses.

6.3.2. Option 2 – Jewish Origin of the Guards?

As the Jewish opponents of the Jesus movement presented the TA they faced a challenge concerning the source of their knowledge. It has already been pointed out that some aspects of the polemical discussion were foreseen, and thus it is reasonable to assume that the formation of the very first TA already included an answer to the question: "How do you know that the disciples stole the body?" It is likely that this party believed that the disciples had actually stolen the body, since there it was unlikely that there were too many other explanations for the empty tomb. Nonetheless, just making this "knowledge" public would have left a lot to hope for in a polemical situation where the goal is optimal persuasion. Consequently, witnesses were needed; but someone with too close ties to the religious aristocracy would not do much to improve the credibility of the TA. Thus, the religious leaders themselves and also the Levite temple police, who took orders from the high priest, were excluded. Roman soldiers made ideal witnesses, since they were more neutral and also suitable guardians of the tomb of a man crucified by the Roman governor. The curious fact that the guards were posted at the

⁷⁰² See e.g. WATERS 2005:300.

tomb only on the Saturday is more readily explained within this theory, if we assume that there were – in actual fact - no guards. The burial on the Friday was public, and there were potential witnesses who could later state, or at least launch the rumour, that they had not seen any guards around.

It is challenging to explain how the disciples managed to steal the body when the tomb was guarded. There are two options: i) They took the body by force using violence against the guards, or ii) they stole it secretly from the guards, which might be possible if the latter were sleeping. But how could the guards have witnessed the theft if they had been sleeping? This may be the most challenging critical question concerning the hypothesis that the Jews introduced the guards as the witnesses of the theft to the story, and to any theory for that matter. Nevertheless, we know that the claim of “a sleeping witness” was made either by the Jews or as a more or less caricaturized claim by the Christ-believer who formed the GS. It is also quite evident that the one responsible for formulating the tradition must have been aware of this paradox i.e. the inability of a sleeping person to see anything happening around him. My suggestion is that what was meant by *νυκτὸς ἐλθόντες ἔκλεψαν αὐτὸν ἡμῶν κοιμωμένων* (28:13) is a situation where most of the soldiers were sleeping while one unit, perhaps even only one soldier, was awake and on guard.⁷⁰³ If this unit were sleepy, unmotivated or careless, it would not have been impossible to surprise and eliminate them. The narrative leaves, maybe purposefully, scope for the imagination here.

Is the occurrence of the guards in the story about the theft of Jesus' body of Christian or Jewish origin? On the basis of the arguments presented above, against my original assumption, I lean toward the latter theory i.e. that it was the Jewish opponents of the early Christians who introduced the guards into the conflict rhetoric between the Jewish leaders and Christians. The reasons for this are as follows:

- a) The strength of the guard is not emphasized.

⁷⁰³ See the system in Acts 12:4. BRUCE (1988:234) cites Vegetius, *On Military Affairs* 3.8: “The watches are divided into four, according to the waterclock, so that it is not necessary to keep watch for more than three hours of the night”.

- b) The arrival of the guards at the tomb a day after the burial is most awkward if the guards were introduced by a Christian apologist. On the other hand the setting of the guards on the Saturday is understandable if the Jewish opponents of the Christ-believers invented the guards but wanted to avoid the plausible falsification of the rumour by those watching Jesus' burial.
- c) The witness of the guards is left to support the Jewish claim, not e.g. the fact of resurrection (Cf. GPet).
- d) The risk of "hostile correction" must be taken into account. It is possible that the Jews could have countered the story by claiming that there were no guards at the tomb in the first place had not been any.
- e) Christians would have created a hostile witness by introducing the guards.

6.3.3. The Guards and History

Were There Actual Soldier-Witnesses?

It has already been suggested that - in all likelihood -the TA was presented rather quickly after the Christian proclamation began. If the Jewish opponents of the Jesus movement argued that the guards witnessed the theft, it is useful to ask whether there actually were any Roman soldiers who could have been brought forward to confirm this publically. The fact that the Christian version had to explain the guards' testimony by appealing to bribery could be seen to suggest that there had really been such witnesses.⁷⁰⁴

However, would no-one wonder why the guards went unpunished after failing to perform their duty? Furthermore, we may assume that Roman officials, or even Pilate, would not be enthusiastic about hearing so much noise about the failure of their soldiers. Even though it seems to have

⁷⁰⁴ That Luke does not mention anything about this sort of counter-arguments against the resurrection in Acts is not evidence against the existence of soldier-witnesses since it seem to be his literary policy not to mention anything against the "resurrection shown to be true by many infallible proofs". Acts 1:3.

been a practise of the time that witnesses were brought forward to confirm a case in the legal setting, the situation here is slightly different. If the disciples were never officially accused of the theft, the pressure to produce live witnesses might not have been significant. Launching a rumour was possible without a detailed cross-examination of the witnesses. It is not impossible either that some soldiers were actually heard to confirm the TA thereby giving more weight to the rumour, but were hardly likely to be available for anyone's questions.⁷⁰⁵ For Christians this was not an urgent task since they had had strong experiences which they interpreted as the appearances of the risen Jesus, and the claim that their leaders were deceivers must have sounded rather absurd in their ears.

Were There Guards at the Tomb?

If we assume that the chief priests made the initial claim that there were guards at Jesus' tomb, the question naturally arises as to whether they actually were there or not. Again we approach the question by creating possible scenarios.

Scenario 1: There were no guards but after hearing about the resurrection claim the chief priests had to have a way to explain the empty tomb. They believed that the disciples had stolen the body, and wished to make this belief stronger by making Roman soldiers eyewitnesses of the theft.

Scenario 2: There were guards at the tomb and someone actually succeeded in stealing the body while the guards were sleeping. When the chief priests heard the guards reporting this, they decided to gain from the information and use it as a demonstration of the deceptive character of the disciples, who were the most natural candidates for perpetrating such a crime.

Scenario 3: There were guards at the tomb and something extraordinary happened and the body disappeared from the tomb. While the soldiers interpreted the event as supernatural intervention of gods, ghosts etc.,

⁷⁰⁵ It is to be noted that Roman soldiers lived under their military routines as do all occupying armies in corresponding situations. This must have formed a natural social boundary between the crowd and the soldiers.

the chief priests regarded it as a theft with possible tricks to frighten the guards. Consequently the chief priests asked the guards to keep quiet about the “extraordinary” and to tell that the disciples had stolen the body while they were sleeping.

Scenario 1 faces a challenge when it comes to explaining how the chief priests managed to find suitable soldiers to confirm the story. Had there been no deal made with the Romans, the risk of someone exposing the conspiracy on the Roman side would have been rather great. On the other hand, it is possible that the chief priests asked Pilate to concur with their attempt to maintain the peace in Jerusalem, and to suffocate a potential rebel movement. Pilate had already consented to the crucifixion of Jesus, and thus a conspiracy of this kind is hardly outside the realm of plausibility in the Judean politics in the early 30s.

Scenario 2 is usually rejected as an explanation for the empty tomb assuming that the disciples acted *bona fide* in proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus. While this is certainly a good argument, it is possible that the body was stolen by a small group of disciples, while the other followers were totally unaware of what had taken place.⁷⁰⁶ The attempts to demonstrate how impossible it was to steal something from under professional Roman soldiers’ watchful eyes often leans too heavily on the final Matthean version of the story.⁷⁰⁷ The size of the guard and their motivation are not known; moreover a guard could have been neutralized and kept hostage during the actual theft etc.⁷⁰⁸ However, what is problematic in this scenario is that the soldiers were not punished for their failure. It is not easy to find a sufficient motive for the chief priests to defend the soldiers especially because the theft by the disciples would have been legally confirmed by the punishment of the guards. Thus this scenario must be deemed as improbable.

⁷⁰⁶ The argument against the historical basis of the theft theory is usually concentrated on the readiness of the disciples to die for their belief. However, it must be taken into consideration that most of them might have been ignorant of the theft.

⁷⁰⁷ The plausibility of the theft has recently been defended by CARRIER 2005.

⁷⁰⁸ It can be maintained that the stealing a body from a guarded tomb is not implausible in the sense that it would meet the criterion of implausibility.

Scenario 3 raises the question of what this ‘extraordinary’ would have been. It is widely accepted that extraordinary phenomena happened around the person of Jesus both before and after his death. The guards may have known that they were guarding the tomb of a man with magical power, which in the Mediterranean mindset could have prepared them to experience something extraordinary”.⁷⁰⁹ If the guards saw something similar to Paul’s vision on his way to Damascus, their flight to the chief priests might be understandable. Paul interpreted the experience within his own religious and biographical scheme and so did the guards in their respective mental frameworks. The actual disappearance of the body from the tomb could still be explained as a theft, if the thieves had somehow been able to produce the phenomenon.⁷¹⁰ The chief priests’ defence of the failed guards would be explained well within this scenario. The punishment would have meant interrogation, and the “phenomenon” would become known which would not have served the chief priests’ purposes.

The Motive

Why would the chief priests and other like-minded Jewish leaders go to Pilate and ask for guards for Jesus’ tomb? While this question concerns primarily the above-mentioned scenario 3 it also touches the scenario 1. If the chief priests claimed that there were guards, it is reasonable to assume that somehow they would have had to explain why they were sent there in the first place. We have already handled this question from one viewpoint in Chapter 2. However, there our main concern was to evaluate whether the argument “Jesus never spoke about his resurrection” met the criteria of non-historicity or historicity. The current dilemma is somewhat different. It is essential to differentiate between the Christian version of the event and what may have actually taken place.

⁷⁰⁹ This “Mediterranean mindset” includes the widespread experiences of the Altered State of Consciousness. As MALINA (1999) ably demonstrates, it is hard to escape the phenomenon of mystical experiences when strictly following historical-critical reasoning process. Note also the epithet “superb” given to Malina’s article by CHARLESWORTH 2004:38.

⁷¹⁰ As far-fetched as this may sound, the phenomenon of an induced Altered State of Consciousness, or what PILCH (2002:106) calls Shamanistic State of Consciousness, is relatively common. The proponent of this view could refer to the ecstatic phenomena among the early Christians.

Thus we should not consider only whether the Pharisees or chief priests (27:63) had actually heard Jesus speaking about his own resurrection after three days as implied in the Matthean GS. The question is more general in nature. Did the chief priests have any reason to assume that a resurrection fraud could be attempted by stealing the body? Or, could there have been any other reason to ask for guards for the tomb? It is also noteworthy that the chief priests also had to provide a hypothetical motive if they invented the guards, i.e. to tell why they requested the tomb to be guarded in the first place. In what follows I suggest and analyze some possible motives.

- i) That king Herod and some others regarded Jesus as John the Baptist *redivivus* shows that the idea itself was not totally unheard of. If even the tetrarch of Galilee could cherish this sort of belief, there should be no doubt of the political potential imbedded in the claim. By preventing the theft of the body the chief priests may have wished to guarantee that *Jesus redivivus* rumours would never arise. A missing body could also have inspired connotations to Enoch's or Elijah's ascensions to Heaven. In brief – the theft of Jesus' body could have been a potential threat in the minds of the religious leaders of Jerusalem. The enigmatic popular belief is, however, not easily categorized. In what sense John the Baptist was believed to be resurrected and “reincarnated” in Jesus remains a mystery.
- ii) Because of the provocation in the Temple the Jesus movement was considered to be potentially dangerous and thus any chance of it gaining popularity was probably countered as carefully as possible.⁷¹¹ Jesus was seen as a magician and deceiver and thus tricks could be expected even from his followers. Guards could have been set for an unspecified reason, which later on was “modified” to include talk of the resurrection talk and the theft of

⁷¹¹ If the bribery of Judas Iscariot by the chief priests is taken as historical it could be pointed out that efforts were made financially and otherwise to suffocate the Jesus movement by eliminating its leader. It is understandable that the followers were not caught because they very likely fled, as told in the gospels, and could not have been found in Jerusalem where the number of citizens was multiplied due to the Passover festival pilgrims.

the body. This reason could have been e.g. an attempt to catch the closest male followers of Jesus by setting a trap at the tomb.

- iii) As demonstrated in Chapter 2, the claim of evangelists that Jesus spoke about his own resurrection cannot necessarily be ruled out. It is to be noted that he did not have to be as explicit in real life as e.g. in traditions Mk 8:32, 9:32, and 10:33-34. The fear of *Jesus redivivus* or phenomenon could have been awoken even on the basis of more implicit innuendos to his personal resurrection. There is, however, one notable challenge in this scenario: to explain how the chief priests had come to know about Jesus' predictions. It has been suggested that the information had been related to them by Judas Iscariot when he contacted the chief priests in order to tell them of Jesus' nightly location. But if Judas' suicide is historical, it is hard to believe that he would have gone to such detail and premeditated the death of Jesus, which, at least in Matthew's gospel, seems to have been the very reason for his desperate act.
- iv) If the guard at the tomb is a later invention, it is possible that the chief priests put forward the story only after the Christians began preaching the resurrection. The chief priests could then claim that they had known about this resurrection conspiracy and had even asked for guards to be posted at the tomb to prevent the theft.

It is possible to find more or less reasonable motives for placing the guards, but the timing becomes a challenge in most of the alternatives mentioned above. If the guards had been posted to prevent the theft, to catch the disciples, to prevent visits or worship of a prophet's tomb, it is somewhat curious, that they were not sent there immediately after the burial. The remaining option, if the historicity of the guards is to be maintained, is that the chief priests only got the knowledge of Jesus' predictions on the Sabbath day. Otherwise the delay is, to my mind, incomprehensible. While it cannot be totally excluded that someone had heard Jesus predicting his resurrection and told this to the chief priests on the Sabbath, the timing is more readily explained if the guards are the later invention of the chief priests. By claiming to have posted the guard on the Sabbath they avoided any possible counter-witness from those who happened to see the burial of Jesus. The "traffic" on Sabbath day

was in all likelihood significantly more peaceful than other days and thus falsification was less probable as it would have been if they had claimed to have posted the guards already on the Friday.

6.4. Christian Guard Story

6.4.1. Need for Reaction from the Christian Side of the Conflict

As stated above, it is probable that the chief priests were forced to make a quick counter against the Christian resurrection claim. The measures taken to suffocate the re-kindled religious movement could not wait for long. However, the Christian reaction to the TA may be somewhat more complicated to reconstruct. While we know that at some point a Christ-believer decided that an alternative narrative was needed to recount “what really happened”, it is difficult to tell where and when this need resulted in the actual formation of the Christian GS (CSG).

The TA hardly threatened the identity of the early Christian movement. Thus answering the TA was not a matter of life and death for the church. This can be argued on the following grounds.

First, the core of the Early Christian movement was keenly attached to the conflict history of the Jesus movement, and thus they harboured inherited antagonism against the religious leaders in Jerusalem. Whatever was identified as coming from them was in all likelihood regarded with a fair amount of scepticism. In the Christians’ social construction of reality the role of the chief priests was very likely corrupted and deceitful.

Secondly, the edge of the TA was that the Christian leaders are deceitful. For a Christ-believer the choice was – either the chief priests are deceitful or his own leaders were. Christ-believers generally believed that the bribery of Judas by the chief priests had happened, and thus the idea of the chief priests being corrupted was confirmed with this piece of information. It is readily understandable that the cognitive dissonance was quickly resolved and the chief priests were judged to be the

deceivers. When the chief priests or someone else appealed to the Roman guards as witnesses, the bribery as *modus operandi* of the chief priests was in all likelihood quickly referred to as an explanation. It is possible that this explanation was seen as so self-evident that it did not need any “official” narrative to support it.

Thirdly, at the core of the resurrection faith was the experience which was interpreted as an appearance of the resurrected Jesus. There were hundreds of Jesus’ followers who had had these experiences and it is reasonable to assume that almost all Christ-believers in Jerusalem in the beginning of the 30s personally knew someone who “had seen the Lord”. The TA presumed that these experiences were based on a plot and lies, something which would be very difficult to convince the Christ-believers of.

The situation must have been slightly different among the so-called neutral outgroup i.e. among the crowd who partly converted to Christianity accepting the claim of Jesus’ resurrection and who partly rejected it. According to Luke’s description an important reason for the mass conversions was the miracles which were believed to happen among the Christ-believers. This phenomenon was interpreted as a sign that the prophecies were being fulfilled (Acts 3:1-26) and that God was among the Christ-believers. The cognitive dissonance between miracle-performing Christians and their unacceptable claims could be resolved by accusing the Christ-believers of being deceivers empowered by Beelzebub. Nevertheless, this solution was not unproblematic, since the Jewish religious tradition recognized the idea of limits of magical power as seen in Exodus story where Egyptian magicians conclude, “this is the finger of God”.⁷¹² If “the finger of God” was believed to be operative in the Christ-believers’ miracle-working, it is probable that they questioned the TA by asking “how could JHWH act through deceivers?”.

While the appearances of Christ were an important phenomenon in re-igniting the Jesus movement after Easter, their relative value diminished as a direct reason or an argument for converting to Christianity as time passed. For most converts the miraculous - interpreted to be in the

⁷¹² Exodus 8:19.

continuum of the Holy tradition - was the primary reason for conversion, not weighing up the arguments for and against the resurrection of Jesus. The latter was finally a question of word against word, and its solution was dependent on the factors described above.

There does not appear to have been much pressure among the Christ-believers to reply immediately to the TA with an alternative story. While it is probable that Christ-believers heard the accusation very quickly, and labelled it as a bribery-based lie, the threat was not necessarily acute enough to inspire any dedicated tradition formation. On the other hand, the early origin of the Christian GS cannot be ruled out either.⁷¹³

6.4.2. The Tension between the Empty Tomb Story and the Guard Story

The historicity of the Matthean GS was found wanting due to problems in combining the Markan empty tomb story with the presence of the guards at the tomb.⁷¹⁴ There are no signs of the women seeing guards in Mark's, Luke's or John's versions of the women's visit at the tomb.⁷¹⁵ This suggests that Jesus' followers did not know anything about the guards before the Jewish leaders made that claim. On this basis I propose the following chain of events as the most probable:

The knowledge about the finding of the tomb empty by a group of women led by Mary Magdalene was spread among the disciples in Jerusalem a little before and simultaneously with the reports of the appearances of Jesus. While the appearances soon became the major

⁷¹³ The rumour researchers have found that anxiety and activity in rumour transmitting are closely connected. See e.g. ROSNOW 1980, BORDIA & DIFONZO 2002 and PEZZO & BECKSTEAD 2006. As the conflict between the Christ-believers and the ruling elite was acute, it is likely that the anxiety level was rather high among the Christians. This could have resulted in generating a rumour to alleviate the dissonance caused by the TA.

⁷¹⁴ See 2.2.2.

⁷¹⁵ I agree with WRIGHT (2003:589-590) in regarding Luke's empty tomb story as leaning on an independent tradition. The way the third evangelist presents the identity of the women is most readily explained by his will to correct the naming of the women in the Markan version.

evidence of the resurrection, the empty tomb story was told as a part of Easter story dramatizing the effect of appearances.⁷¹⁶ The basic story line was fixed during the constant re-telling of the narrative with no reference to the guards whatsoever before the TA was ever presented. When the Christians heard about the guards for the first time, their communal basic outline of what was believed to have taken place during the Passover had already been formed. When the situation arose for a Christian to make a narrative counter to the TA it was based on what was claimed by the Jewish TA and known from Christian tradition concerning the tomb.

This means that the CGS is later than the empty tomb tradition where Mary Magdalene with some other women found Jesus' tomb empty. But, since the empty tomb tradition is very early, this information is of limited use when it comes to dating the CGS. The writing of Matthew's gospel is naturally the *terminus ante quem* for CGS.

6.4.3. Analysis of the Elements in the Christian Guard Story

There are signs that the hostile correction factor had been taken into consideration by the Christian who formed the CGS. This is seen in the fact that the basic elements of the story were adopted from outside sources.

The creative or redactive work of the tradent focused on the points where his sources collided and where the hostile correction was not viable or acceptable. In what follows I present a more detailed analysis of the CGS based on the assumptions described above.

Τῇ δὲ ἐπαύριον, ἣτις ἐστὶν μετὰ τὴν παρασκευὴν, συνήχθησαν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι πρὸς Πιλάτον λέγοντες, Κύριε, ἐμνήσθημεν ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ὁ πλάνος εἶπεν ἔτι ζῶν, Μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἐγείρομαι. κέλευσον οὖν ἀσφαλισθῆναι τὸν τάφον ἕως τῆς τρίτης ἡμέρας, μήποτε

⁷¹⁶ It is indicative that the themes of wondering and anxiety are present in every description of the original reaction of the women to the empty tomb.

ἐλθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ κλέψωσιν αὐτὸν καὶ εἴπωσιν τῷ λαῷ, Ἥγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν, καὶ ἔσται ἡ ἐσχάτη πλάνη χείρων τῆς πρώτης. ἔφη αὐτοῖς ὁ Πιλάτος, Ἔχετε κουστωδίαν: ὑπάγετε ἀσφαλίσασθε ὡς οἴδατε. οἱ δὲ πορευθέντες ἠσφαλίσαντο τὸν τάφον σφραγίσαντες τὸν λίθον μετὰ τῆς κουστωδίας.

It is difficult to say whether the exact identities of the delegation members were included in the Jewish version of the story. The curious addition of the Pharisees to the delegation may be of Jewish origin if an attempt was made to emphasize the unity of the leaders in acting against the deceiver. This, however, is rather speculative and the question must be left open. Since Matthew left the Pharisees out from the conflict scene e.g. in 27:1-3 and 27:20, I find it improbable that he added it here.⁷¹⁷ Thus the choices are either the Jewish opponents of the Jesus movement or the originator of the pre-Matthean GS. If the identity of the delegation members was supposed by the Christian trident, it is very possible that it is reflective of his *Sitz im Leben*. Should this be accepted it could be argued that the CGS was formed when the opposition to Christianity was mostly in the hands of the chief priests (mentioned both in 27:62 and 28:11) but that they acted together with the Pharisees and the elders (mentioned in 27:62 and 28:12 respectively). This sort of coalition would refer to the time period of 30-70 A.D. when the chief priests were in power.

The words put to the mouths of the delegation were probably reasoned from the contemporary Jewish propaganda, and then enriched by Christian theological colouring. The expression “ἐμνήσθημεν ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ὁ πλάνος εἶπεν ἔτι ζῶν, Μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἐγείρομαι” is most descriptive of this. The term used of Jesus is the established way to call Jesus and probably derives from the pre-Easter period as being the most natural choice for the delegation’s way to call Jesus.⁷¹⁸ Since the resurrection predictions are very old traditions, the expression Μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἐγείρομαι is probably a reflection of the Christian understanding that Jesus had actually predicted his own resurrection.⁷¹⁹

⁷¹⁷ See 2.3.3.

⁷¹⁸ See 3.3.1.

⁷¹⁹ See 2.3.1.

It was natural for a Christian tradent to assume that the Jewish opponents of Jesus had also heard about his predictions, particularly if the latter claimed to have been aware of the conspiracy to steal the body. The motivation “μήποτε ἐλθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ κλέψωσιν αὐτὸν καὶ εἴπωσιν τῷ λαῷ, Ἠγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν” is likely derived from the original Jewish TA story, and demonstrates how the chief priests knew of the deceitfulness of Jesus’ disciples beforehand.

The expression “καὶ ἔσται ἡ ἐσχάτη πλάνη χειρῶν τῆς πρώτης” probably reflects the contemporary Jewish way to call Christianity as ἡ πλάνη. It is not impossible that the whole expression was used by Jerusalem leaders when they compared the pre-Easter Jesus movement to the quickly spreading post-Easter Christianity.⁷²⁰ Verses 65 to 66 are again the Christian tradent’s understanding as to what must have happened. The burial tradition and the empty tomb tradition included the stone and thus it is also mentioned in the CSG by telling about the sealing of the tomb by the Jewish delegation.

28:2-4

καὶ ἰδοὺ σεισμὸς ἐγένετο μέγας· ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ προσελθὼν ἀπεκύλισεν τὸν λίθον καὶ ἐκάθητο ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ. ἦν δὲ ἡ εἰδέα αὐτοῦ ὡς ἀστραπή καὶ τὸ ἔνδυμα αὐτοῦ λευκὸν ὡς χιών. ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ φόβου αὐτοῦ ἐσείσθησαν οἱ τηροῦντες καὶ ἐγενήθησαν ὡς νεκροί.

This part of the GS is redaction-critically very challenging. It differs from the other parts 27:62-66 and 28:11-15 by being much more dramatic. The existing themes of an earthquake (27:51) and an angel at the tomb (Mk. 16:5) are combined with things that “must have happened”. Since the Christian tradent “knew” that Jesus had been resurrected, something dramatic must take place when the angel (from the empty tomb tradition) came, thus the stone was rolled away and soldiers fell down as paralyzed. All these elements in the story are immune to “hostile correction” because the possibly differing testimony of the guards is labelled as a lie. While these verses are easily seen as originating from

⁷²⁰ From the Jerusalem perspective the Christian movement was probably more troublesome than the pre-Easter Jesus Movement, which operated mainly in Galilee.

Matthew's pen, even the original GS must have included some sort of climax where something happened, scaring the guards away from the tomb. I remain rather sceptical when it comes to the possibility to separate tradition from the Matthean redaction here.

28:1, 5-10.

But why do women come to the tomb and see everything in striking contrast to the other canonical gospels? As we have seen, attempts to harmonize the stories are not convincing, and we must conclude that either the tradent or Matthew decided to present the women as co-witnesses of the angel coming from heaven and moving the stone. Matthew or the Christian tradent brought his own witnesses to the story to counter the opponents' witnesses i.e. the Roman soldiers. The "shortest" way to do it was to move the time of the arrival of the women slightly forward and allow them to see what actually must have happened. This matches well with our assumption that the soldiers were introduced by the Jews to function as witnesses to the theft. While it is possible that this element was present in the pre-Matthean GS, it is as likely that women were not mentioned in the first version of the Christian GS, as in the GS of GPet.

28:11-15

Πορευομένων δὲ αὐτῶν ἰδοῦ τινες τῆς κουστωδίας ἐλθόντες εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἀπήγγειλαν τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσιν ἅπαντα τὰ γενόμενα. καὶ συναχθέντες μετὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων συμβούλιόν τε λαβόντες ἀργύρια ἱκανὰ ἔδωκαν τοῖς στρατιώταις λέγοντες, Εἶπατε ὅτι Οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ νυκτὸς ἐλθόντες ἔκλεψαν αὐτὸν ἡμῶν κοιμωμένων. καὶ ἐὰν ἀκουσθῇ τοῦτο ἐπὶ τοῦ ἡγεμόνος, ἡμεῖς πείσομεν [αὐτὸν] καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀμερίμνους ποιήσομεν. οἱ δὲ λαβόντες τὰ ἀργύρια ἐποίησαν ὡς ἐδιδάχθησαν. Καὶ διεφημίσθη ὁ λόγος οὗτος παρὰ Ἰουδαίους μέχρι τῆς σήμερον [ἡμέρας].

The last part of the GS focuses on the lack of integrity of the Jewish leaders, and counters the theft accusation with an explicit reference to the bribery. The expression τινες τῆς κουστωδίας is curious. Why are not all the guards included, rather than only some of them? This may be a reflection of the Jewish version where "some of the guards" came to tell the chief priests that the disciples had stolen Jesus' body. The soldiers (in the Jewish version) were not running amok, frightened by an apocalyptic

drama, but rather acting in keeping with the way of a disciplined military unit – messengers sent, while the guarding post is still kept under control.

While those asking for guards were the chief priests and Pharisees, those giving birth to the rumour and bribing the guards were the chief priests and the elders. The Pharisees are no longer mentioned. If sociological reactivity of the text to the situation at the time of writing is sought, it is here in Matthew's gospel where we would expect to find it. The rumour put forward was the very same one being spread among the Jews, and thus their originators could reflect on the identity of their contemporary enemy. Their being the chief priests and elders matched well with the picture reconstructed earlier concerning the conflict between the Christians and Jewish leaders in the period of 30-70 A.D.

6.4.4. How Was the Christian Guard Story Formed?

Every historian is painfully aware of the fact that reconstruction of a coherent chain of events, forming an accurate narrative of what happened, from fragmentary and sometimes heavily edited sources is always difficult. On the other hand we know that there is a narrative which knits rare and scarce facts together. It is also a very human way of thinking, confirmed by findings in cognitive psychology, to consciously or subconsciously build a narrative to make a group of related facts a coherent and meaningful whole. In what follows I briefly present a narrative of what probably, on the base of what has been presented above, happened.

Mary Magdalene and some other women went to the tomb of Jesus two days after the burial and found the tomb empty. As the finding was reported in a very "unofficial" manner to other followers of Jesus, it mostly caused confusion, but the rumour of it was quickly spread among the members of the shattered Jesus movement. Experiences that were interpreted as the appearances of the risen Jesus followed, and gave birth to the conviction of the crucified Jesus' resurrection. A few weeks later the strong and collective religious experience of the Jesus' followers re-ignited the public activity of the Jesus movement now centred primarily

in Jerusalem and Judea. Their preaching was based on the resurrection of Jesus, and gained not an insignificant following among the pilgrims and locals in Jerusalem. The leaders of the temple dynasty attempted to suffocate the movement and countered its theses by claiming that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus, while the Roman guards they had requested from Pilate to guard the tomb against this very act had been sleeping. Whether there had actually been any guards at the tomb or not was hardly crucial for the persuasiveness and success of the story. No Christ-follower, or anyone else for that matter, had been at the tomb on Saturday and thus were in a position to bring forward a testimony against the story.

The cognitive dissonance produced by this allegation was not significant among the Christ-believers, who believed in the integrity of their leaders, the apostles. As similar prophetic acts as the healings and exorcisms in Jesus' activity continued among the Christ-believers, many were attracted to join them, probably more convinced by the miraculous than rationale evidence for the resurrection. Thus no remarkable efforts were made by the Christ-believers to counter the accusation of theft, except by repeating their own "preached" version. The Christian Guard Story was formed and "published" when the movement had already grown, and the immediate influence of the apostles somewhat faded due to their physical absence from Christ-believing communities around the Roman Empire. In some communities the Jewish counter-propaganda was seen as acute and threatening and it was regarded as necessary to launch a story to clarify "what actually had happened". The story was probably not formed in a dialogue with the hostile party, or even directed at them, but rather used to alleviate cognitive dissonance among the Jewish Christ-believers influenced by the accusation of theft. The story emphasized the corrupt and deceitful nature of the chief priests. The first evangelist found the theft accusation's influence disturbing and considered it necessary to include the Christian Guard Story in the gospel he wrote.

7.0. Concluding Thoughts

As we now have made an analysis of the elements in the GS and its context, it is necessary to compare the results to the ideas prevalent in the scholarly community. It is this interaction where any potential contribution to the study of the current subject is measured. Should something in the normal interpretations of a certain phenomenon be incorrect, as we have argued in the study, it is useful to consider how this possibly affects other solutions in related areas.

The inner contradictions and implausibilities are seen to prove the non-historicity of the story in quite a few commentaries and other studies. However, in our analysis the arguments based on contradictions and implausibilities were not found persuasive, save one: the Markan empty tomb story is contradictory to the Matthean version. I do not find any credible way to harmonize the Matthean and Markan empty tomb stories into a smooth and cohesive narrative. Of course, the existence of these contradictions is one thing, what it tells about the historicity of the story as a whole is another. If someone freely creates a story for apologetical purposes, it may be considered odd if it is full of inner contradictions and implausibilities. The tensions refer to a situation where the final collector of contradictory traditions has put them together, and simultaneously added to it with his own theological agenda. Thus it seems to me that the first evangelist, rather than having created the GS, has put together the Markan empty tomb story and the Guard tradition, thus compromising its harmony with the Markan original. This leads us to explore the origin of the Guard tradition, rather than rejecting its historicity outright. At the same time the tension between these two gospels make the so-called literal reading problematic.

When two scholars approach a given question it is essential that they share sufficient common assumptions to make discussion plausible. The multifaceted nature of New Testament studies makes this a formidable challenge. While adopting a majority view or silence in questions other than the very topic under study may be economical, and certainly is always -to some extent- inescapable, the procedure is also vulnerable to criticism. No question in the early Christian history or Jesus movement

can be isolated from the context, and numerous small choices in e.g. isagogic and methodological questions may affect the results with far reaching consequences. In this study I have tried to explain and justify my choices in questions where the scholarly world is divided, and sometimes, without necessarily taking a definite stand, demonstrated the outcome based on different choice in one particular question. While this sort of thinking does not always lead to one clearly defined result, I see some value in it. We do not always find the answer to the question “what happened?”, but we can explore different possible chains of events assuming various conditions. Sometimes scholars are significantly one-minded and good arguments can be found for a “fact” of history. Historians naturally believe in these “facts” with varying degrees of certainty and one scholar’s fact, can be seen by another scholar as “likely” or “possibly”.

In this study I have built the analysis of the GS on parameters which I consider – with a great degree of certainty – to be solid. Without sharing my conclusions on the parameters, it may be difficult to agree with me in the speculation concerning the origin and tradition historical context of the GS.⁷²¹ Of course it is possible to analyse the speculation concerning the GS assuming, for argument’s sake, that the parameters are correct. I would not, however, relativize the historical science all the way to a sheer presentation of various possible chains of events. Rather, it is possible to acquire some knowledge of the past, which is “beyond reasonable doubt”. One step further and we can gain a great deal of

⁷²¹ For example, when reading PYYSIÄINEN’s (2007) recent exploration of the Christian origins by applying social sciences to the empty tomb legend, I find it difficult to discuss his cognitive psychological contribution due to the problems (as I see them) in the historical reconstruction of the birth context for the “legend”. He presents a minority viewpoint (the one defended by Myllykoski) without even touching the arguments of the majority who believe in the early origin of the legend. His extensively use of an ideologically loaded antireligious publication with questionable scholarly value also strikes me as odd. (PRICE 2005). One of the authors referred to in the article is Richard Carrier who has suggested that Jesus probably did not exist. While ideological agenda does not necessarily mean that the scientific argumentation is poorly performed, it raises suspicion especially when all the exegetes cited (Mack, Crossan, Lüdemann and Myllykoski) represent minor viewpoints, and important standard monographs like PERKINS 1984, WRIGHT 2003 and ALLISON 2005 are not so much as mentioned in the bibliography. However, it is possible to analyze logic in Pyysiäinen’s reasoning within the premises he has chosen.

knowledge which is “very likely true”. I place the parameters presented in this study into this category. They can be defended with solid arguments and known alternative theories to them are significantly weaker.

The first parameter is that Matthew had an earlier tradition in use when he wrote the Guard story. In chapter 3 the arguments for the Matthean origin of the story were analysed as well as the arguments suggesting for the existence of a pre-Matthean tradition. The analysis was performed within a broader methodological framework, similar to those of Aejmelaeus and Broer, which to my knowledge are the most profound done prior to this study. Nonetheless, on the basis of logical and statistical reasons I could not accept all of their reasoning. There were no grounds for regarding the story as a Matthean creation. Since it is quite broadly believed, on the base of remarkable similarities with the material in Mark’s and Luke’s gospels, that Matthew has extensively used sources, this conclusion is hardly striking.

The second parameter is somewhat more difficult to formulate as a single thesis. However, it is crystallized in a claim that the conflict between the Christ-believers and their Jewish opponents has a long and complex history, which already began in Jesus’ Galilean ministry. Due to the normal dynamics in intragroup conflicts, there was a continuous *Sitz im Leben* for conflict rhetoric. This assumption has far-reaching effects because it questions the broadly prevailing paradigm to read somewhat uncritically e.g. post-70 conflicts into the gospel texts. Because a conflict is remembered and used in the formation of ingroup identity, the antagonism against the hostile outgroups remains even when there are no acute real life hostilities. The remembrance of past conflicts also affects prejudices and hostility, thus increasing the chance of future conflicts also during more peaceful periods.

The third parameter, the early origin of the empty tomb tradition, makes questions concerning Jesus’ tomb meaningful and understandable in the beginning of the post-Easter Jesus movement. The presence of women in the tradition makes its later premeditated origin unlikely. It is also hard to understand how the proclamation of the risen Jesus could have survived without the idea of the empty tomb. Alternative theories were

analysed and found wanting, e.g. as for the concrete arguments and explanations for the presence of the women in the story.

Building upon these parameters we approached the GS analysing the possible context of its birth and factors influencing on its formation. In what follows I present the eventual findings and theses of this study.

1) The theft accusation, i.e. that the disciples stole the body of Jesus, is quite likely very old. Outside Matthew's gospel it is mentioned in documents including Justin's *Dialogue* and Tertullian's *On Spectacles* and is also possibly implied in John 20:6-8. While this does not prove its early origin, it tells us something about its suitability for Jewish counter-apologetics. The TA could provide an explanation for the emptiness of the tomb, and also cast a shadow of doubt over the integrity of the resurrection proclaiming Christ-believers.

2) William Lane Craig has presented an argument, according to which Mt 28:11-15 demonstrates the historicity of the empty tomb because the Jews implicitly admit its existence. In the light of our analysis of the conflict context, however, this argument needs elaboration. The existence of the empty tomb as such was not necessarily entirely a problem for the Jewish opponents of the Jesus movement. If it could have been turned to demonstrate that the body had been stolen and that the disciples of "the impostor" were thus deceitful, the counter-argumentation could actually be somewhat easier than in a situation where no empty tomb whatsoever was attached to the proclamation of Jesus' resurrection.

3) The previous consideration leads us to take a "multi-dimensional" approach to the GS and the conflict it represents. Centuries long apologetical and counter-apologetical discussions have emphasized the rational question as to whether the tomb was empty or not. However, as the social-scientific studies of the New Testament world have rather convincingly shown, there are also other dimensions in the social dynamics. The question of the honour, integrity and righteousness of a religious leader was most relevant from the status point of view. To put it simply, the whole argument could be more about who is to be believed than what had actually happened. The accusation of bribery by the priests on one hand, and the theft of the body by the disciples of Jesus on

the other, concerned the very honour of the leaders for the respective religious groups.

4) It has been generally assumed by both those regarding the GS as fiction as well as by those who see a historical event behind it that the presence of the guards in the story works as an argument for the Jesus movement. However, our analysis of the story questions this assumption. While a conclusive decision about the origin of the guards in the story can hardly be made, a number of considerations point to the Jewish leaders' side as being responsible for the original introduction of this element to the narrative. This claim has never, as far as I know, been presented and thus counts as a potential contribution of the current work to the New Testament studies.

5) Sometimes interesting and important questions must be left unanswered, or only a rather conjectural "educated guess" can be suggested. This is necessary when the source-material is scanty and alternative theories are equally well or equally poorly defended. While convincing, and being convinced, in the field of historical science often includes both objective and subjective elements, it is useful to understand when the subjectivity exceeds a reasonable limit. With this in mind, I tend to regard the existence of the guards at the tomb an invention of the Jewish opponents of the Christ-believers, who claimed to have posted them there on the Sabbath day in order to avoid possible contradicting voices from the eyewitnesses of the burial. At the same time it must be admitted that there is "a historically possible world" for the scenario, in which an unknown person told s the chief priests about Jesus' prediction of the resurrection on the Sabbath day, and they acted accordingly.⁷²²

⁷²² I use the concept "historically possible world" in the same manner as LAATO (2004:37, 48-50), when he elaborates the question of the historicity of the patriarchs and Moses. Laato uses the concept "en historisk möjlig värld" of the situation where a given phenomenon in the text (e.g. a person) is not contradictory to any better-attested fact and is plausible in the light of what is otherwise known about the context, but still lacks any external support. When two alternative phenomena are both equally viable in "a historically possible world", it is best to leave the question open.

6) No exact time or can be given for the launching of the CGS. I would suggest that it is not very early, since the empty tomb traditions (pre-Markan, pre-Lucan, and pre-Johannine) do not mention the guards. These traditions were spread and established in various areas and locations within the Jesus movement without being affected by the GS. Had it been actively circulated among the early Christ-believers in Jerusalem, it would very likely have influenced the "basic" empty tomb tradition somehow. Thus the CGS was told for the first time some time after the basic tradition(s) of the tomb had already established.

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The story about the guards at the tomb of Jesus (Mt 27:62-66 and 28:11-15) has often been labelled as an apologetical legend, and is rather too often all but ignored in both Matthean scholarship and in the studies on the resurrection stories. The aim of this book is to explore the origin of the guard story and analyze it in the context of continuous conflict between some Jewish leaders and Christ-believers. The author suggests that the story is derived from a pre-Matthean tradition which was a reply to the Jewish accusation that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus. It is also proposed that the guards were first introduced to the story by the Jewish leaders in order to give credence to the accusation of theft.

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