## The Letters of Paul

This question, whether the development of the Pauline epistle collection was similar to that of other ancient epistle collections, has already been answered positively by David Trobisch in a small monograph.[[1]](#footnote-1)This position was again supported and nuanced by Eric Scherbenske in his larger study on the process of canonisation of Paul's writings in the course of the history of the various collections. [[2]](#footnote-2)

However, when one asks Pauline scholars today what the specific profile of Paul's message, his thinking, his ethics, his religious practice looks like, the answers are usually drawn exclusively from seven of the fourteen Pauline letters that have become canonical, [[3]](#footnote-3)namely the Epistle to the Romans, the First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians, the Epistle to the Galatians, the Epistle to the Philippians, the First Epistle to the Thessalonians and the Epistle to the Philemon, while the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, the Epistle to the Ephesians and the Epistle to the Colossians, as well as the Pastoral Epistles (First and Second Epistles to Timothy, Epistle to Titus) are regarded as pseudonymous Pauline Epistles and the Epistle to the Hebrews is only conditionally classified in the Pauline tradition. In terms of content, it is concluded from the seven letters that Paul believed,

"Let Jesus be known as the Messiah long awaited by the Jews ... who had now offered freedom from sin and reconciliation with God to all people through his death and resurrection. What had begun in these two world-shaking events will soon be fulfilled in the resurrection of all who trust in Jesus and in the full realisation of God's kingdom in a redeemed creation." [[4]](#footnote-4)

But one only has to leaf through the works of one of the early readers of Paul, such as Clement of Alexandria, who stylised Paul as a "divine apostle" and "constantly quotes from his letters" to get a "considerably different summarium". Clement "emphasises the knowledge of God as the central endeavour of the Christian, the striving for perfection and the hope of ascending through the heavenly spheres to the perfect goal of the infinite contemplation of God". [[5]](#footnote-5)[[6]](#footnote-6)These ideas, are drawn precisely from those epistles that modern scholarship has denied to Paul himself and attributed to Pauline imitators, i.e. from the passages Col 1-2, Eph 3, Heb 5 "the emphasis on heavenly realities, the celebration of the mysteries of divine knowledge", from Col 1:15-20 "the reflections on the pre-existence of Christ as the Creator of all", and from Heb 4:14; 6:20 "his role as forerunner in the ascent of believers to heaven".[[7]](#footnote-7) Clement consequently read Paul in the larger collection known to us from the canonical New Testament and drew from this the image of a Platonising philosophical Paul and of a Christianity that for him was "knowledge" or "gnosis" from its beginnings and was more like a school of philosophy than a network of church communities.

Similar to Ignatius, the question consequently arises as to which collections of Paul's letters existed, and what ideas of the beginnings of Christianity these collections convey to us.

Paul's best-known collection of letters is, of course, found in the canonical edition of the New Testament. We do not need to go into the different position of Paul's letters in the various Bible manuscripts here, because it has already been addressed above. Consequently, we will focus here on the different number, cut and position of the letters within this one of four New Testament sub-collections and then examine how the Pauline letters existed outside the canonical collection.

In the New Testament we find the fourteen Pauline epistles that have already been listed here, namely the seven authentic ones widely recognised in today's research, then the three Deuteropaulines, the Pastoral Epistles and finally the Epistle to the Hebrews, which does not have Paul's name as sender. The order in which these letters appear in the New Testament is already found in the large codices of the full Bibles of the 4th and 5th centuries: Rom, 1-2Cor, Gal, Eph, Phil, Col, 1-2Thess, 1-2Tim, Tit, Phlm, Heb.

An older collection of Pauline letters is attested for the time before the middle of the 2nd century for the Pauline collector and possibly editor Markion of Sinope, namely by two authors: Epiphanius of Salamis from the 4th century and Tertullian of Carthage from the beginning of the 3rd century. It is further supported by two other witnesses, the first known as the commentator on the Syriac New Testament, Ephräm the Syrian, who is often used in research for testifying to Markionite readings of the Gospel of Luke and the Pauline Epistles, and another Syriac witness, the *Canon* or *Catalogus Sinaiticus* from around 400, which is a "mixture between the arrangement like that of Markion, of the prologues for the first four epistles and an arrangement more like that of our Greek manuscripts for the rest of the epistles".

The main witnesses for this older collection of Markion give the following arrangement of the letters:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Tertullian** | *Gal* | 1-2Cor | *Rom* | 1-2Thess | *Laod/Eph* | *Kol* | *Phil* | *Phlm* |  |  |  |  |
| **Epiphanius** | *Gal* | 1-2Cor | *Rom* | 1-2Thess | *Eph* | *Kol* | *Phlm* | *Phil* | *Load* |  |  |  |
| **Canon Sinaiticus** | *Gal* | 1-2Cor | *Rom* | *Heb* | *Kol* | *Eph* | *Phil* | *Phil* | 1-2Thess | 2Tim | *Tit* | *Phlm* |

Apart from the two collection arrangements (Tertullian and Epiphanius), there are also those that show slight variants compared to them. Thus, despite the closeness of Ephræm's collection of Pauline letters, which his commentary testifies to, there is a change compared to that of Markion, for in Ephræm the last Pauline letter after Tertullian, Phlm, is replaced by the so-called Third Epistle to the Corinthians, which we have already encountered above as part of the Acts of Paul.

### The canonical collection of fourteen letters

Let us first take the further collection of Paul's letters of the canonical New Testament. Here some general remarks can be made before we have to distinguish once again which form of this collection we are looking at, be it the one in Greek, the Old Latin translation(s) or its revision in the late 4th century, which is associated with the name of Jerome and the title "Vulgate", a version which, however, was constantly developed and revised during the next centuries and led to a history of editions and corrections which is highly complex and has not been researched in detail until today. [[8]](#footnote-8)

This New Testament collection of Paul's letters, which opens with Rom, followed by 1-2 Cor and only then by Gal, gives Paul a distinctive profile in terms of content. In particular, the beginning and end of this Rom in the canonical version offers "the easiest entry point" to understand Paul and to see "how Paul thought of himself, who he was", as in fact Rom became "one of the most influential documents in Western history". [[9]](#footnote-9)

The fact that Eph is followed by Phil and then Col links two letters, today called Deuteropaulines, via a letter that scholars consider authentic. The series of letters addressed to churches in this collection is concluded with 1-2Thess, before the Pastoral Epistles are added before Phlm, which is considered authentic today, and the collection closes with Heb.

If one compares Markion's collection with this, it is noticeable that Gal and Rom are in an exchanged position, and the Deuteropaulines Laodiceans/Eph and Col are found together. The position of the other epistles varies, whereby the direct witnesses to Markion's collection prove that the Pastoral Epistles and Heb were missing from this collection. Neither of the two collections, however, exclusively possesses letters that are today regarded by researchers as authentic letters, i.e. as far as Pauline letter collections can be historically grasped, we are already dealing with a Paul who does not correspond to the Paul of the seven-letter collection.

Let us first consider the further collection of Paul's letters to which the canonical New Testament bears witness.

The preface of this collection, as indicated, is Rom as the first of the large letters to churches that follow it. By placing the letters to the churches before the letters to individuals, Paul is presented from the outset as an authority who instructs the churches, sometimes through direct presence, but mostly through his letters from a distance. This long-distance instruction serves to form an enduring doctrinal tradition across geography and, above all, across time. In Romans, it is especially its opening and conclusion in which Paul is introduced in a self-reflective way. Right at the beginning, Paul states that "Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart to preach the gospel of God" (Rom 1:1), i.e. he does not see himself as the second founder or even the founder of a religious movement, the transmitter of his own message and conviction, but as the servant of another, Christ Jesus, by whom he knows himself to be called as his messenger, set apart, as the proclaimer of God's gospel. [[10]](#footnote-10)

In the already quoted verses Rom 1:5-6 he emphasises in advance that he had received "grace and apostleship" to demand "obedience of faith". But it is not until chapter 15 of this letter that he makes his role clearer.[[11]](#footnote-11) Here he writes that Christ himself became the "minister of the circumcised to confirm the promises made to the fathers" (Rom 15:8) so that the Gentiles could "worship the God of Israel". [[12]](#footnote-12)Paul describes himself as a "minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles" who "administers the gospel of God as a priest" (Rom 15:18). This reference to Paul's priesthood is the only one in the letters considered authentic and, like this priestly language in general, is described by scholars as "highly unusual". [[13]](#footnote-13)

"The context ... clearly shows that Paul solemnly presents his apostolic ministry, the proclamation of the gospel, in the image of a priestly sacrificial service ... and in the final clause v 16b Paul's evangelism is described as a sacrificial act in which the apostle offers the Gentile nations to God as a sacrifice pleasing to him." [[14]](#footnote-14)

This language and thought is also unusual for Paul because at no point in his seven letters, in which he speaks variously of leadership structures and offices, does he ever mention a priest or even a priestly office, not even that of a Jewish presbyter.

Furthermore, reference is repeatedly made to Rom 9-11, in which Paul describes the relationship between Jews and those who "have become unbelievers". [[15]](#footnote-15)Certainly, one can make a reference to Rom 3,1-8 with the question of what the "advantage of the Jew" is (Rom 3,1), which Paul sees first of all in the fact that "the words of God are entrusted to him" (Rom 3,2). And one can also think of the long explanations in Rom 6,1 - 8,39, in which Paul calls to put oneself "at the service of righteousness" (Rom 6,19), knowing, however, that one has become free from the law (cf. Rom 7,6). But it becomes clear that "these three chapters", Rom 9-11, "form a self-contained train of thought", which [[16]](#footnote-16)is why some scholars were even of the opinion that these chapters could sensibly "also be read without the rest of the letter", indeed that conversely "the letter could be read without a break if these three chapters were omitted". [[17]](#footnote-17)

With these three chapters, however, the beginnings of Christianity are placed in a light in which there is already a fundamental tension between, on the one hand, Jews who have been entrusted with the words of God and who know themselves to be under the law, and, on the other hand, those whom Paul calls "unbelievers". However, this tension is alleviated precisely in Rom 9-11, in that Paul both gives expression to Israel's lasting calling (Rom 11:2: "God has not cast away his people") and calls modesty into the conscience of those who follow Christ (Rom 11:18: "It is not you who carry the root, but the root that carries you").

The discussion that follows 1-2 Corinthians in Galatians below is therefore already placed in a framework in which the relationship between the circumcised and the uncircumcised was fundamentally discussed and brought to a mediated solution by Paul.

Now, it is not possible here to go into all the details of the picture that the canonical collection of Paul's letters gives of the beginnings of Christianity. But we will briefly deal with the question of how Paul, as far as can be ascertained from this collection, tells us about them.

It has long been noticed that Paul has no "interest in the narratives and words of Jesus" as they are reported to us in the Gospels.[[18]](#footnote-18) But mostly this phenomenon has been placed in the larger framework of continuity or non-continuity between Jesus and Paul, a problematic that has led to very different answers among the most famous New Testament scholars. While Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976)[[19]](#footnote-19) has a rather minimalist understanding of this continuity, [[20]](#footnote-20)Ernst Käsemann (1906-98) sees stronger connections, [[21]](#footnote-21)Werner Georg Kümmel (1905-95) assumes even more[[22]](#footnote-22), and Joachim Jeremias (1900-79) assumes a pronounced continuity, [[23]](#footnote-23)let us at least briefly address this issue. [[24]](#footnote-24)

Since Paul reports in Gal 1,11-16 how fiercely he fought the church, Bultmann assumes that he must have been concerned with the tradition of this church in order to have known in the first place why he should fight this church (cf. Phil 3,4-6; 2Cor 11,22); according to Bultmann it was the knowledge that Paul repeats in his letters, namely that these churches were critical of the law, [[25]](#footnote-25)and that in them it was believed that God had raised the crucified Jesus of Nazareth and made him the Messiah who would come to pass judgement and bring salvation.[[26]](#footnote-26) However, Bultmann makes the restriction that this is no longer the simple gospel, but already a myth of Christ that goes beyond Jesus' own message. When Paul speaks of Christ here, he is not thinking of the historical personality of Jesus, but of the pre-existent Christ. [[27]](#footnote-27)Furthermore, he adds that Paul does not attribute these contents in his letters to knowledge by people or church experience, but exclusively to a revelation (Gal 1,1.11f). [[28]](#footnote-28)

Paul does not give the impression in his letters that he physically and directly met the historical Jesus.[[29]](#footnote-29) Indeed, he says in Gal 1,22 "but to the churches of Christ in Judea I remained personally unknown". So he does not seem to have been in Jerusalem for any length of time, nor to have been trained by Gamaliel, even though Acts claims both about him.[[30]](#footnote-30) Paul reports little about Jesus himself. According to him, Jesus was born of a Jewish woman (Gal 4:4; cf. Rom 1:3), not extraordinary information precisely because Paul says nothing about a virgin or a virgin birth. He says that Jesus had James as a brother and apostle (Gal 1:19), also some disciples, Peter and the twelve (1Cor 15:5), that he was crucified (Gal 3:1; 1Cor 2:2 etc.) and that he rose from the dead (1Cor 15 etc.), whereby especially the cross and the resurrection are mentioned as "eschatological, not historical events". He transmits just four of Jesus' words, the first three of which are in one and the same letter, the First Epistle to the Corinthians:[[31]](#footnote-31)

1Cor 7:10-11: "10 To those who are married I do not command, but the Lord: the wife must not separate from the husband 11 - but if she separates, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to the husband - and the husband must not put away the wife."

1Cor 9:14: "14 So also the Lord commanded those who preach the gospel to live by the gospel."

1Cor 11:23-25: "23 For I received from the Lord what I then delivered to you: The Lord Jesus took bread on the night he was delivered up, 24 said the prayer of thanksgiving, and broke the bread, saying, 'This is my body for you. Do this in remembrance of me!2 25 Likewise, after the meal, he took the cup and said, "This cup is the New Covenant in my blood. As often as you drink from it, do this in remembrance of me.

1Thess 4,15-17: "15 For this we say to you according to a word of the Lord: We, the living who are left at the coming of the Lord, will have nothing ahead of those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven when the command goes forth, the archangel calls, and the trumpet of God sounds. First those who have died in Christ will rise; 17 then we, the living who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds into the air to meet the Lord. Then we will always be with the Lord."

When Paul says in 1Cor 7,25, "but as for the unmarried, I have no commandment from the Lord", this seems to make it clear that Paul, if he knows the words of the Lord, also refers to them, but in view of the narrow tradition he gives us of these words, perhaps he did not know many such words either. In general, it is noticeable that the first two words have an ethical-practical orientation and that especially with regard to the first quotation, the closest connection in content between Paul's interpretation of the law and that of Jesus has been established.[[32]](#footnote-32) The next word is the only one that recalls a historical act of Jesus, the Lord's Supper "on the night he was delivered up". Paul here shows a knowledge of a piece of Jesus' passion story, without us being able to know how far he knew details of this story himself.[[33]](#footnote-33) The last word is different, giving an apocalyptic outlook on the Second Coming of the Lord, which Paul expects during his lifetime.

Even though there are a number of other echoes between passages in Paul and those in the Gospels, the silence about Jesus' childhood, baptism, miracles and parables, as well as about the life and work of the disciples in general during Jesus' lifetime and at the [[34]](#footnote-34)beginnings in Paul, is unmistakable and the little knowledge Paul conveys has been found to be "astonishing"[[35]](#footnote-35) and "embarrassingly scanty". [[36]](#footnote-36)

"As far as the evidence of his letters is concerned, we must say that he (Paul) had little or no interest in him (the historical Jesus), and that in this respect Bultmann's judgment seems indisputable, according to which Paul was concerned about that*,* but not about *what of* Jesus' existence. “ [[37]](#footnote-37)

The reasons given since Ferdinand Christian Baur that Paul's own joining of the Jesus movement had to do with a revelation of Christ, not with an encounter with the historical Jesus, and that he possibly had little access to the Jesus traditions of the Jerusalem community because he had a rather strained relationship with it, may be convincing to a certain extent,[[38]](#footnote-38) But firstly, because of his eschatological expectation of the Second Coming of the Lord, he seems to look forward in time and seldom backwards, and secondly, we can see from his letters that even persecution, which he describes as historical, required contact with this movement and he also reports such contact with Jerusalem and the authorities there.

Rather, it becomes clear from the retrospective that in research, the entire tradition of what is assumed to exist in the canonical Gospels [[39]](#footnote-39)and Paul's letters are usually already read as indicative of this. According to what has been said so far, one will assume conversely that in the groups of Jesus-followers with whom Paul had contact, there was hardly any more information and no other interest than Paul's, and that only with growing distance to the historical events and the decrease in near expectation did the desire grow to reach backwards rather than forwards and to make sure of the beginnings of the history of one's own movement. However, this is contradicted by the fact that not even the Acts of the Apostles was regarded as such a historical document by its first readers, but was rather read as an anti-Heretical apology.

However, we can gather at least this much from Paul's letters that he presents the followers of Jesus as an identifiable quantity whom he wrote had persecuted harshly, saying more about himself than about Jesus and about those whom he persecuted:

"5 I was circumcised on the eighth day, I am of Israel's lineage, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, according to the law a Pharisee; 6 I zealously pursued the church and was blameless when measured by the righteousness required by the law." (Phil 4:5-6)

"22 They are Hebrews - so am I. They are Israelites - so am I. They are descendants of Abraham - so am I." (2Cor 11,22)

Even though Paul later commits himself to this church, this does not seem to have led to the self-assessment that he was no longer a "Hebrew", an "Israelite", a "descendant of Abraham" or blameless when measured against the righteousness required by the law.

Since the major church epistles are bound into one collection with the Deuteropaulines, we can ask how the picture of the beginnings of Christianity expands if we first look at Eph, 2Thess and Col in particular before adding the so-called Pastoral Epistles?

Eph is an overall "puzzling", [[40]](#footnote-40)"difficult" letter.[[41]](#footnote-41) It takes up several themes from the preceding Gal, so in a way it seems like a continuation and deepening of these thoughts, be it the prominent role of God's Spirit in our salvation, be it that the elect are to become His sons, be it that people will be God's inheritance. These important thoughts are taken up immediately after the greeting address in the hymn of Eph 1:3-14.[[42]](#footnote-42) But the hymn goes far beyond Gal. Here in Eph these ideas are extended into prehistory. Even "before the foundation of the world he chose us to live holy and blameless before him. He predestined us in advance out of love" (Eph 1:4-5). Also "the mystery of his will ... he has graciously determined in advance" (Eph 1:9). Even the calling as heirs was "predestined according to the plan of him who brings all things to pass as he determines in his will" (Eph 1:11). "In His beloved Son" this pre-determined calling took place (Eph 1:6). Like a refrain, this predestination runs through this hymn, as if the author had known that he was herewith introducing an important theme that was new compared to the previous epistles. What is important for our context is that herewith the history of the followers of Jesus is not only traced back to the prophetic announcement in the Jewish scriptures, but is moved beyond them, beyond David and Abraham, into the antediluvian Christ and thus into the foreseeing and planning will of God Himself, which will not fail to have its effect, as we have seen among others in Gregory of Tours, Orosius and Eusebius.

In the further course of Eph, too, themes are echoed that had already been encountered in the earlier letters and had in part been widely discussed, especially the relationship between the circumcised and the uncircumcised, which was discussed by Gal and considered in Rom 9-11. Dressed in other images, no longer with reference to trunk and grafted branch as in Rom, but instead clarified with the example of building a house or citizenship in the city:

„14 ... He united the two parts and tore down the dividing wall of enmity in his flesh ... 19 So now you are no longer strangers and without citizenship, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household. 20 You are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets; the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. 21 In him the whole structure is held together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 Through him you also are being built into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. " (*Eph* 2:14-22)

Eph is linked editorially and literarily with the following Phil, for the latter begins in the same way as the latter with the greeting formula in which not only Paul but also Timothy are introduced as "servants of Jesus Christ" and sender. This double naming also occurs in other Pauline letters, 2Co, 1-2Thess and Phlm, i.e. both in letters that scholars attribute to Paul, but also in those that they deny him. However, Timothy also refers to Acts via the collection of Pauline letters, where he plays a not insignificant role as Paul's companion.

Strikingly, although Acts reports in the last mention of Timothy that he was among others with Paul when the latter wanted to travel from Greece via Macedonia to Asia Minor, it does not say that they would have a stay in Ephesus (Acts 20:3-5). This information could only be obtained by a readership from the present collection of Paul's letters. For only 1Tim offers the information when Paul writes there of and to Timothy: He "asked him to stay in Ephesus to warn the brothers against false teachers" (1Tim 1,3). What these false teachers are all about can be gained from Timothy's profile. For according to Acts, he formed the model with which Acts draws Paul as the one who brings uncircumcised and circumcised together in one house:

"1 He (Paul) also came to Derbe and to Lystra. And behold, there lived a disciple named Timothy, the son of a believing Jewess and a Greek. 2 He had been recommended to Paul by the brethren in Lystra and Iconium. 3 Paul wanted to take him with him as a companion and had him circumcised in consideration of the Jews who lived in those regions, for all knew that his father was a Greek. 4 Now as they passed through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees made by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, and charged them to keep them." (Acts 16:1-4)

Timothy is clearly associated here with the so-called Apostles' Council and the question of circumcision. He comes, it is said, from a mixed family of a Jewish mother and a Greek father, whereby he himself was not circumcised, but was Jewish because of his mother. [[43]](#footnote-43)Paul is said to have had Timothy circumcised "with regard to the Jews", so he is not portrayed as the uncompromising one he portrays himself as in Gal, and this despite the fact that the Jews "stirred up and incited the people", Paul had to save himself to the sea, was taken from there to Athens to safety, and Timothy was also sent after him with Silas (Acts 17:13-15). Finally, Paul reports towards the end of 1Thess that from Athens he sent "Timothy, our brother and God's co-worker in the gospel of Christ" as a scout and messenger to the Thessalonians to "strengthen them and build them up in the faith" (1Thess 3,2):

"5 For this reason I could bear it no longer; I sent Timothy to learn about your faith, whether the tempter had not led you into temptation and our efforts had been in vain. 6 But in the meantime Timothy has come back to us from you, bringing us good news of your faith and love, also that you always keep us in good remembrance and long to see us, just as we also long to see you." (1Th 3:5-6)

The opening of Phil in conjunction with that of Eph and the other epistles in which Paul is given as epistolary author together with Timothy support the picture of the harmonising and integrating figures of Paul and Timothy from Acts. This function of the two is further underpinned by the Pastoral Epistles, where Paul is in direct contact with Timothy, calling him "his true child in the faith" (1Tim 1:2) and "his beloved child" (2Tim 1:2), seems to be familiar with Timothy's Jewish part of the family, when he speaks of the "sincere faith" that "was already alive in your grandmother Loïs and in your mother Eunice" (2Tim 1,5) and commissions such details that should convince the reader of the historicity of what is written:

"9 Make haste to come to me soon. 10 For Demas has left me for the love of this world and has gone to Thessalonica, Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. 11 Luke is the only one with me. Take Mark, and bring him with you; for he is useful to me for service. 12 Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. 13 When you come, bring the mantle I left at Troas with Carpus, also the books, especially the parchments!" (2Tim 4:9-13).

The fact that Paul names Luke as the only one who stayed with him shows the special closeness of Luke, identified with the author of Acts, to whom Mark is also immediately placed, who is described as "useful", thus creating another bridge to the Petrine tradition and also a connection with Mk. In addition, the books and parchments point to the learned environment in which Paul moves and in which the others mentioned, especially the letter addressee Timothy, also move. David Trobisch interprets the reference to Carpus, with whom Paul left not only the cloak but also books and parchments, as Polycarp and even sees in it a hidden reference to the author of the Pastoral Epistles and editor of Paul's letters. After all, Heb knows "that our brother Timothy has been released; as soon as he comes, I will visit you together with him" (Heb 13:23). So too, the last letter in the Pauline epistle collection contributes to the further knowledge of Timothy's closeness to Paul at the very end of this collection. Timothy also shares the fate of arrest with his eminent brother Paul. Similarly to sending Timothy to the Thessalonians, he also intended to send him to the Philippians, as he writes in Phil: [[44]](#footnote-44)

"19 But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be encouraged when I learn how you are doing. 20 For I have no one like-minded who is so sincerely concerned about your cause; 21 for all seek their own advantage, not what is Jesus Christ's. 22 You know how he proved himself: As a child to his father - so he has served the gospel with me. 23 This, then, I hope to send as soon as I overlook my situation." (Phil 2:19-23)

Conversely, Timothy is also considered Paul's trustee, even though he does not seem to have Paul's dynamism. Thus, Paul must advocate for him in 1Cor 16:10-11: "10 When Timothy comes, take care that you do not discourage him, for he labours in the service of the Lord as I do. 11 Let no one hold him in low esteem." This is clarified in 1 Timothy 5:23 by drawing him as prone to sickness: "Don't just drink water, but take some wine too, with consideration for your stomach and your frequent illnesses!" Nevertheless, towards the end of the letter it sounds as if Paul sees him as the right custodian in the face of a false interpretation that research has more often associated with gnosis and Markion: "Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you! Keep away from the ungodly babblings and the antitheses of what is falsely called knowledge!" (1Tim 6,20)

What is exemplified here only in this one example, but could be rehearsed in others, points to the fact that the letters of Paul's epistle collection of the canonical New Testament are in themselves interwoven in many ways and, beyond the epistle collection, were also connected with the broader framework, especially Acts and the Gospels of Luke and Mark.

But let us take a special look within this collection of Paul's letters at the so-called Pastoral Epistles. We have just seen how they give colour, historical details and personal closeness to Acts and the Pauline letters. They also contour Paul's ethical-religious thinking and put it in a different light. The New Testament scholar Harry Maier therefore calls the Pastoral Epistles the "most dramatic treatment of Paul in the New Testament". [[45]](#footnote-45)In Maier's and some other colleagues' opinion, they make use of a double pseudonymity, [[46]](#footnote-46)because not only the alleged author Paul is literarily reinvented, but also his supposed addressees Timothy and Titus, to whom these letters are [[47]](#footnote-47)addressed as a kind of last will and testament. However, researchers puzzle over what these pastoral letters actually are, because on the one hand, this kind of pseudepigraphy is "far from what can be called accepted scholastic pseudepigraphy, but rather belongs to literary forgery with an intention to deceive that was also negatively judged in antiquity", and on the other hand, the question arises "why they were written and to whom they were addressed". [[48]](#footnote-48)

While research in the past has been widely concerned with questions of authenticity and dating of the Pastoral Epistles and the suggestion has been made that each of the three letters should be interpreted more strongly from its "own profile and claim",[[49]](#footnote-49) the importance of the collection contexts has also been pointed out[[50]](#footnote-50) and the path taken by reading the Pastoral Epistles as a trilogy that was created "'in the course of a new edition of the previous corpus' of the Pauline Epistles and was also disseminated via such a new edition - now expanded to include its own corpus".[[51]](#footnote-51) Similar to this approach, the aim here is again to start from the appearance and effectiveness of these letters.

As the collection contexts in *Codex Sinaiticus* and *Codex Alexandrinus* show,[[52]](#footnote-52) the Pastoral Epistles are in the order 1-2Tim - Tit [[53]](#footnote-53)and come after Paul's letters addressed to churches; they are followed by the other Phlm addressed to an individual. We consequently find the Pastoral Epistles as part of the letters to individuals within the larger collection of Paul's letters, which "in many manuscripts of the Byzantine Recension is titled on the flyleaf before the Epistle to the Romans": "Fourteen Letters of Paul", [[54]](#footnote-54)one of the four collection units that make up the New Testament in our early large Bible editions.

Among others, however, they are also clearly directed against such persons who, as the preceding testimonies prove, read Paul as radical ascetics, "confounding whole houses" (Tit 1,11), "creeping into houses and capturing certain women who are ruled by sins and driven by lusts of all kinds, women who are always learning and yet can never come to the knowledge of the truth" (2Tim 3,6-7). These letters "forbid marriage and require abstinence from certain foods" (1Tim 4,3). Already Maier sees the connection of these opponents of the Pastoral Epistles with the positions found in the Acts of Paul.[[55]](#footnote-55) But he goes beyond this by considering Markion in particular as a possible opponent of these letters, and in this he follows the older position of Hans von Campenhausen, who considered "Markion to be the actual (though not the only) opponent" in these letters. [[56]](#footnote-56)An allusion to the latter's preface to his New Testament, called Antitheses, could be 1Tim 6,20, which speaks of the "antitheses of the falsely called Gnosis". Because the texts also criticise the preoccupation with myths (1Tim 1,4; 4,7; 2Tim 4,4; Tit 1,14) and with genealogies (1Tim 1,4; Tit 3,9), which were alien to Markion, one must probably also think of other opponents such as the "Gnostic" representatives of genealogical systems, who were for example demonstrated and attacked by Irenaeus.[[57]](#footnote-57) Tit, however, specifies that the opponents are "mostly people of the circumcision" (Tit 1,10), that is, they are Jews, though not exclusively.

Now the Pastoral Epistles do not give us a picture of the development of the young movement, as we have found this above all in Acts, but they place Paul in a world from which he is no longer eschatologically distanced, as for example in 1Cor 7,29-31. On the contrary, it is about the teaching that is to be passed on in the right tradition:

"1 So then, my son, be strong in the grace given you in Christ Jesus. 2 What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable people who are able to teach others also." (2Tim 2,1-2)

And:

"1 But proclaim what is in accordance with sound doctrine. 2 Let the older men be sober, respectable, prudent, strong in faith, in love, in endurance. 3 In the same way, let the older women be dignified in their conduct, not slanderous and not drunkards; they must be able to teach what is good, 4 so that they may urge the young women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be prudent, respectable, domestic, kind, obedient to their husbands, so that the word of God may not be brought into disrepute." (Titus 2:1-5)

We are reminded of the "blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13), a "appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which shall show us in his time the Blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in a light to which no one can come, whom no man has seen or can see" (1 Tim 6:14-16), a coming of Christ Jesus "to judge the living and the dead" (2 Tim 4:1), but "there is no sense of near expectation or eschatological tension" in the Pastoral Epistles. [[58]](#footnote-58)Even more, it could be shown in research that the Pastoral Epistles also do not perceive other theological themes that we find in the canonical form of the Pauline letters (for example, the importance of Israel), and it is likely that these Pastoral Epistles knew the short version of the Epistle to the Romans (without chapters 15-16) attested for Markion's collection of ten letters. [[59]](#footnote-59)

### The Ten Letter Collection

Let us return to the Pauline epistle collection as a whole, as we encounter it in history. Having looked at this in more detail as the fourteen-letter collection in the canonical New Testament, we must also turn to the ten-letter collection as found earlier in Markion's version.

Let us first consider the epistles included in it and their arrangement in the collection. As we have already established, according to the consistent witnesses Tertullian and Epiphanius, this collection contains the following letters in the order given here: Gal, 1-2Cor, Rom, 1-2Thess, Laod (called Eph in the collection of fourteen letters[[60]](#footnote-60)), Col, Phil, Phlm. Only the position of the last two letters is attested differently; according to Tertullian, Phil comes before Phlm, according to Epiphanius it is the other way round. Because of the connection between the contents of Kol and Phlm, Epiphanius may have arranged them accordingly, if this arrangement did not correspond to the older order. Modern research therefore often takes Kol and Phlm together in the commentary. Just take the introductory words of James D.G. Dunn in his commentary on Col:

"Colossians can rightly be called the most fascinating Pauline letter. Primarily because it forms the bridge between the undisputed Paulines and the pieces of the Pauline corpus that are generally regarded as deuteropaulinic. That is, on the one hand, it is surprisingly close in many respects to Ephesians, whose deuteropaulinic authorship is supported by a broad consensus in Pauline scholarship. But at the same time, his Christology and ecclesiology in particular are clearly less developed than in Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles. In a deutero-Pauline perspective, Colossians would have to be placed very close to the beginning. On the other hand, some details place it very close to Philemon, whose authorship of Paul has rarely been doubted in the course of the history of Christianity. And yet, at the same time, his Christology and ecclesiology, and also the paraenesis, seem to be considerably advanced beyond what is found in the undoubted Paulines." [[61]](#footnote-61)

Consequently, there is much to be said for the sequence attested by Epiphanius, in which Eph, Col, Phlm stand in a row. Finally, Epiphanius exhibits another special phenomenon, since he both names Eph and then refers to Laod again at the end, while Tertullian claims that Markion knew Eph as Laod.

Since, in contrast to the collection of fourteen letters, in which the Phil precedes the Col, in the collection of ten letters to be discussed here, the Col immediately follows the Laod, its explicit reference not only to Laodicea, but also to a "letter from Laodicea" is obvious. With the invitation to read Col in Laodicea as well, a direct connection is made to the preceding Laod, which was addressed precisely to this community. Moreover, the passage in Col is an explicit reference to the practice of reading letters to different audiences and to the exchange of letters between congregations in Christianity, which gives Col a certain authority and significance. Accordingly, when Kol and Laod (as Eph) are considered together in research, this is not just a modern perspective, [[62]](#footnote-62)even if Kol is considered the older text today: [[63]](#footnote-63)

"14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you. 15 Greet the brothers in Laodicea, also Nympha and the church in her house. 16 And when the letter has been read to you, see to it that it is also read to the church at Laodicea, and that you also read the one from Laodicea!" (Col 4:14-16)

According to this passage, Col is to be read in Laodicea, just 16 kilometres from Colosse.[[64]](#footnote-64) The passage is introduced with a reference to Luke, which in this case would again establish a connection to Acts and Lk. However, these two writings are not present in the Markionite collection of the New Testament, and it is therefore not surprising that Tertullian's commentary on Col of the collection of the Ten Epistles also only goes as far as Col 3,10.[[65]](#footnote-65) The connection that is thus drawn with Col 3,11-4,17 to the Acts and the Lk is most probably due to a later editorial treatment of this letter, which also inserted the name of Timothy in Col 1,1, which is conspicuously missing in Col 4,18. This phenomenon shows that the Pauline epistle collection was probably expanded no differently than the Ignatians, and in the process the existing epistles were each revised anew, a topic that will occupy us again with an example below.

Let us move back to the beginning of the Epistle collection. Tertullian's commentary explicitly shows that Markion's collection began with the Epistle to the Galatians (mGal = version of the Epistle to the Galatians in Markion's collection of ten epistles), precisely with the challenging assertion with which Paul attributes his authority not to other apostles, not to a church and not to an institution, but to Jesus Christ alone: "Paul, called to be an apostle, not by men or through a man, but through Jesus Christ" (mGal 1:1). [[66]](#footnote-66)As already indicated by Tertullian and made even clearer by Jerome, Markion's Galatians text did not contain the "and through God the Father, who raised him from the dead" that follows "Christ" in the canonical text.[[67]](#footnote-67) Since the reference to Jesus' descendant of David is not attested for Markion and most likely was missing in his copy of Rom, [[68]](#footnote-68)the beginning of Rom agrees in several ways with the opening of Gal. Both beginnings are Christ-centred, confirming that Paul is an apostle, even adding in Rom 1:1 that he was "called" as one. Finally, according to Tertullian, the following verse seems to have read differently from canonical Rom. For in this text, as already noted above, the connection to the prophets and the Jewish scriptures was established right at the beginning of the collection of fourteen letters: "1 Paul, slave of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart to preach the gospel of God, 2 which he promised in advance through his prophets in sacred writings" (Rom 1:1-2). On the other hand, according to Tertullian, Markion's copy seems to have read that Paul was set apart and called to preach the gospel that God proclaimed in Christ - that is, not in the prophets and the Jewish Scriptures: "1 Paul, (slave of Christ Jesus), called to be an apostle, set apart to preach the gospel of God, 2 which he proclaimed in Christ" (Rom 1:1-2). [[69]](#footnote-69)

The lack of reference to the prophets and the Jewish Scriptures is consistent with the position otherwise reported by Markion, according to which he compiled his New Testament as a deliberate antithesis to the Old Testament, the validity of which he limited to Judaism. Instead, mGal opens his collection of Pauline letters in which Paul most clearly articulated his position on the issue of not circumcising the uncircumcised who turn to the gospel. He saw the opposing position as an apostasy from the gospel and a reversion to the dominance of the law. According to Markion, "the prophets and the law applied only up to John (the Baptist)", [[70]](#footnote-70)which Tertullian points out at the very beginning of his commentary on the Pauline text witnessed by Markion, a quotation from Markion's Gospel text (Mcn 16,16). [[71]](#footnote-71)

This collection of the ten letters of Paul consequently gives us a very different idea of the beginnings of Christianity, a beginning that does not begin with the history of Israel as in the collection of fourteen letters,[[72]](#footnote-72) not with its creator God, not with the prophets, not with David, but with an unknown God. It is a beginning that is most reminiscent of the pre-existence of the Logos in John, to which this Gospel has moved the beginning of the history of Jesus back. But Markion's idea that the beginning of everything leads beyond the Creator and creation to a "new and unknown God", a "foreign God" and "an exotic divinity" ("novus et ignotus deus"; "alius deus"; "peregrina divinitas") goes beyond this Gospel.[[73]](#footnote-73) This deity did not bring creation into being, nor history, since these were fabricated by an inferior demiurge, as described in the "Old Testament". In order to save man caught up in this creation and history, God unexpectedly and suddenly breaks into creation and history from above to reveal himself as Saviour, a Christ who must not be confused with the political Christ that the Jews expect from their Creator God.

The history of Christianity, according to this New Testament and the one Gospel and the Ten Epistles, in which neither the Acts nor the Catholic Epistles nor the Rev were to be read, begins with the unknown God and his unforeseen revelation in Christ, who replaced the "old law" with his "new edict", or, as Tertullian summarises Markion's preface to his New Testament:

"Markion asserts that the Christ revealed by an unknown God in the time of Tiberius is different from the one appointed by the Creator God to restore the Jewish state, and who is only to come one day. Between these two he draws the gulf of opposition as wide and as general as between strictly just and benevolent, between law and gospel, between Judaism and Christianity." [[74]](#footnote-74)

While for Markion the demiurge of creation and the founder of political history is "strictly just", the true God, unknown before the revelation, is "benevolent". Probably from Paul, but also from the message of the Beatitudes, Markion must have read out the contrast between the demiurge who gave and imposed the law on the Jews, while the true Christ of the unknown God brought the "new edict" of the Gospel - according to the word a "Eu-angelion", a good message or also an angel's message. According to Markion, this also created the contrast between "Judaism" and "Christianity". Here - probably for the first time in the history of Christianity, as far as we know - a clear distinction is made between two opposing institutions or "schools of religion". [[75]](#footnote-75)

As much as Tertullian adopts the Pauline-Markionite idea of the newness of Christianity and also takes up the criticism of the Law, he rejects the radical distancing between Judaism and Christianity as he read it in Markion and as he could have read it similarly in Markion's contemporary Aristides of Athens and his Apology. Just as Justin and Irenaeus wanted to hold on to the inheritance of Israel after the middle of the second century and saw the coming of Christ prefigured in the prophets of the "Old Testament", Tertullian did not want to distinguish between a God of the Christians and one of the Jews, between a Christ of the Christians and one of the Jews. [[76]](#footnote-76)

Tertullian reads Markion's collection of Pauline letters as highlighting Paul's sole authority. According to him, in the first letter of this collection, the mGal, Paul unjustly criticises all the other apostles and authority bearers, as if they had failed to recognise this coming of God in Christ, in the great prophet and teacher. Tertullian counters. He makes it clear that this argumentation was, on the one hand, about the question of the source, i.e. one takes as a basis, like Tertullian, the canonical New Testament of the four Gospels and the fourteen Pauline Epistles, the Acts of the Apostles, the Catholic Epistles and Revelation, or, like Markion, the New Testament of the one Gospel and the ten Pauline Epistles. On the other hand, it was also a question of which tradition could be relied upon. Was it that of the twelve apostles, first and foremost James, Peter and John, whose writings Tertullian believed he had read, or was it exclusively that of Paul as the only guarantor of revelation, as Markion read it in his New Testament - after all, both the Pauline Epistles and his Gospel offered ample testimony that first and foremost Peter, but also all the other apostles, failed again and again, misinterpreted Jesus, and Peter in particular even denied Jesus in the end. Peter also turned out to be a turncoat towards Paul, so that Paul "resisted him to his face" (Gal 2:11) and left him together with Barnabas and had to go his own missionary ways.

If Tertullian refers precisely to the tradition of the churches founded by these apostles and connects with them the Gospels, Acts, the Catholic letters, Paul's collection of fourteen letters and Rev, it [[77]](#footnote-77)becomes all the clearer what a different story of the beginnings of Christianity that New Testament of the one Gospel and Paul's collection of ten letters tells, which Markion holds in his hands, be it that this New Testament was merely compiled by him, used and, as the oldest collection, was first given the name "New Testament" to suit his conception, [[78]](#footnote-78)some scholars think, or[[79]](#footnote-79) whether, on the basis of Paul's letters and the oral traditions about Jesus of Nazareth, which he had collected, but in the absence of an older written version of the traditions about Jesus, as opposed to the written letters, he had written down the Gospel himself and put it into a biographical form, as I suggested.

### The development of letter collections

"The only Paul we have is the one that was read by later readers". [[80]](#footnote-80)However, if we reconsider David Trobisch's observation on the development of epistle collections in antiquity and the nuanced confirmation that this has received from our consideration of the Ignatians, we may also conclude for the Pauline epistle collection that we are not dealing with only one Paul whom later readerships had before them. We will probably have to reckon with a similar process of development of the collections, and we will encounter different profiles of Paul, depending on the collection. Texts and collections were not amorphous or fluid, but they were not rigid either, but were supplemented with new letters by further authors and editors, the existing stock was textually edited and thus brought together into a new structure.

Building on Trobisch, we may assume that the first collection of these letters may have been compiled by their author Paul or one of his followers, [[81]](#footnote-81)if one does not want to follow the radical critique and, in analogy to the Ignatians, fundamentally assume a pseudonymy of these texts as well.[[82]](#footnote-82) However, one argument against such a pseudonymy of the letters that are considered authentic in research is that one can once again distinguish between the seven letters that today are more likely to be attributed to Paul and the Deutero-Pauline letters (Eph, Col, 2Thess), from which the Pastoral Epistles can once again be distinguished. The fact that Markion already knows the seven plus three letters in an early version, to which the Pastoral Epistles were obviously not yet attached, and that one can distinguish a redaction stage, as above with Col and below with Rom and 1Cor, at the stage of adding the Pastoral Epistles, speaks at least for the fact that an early form of the seven letters can be assigned to the historical Paul.

We may therefore assume that Paul had not only written the hitherto widely undisputed letters, but perhaps also produced a first collection. The note in 2Petr has often been claimed for this: [[83]](#footnote-83)

"14 Therefore, beloved, who expect this, strive to be met by him without blemish or fault in peace! 15 And consider the patience of our Lord as your salvation. This also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you with the wisdom given to him; 16 it is in all his epistles where he speaks of it. In them some things are hard to understand, and the ignorant, who are not yet established, will pervert these passages as they do the rest of the Scriptures to their own destruction. " (2 Peter 3:14-16)

"All his letters" speaks for a collection of letters that existed at the time 2Petr was written. Unfortunately, we do not know exactly when 2Petr was written and why reference is made to Paul in this letter, but there are now sufficient arguments that 2Petr responds to the Apocalypse of Peter and was therefore written after it, which has recently been dated around 150 AD. [[84]](#footnote-84)However, the text is deliberately backdated with the indication that it was written after the first generation of Christians to whom the author looks back. In the same breath, he turns against people who found the absence of Christ's return (expected by Paul during his lifetime) problematic. The following quotation, which immediately precedes the one quoted before, states:

"1 This is already the second letter, beloved, which I am writing to you. In both of them I want to call to mind your clear understanding and remind you: 2 Remember the words spoken in advance by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour which your apostles handed down to you. 3 Know this above all things: In the last days scoffers will come, mocking, following their own lusts, 4 saying, Where is his promised coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things remain as they were from the beginning of creation. 5 Those who say this overlook the fact that there were once heavens and an earth, which came into being out of the water and endured through the water at the word of God. 6 Through this the world of that time was flooded by water and perished. 7 But the present heavens and earth were saved for the fire by the same word. They are being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. 8 But this one thing, beloved, shall not be hidden from you, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord of promise does not delay, as some think, who talk of delay, but he is patient with you, because he does not want any to perish, but that all may come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a clatter, the elements will dissolve into fire, and the earth and the works upon it will be found no more. 11 When all this dissolves in this way: How holy and devout you must then live, 12 awaiting and hastening the coming of the day of God! In that day the heavens will burst into flame and the elements will melt in fire. 13 According to his promise, we expect a new heaven and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells." (2Peter 3:1-13)

The letter explicitly refers to a first letter from the same sender to the same addressees, [[85]](#footnote-85)even if the addressee group is not as clearly outlined in the letter address of the present letter as it is in the preserved 1Petr.[[86]](#footnote-86) The vagueness of the group of addressees in 2Petr may, however, have been done precisely with a view to the deliberate pseudonymous linking of 2Petr with 1Petr.[[87]](#footnote-87)Research cites a number of reasons that point to different authorship of 1Petr and 2Petr. [[88]](#footnote-88)

As the text makes clear, the author is concerned with securing his idea through both the Petrine and the Pauline tradition. With both, which are quite different[[89]](#footnote-89), he wants to counter the "scoffers" who ask about the absence of the Second Coming of the Lord. Their argument seems to have been weighty enough for the author to repeat it in this letter. It is not very convincing when Wolfgang Schrage, in his commentary on 2 Peter, tries to deny that the absence of the Second Coming of the Lord did not "play a role for the first Christians", when the text speaks of the opposite. [[90]](#footnote-90)

According to this reasoning, the criticism refers not only to the absence of the coming of Christ, but also to the fact that nothing new has occurred. How much this newness is at stake is shown by the quotation at the end, when the author refers to the promised, expected, future "new heaven" and the "new earth" and that neither the arrival nor the future of the occurrence of the new should be calculated.

This theme of the absence of the Second Coming is reminiscent of the *Epistula Apostolorum*  discussed above. A parallel to the Pastoral Epistles is the emphasis on the apostolic teaching tradition.[[91]](#footnote-91) According to our retrospective view, we can ask when 2Petr was first read and discussed. However, the letter is not mentioned in the *Canon Muratori,* which itself is disputed as to its date.[[92]](#footnote-92) It is also not explicitly listed in Eusebius of Caesarea together with the writings of the New Testament, which Clement of Alexandria interpreted in his "Hypotyposes" towards the end of the 2nd, beginning of the 3rd century.[[93]](#footnote-93) In fact, this letter is then also missing "in the extant commentaries of Clement". [[94]](#footnote-94)One of the earliest witnesses - despite all the problems of dating it - seems to be, as mentioned, the Apocalypse of Peter, which scholars date before or around the middle of the 2nd century because of its possible allusion to the Jewish rebel Bar Kokhba.[[95]](#footnote-95) Later, around the middle of the 3rd century, Origen knows the text. According to Eusebius of Caesarea, he is said to have been critical of it when Eusebius quotes Origen from his fifth book of his commentary on John:

"Peter, on whom is built the Church of Christ, which shall not be overcome by the gates of hell, left only one generally acknowledged letter. He may have left a second, but it is doubted." [[96]](#footnote-96)

But there is a note in Origen that he considers both Epistles of Peter to be reputable works.[[97]](#footnote-97) Perhaps Eusebius had put his teacher at his service, since he himself considers 2 Peter "un-Petrine" [[98]](#footnote-98)and "controversial", even though he admits that "it is held in high esteem by most".[[99]](#footnote-99) Indeed, he was also known by various authors of the 3rd century (Firmilian of Caesarea, Methodius of Olympus; he was also part of the papyrus Bodmer VII = P72, probably from the 3rd century). [[100]](#footnote-100)

With regard to 2Petr, which contains the reference to Paul's collection of letters, this much can be said that it probably became known after the time of Bar Kokhba, and also after the Apocalypse of Peter referring to this rebel leader. It is therefore not surprising that this letter speaks of a collection of the Pauline epistles, which had already been available since Markion around the year 140. Whether Markion had taken up a collection of Pauline letters that had just been circulated, which perhaps in parts still went back to its author himself - following Trobisch's model - or, which seemed more likely to me in this case, that it was Markion who compiled the collection and brought it to Rome, will have to be discussed among scholars in the future. However, in order to collect letters, one not only had to be able to read, to have enjoyed a certain level of education, but also to have financial means and a corresponding network to have manuscripts copied or to copy them oneself, to provide the writing material for such copies, to secure the transport of these materials and manuscripts and much more. Since Markion, according to Tertullian, had more than sufficient means as a businessman and ship owner, taught in Rome and soon became the most discussed teacher of the 2nd century, it is obvious to recognise in him the person who brought this collection together. [[101]](#footnote-101)This is also supported by the fact that there are prefaces to the Pauline Epistles, which were last attributed to Markion by Erik Scherbenske. [[102]](#footnote-102)

How this question stands will be better substantiated when we have taken a closer look at the character of the Pauline letters as they are presented to us in this collection. Connected with this is the further, no less important question of which of the two collections, with the not only different number of letters, but also, as we could already see from Rom 1,1 above, not inconsiderably different textual recensions of the letters contained in them together, represents the older and closer one to Paul.

For contemporary readers, the collection of ten letters stands out at first glance compared to the collection of fourteen letters in that, according to today's opinion, most of the letters, namely seven out of ten, are considered authentic and the other three, despite all the differences noted, are said to be at least undeniably close to Paul's thinking, language and style. Compared to this collection, the collection of fourteen letters does not have one more letter that modern research would call authentic, but rather has only four more pseudo-Paulines compared to the collection of ten letters. This initial comparison does not increase confidence in the Fourteen Letter Collection. If, like the apologists from Irenaeus towards the end of the second century until our time, Markion is considered to be the one who omitted texts and shortened the texts he preserved, then we should at least concede to him that he included in his collection with an almost modern-critical eye and feeling precisely those texts that we today also consider to be most Pauline. From a methodological and historical point of view, it seems more probable that the collection of ten letters, as we find it in Markion, is to be trusted more than the collection of fourteen letters, which has been expanded to include pseudepigrapha; here, the Pauline letters, which are considered authentic, are just about balanced with the pseudepigrapha.

But now we must also ask whether this first, external impression is confirmed by the text versions or not. Unfortunately, the answer to this can only be given with a few examples, which of course cannot replace a comprehensive comparison. But in view of the goal of our investigation, to work out the ideas of the beginnings of Christianity, we have to be content with a few historically and ethically oriented passages which, on the one hand, shed light on these ideas and, on the other hand, possibly allow us an insight into how, with the relationship of the versions to each other, the idea of the beginnings has also changed significantly or should even change.

A small example related to Paul's apostleship from Rom 1:1 has already been given. The appendix discusses the first and parts of the second chapter of Gal (see below xxx).

As this comparison shows, the reconstructed text of the collection of Ten Epistles offers us a Paul who is different in many respects from the collection of Fourteen Epistles. He is on the one hand more self-confident, on the other hand more modest. His Christ-orientation is even clearer, and he does not see the beginning of his own calling as rooted in history, not in the encounter with the historical Jesus, nor with apostles or other bearers of tradition. His calling does not originate from and did not take place through human beings, but exclusively through Jesus Christ, and specifically through the Son of God, who set Paul apart from[[103]](#footnote-103) his mother's womb and called him by his grace. This beginning leads him to "proclaim" the Son "among the nations", expressly without any connection back to the apostles in Jerusalem.

Paul knows the apostles in Jerusalem, but he does not turn to them, which is obviously what the readership of his letter expected - Acts actually has him travel to the church in Damascus (9:6, on Jesus' express command!) - to have his apostolate confirmed. Instead, he discards such a consideration and moves on the basis of his immediate divine calling "to Arabia and then returned again to Damascus". The "again" here indicates that the persecution of the church Paul spoke of earlier had also taken place in Damascus. The Acts of the Apostles reports differently, having Paul persecute the church in Jerusalem (8,3) and only afterwards extending this persecution to the synagogues of Damascus (9,2), just as in Acts in general Paul's actions are no longer disciplining and exterminating the church, but lead to murder, manslaughter and arrest of persecuted individuals. [[104]](#footnote-104)

Paul warns the Galatians of the danger of turning away from him and the gospel he preached and towards another gospel which he himself considers to be falsified. As it soon turns out, it is not only about the way the law is interpreted, but about the position and meaning of the law in general. In contrast to this, the collection of fourteen letters conveys that Paul was not only versed in the traditions of the Fathers[[105]](#footnote-105), but had also championed them "with the greatest zeal", i.e. that his position flowed not only from God's calling, but also from the study of this law. This mediating tendency is then also served when, after the collection of the Fourteen Epistles, Paul seeks and builds up a personal relationship with Peter in Jerusalem, when he also makes contact with James, the brother of the Lord. Even more, his journey to Syria and Cilicia only takes place after this visit to Peter and James. When even the churches in Judea, to whom Paul had consequently remained unknown, praise him that "he who once persecuted us" now proclaims "the faith he wanted to destroy" and they praise God for his sake, it sounds as if this also reflects the opinion of the Jerusalemites, Peter and James. According to this collection, Paul is seen as an integrated and integrating part of a harmonious great movement of churches, whereas the collection of ten letters presents him rather as a single proclaimer.

I do not want to elaborate on these historical examples in the present study, because it would require a detailed comparison, not undertaken so far, to determine both versions in detail and, as far as can still be ascertained today, in their mutual relationship. But it seems to me that even this brief insight is enough to give us an idea that the canonical form of Gal, not unlike that of Rom, 1Cor, even the deuteropauline Col and also the other letters belonging to the collection of ten letters, underwent considerable editorial revision in their insertion into the collection of fourteen letters. If Theobald is correct in his observations on the use of the collection of ten letters by the Pastoral Epistles and they had used the Markionite version of this collection of ten letters, then the collection of fourteen letters also seems to have found a similar editorial revision and, for instance with regard to Rom 14-16, an expansion when this collection was brought together with Acts and - even if not fully - harmonised. To some extent, these collections were finally adapted to the canonical Gospels. From this finding, one would also have to reread the two final chapters of Rom, which were missing from this letter in the collection of ten letters, and likewise, as already indicated above, establish a link again with Acts and other texts of the canonical New Testament.[[106]](#footnote-106)

However, in conclusion to the Pauline Epistles, another example of such interlocking is given, this time on the topic of ethics in Paul, which was brought to my attention by one of my students, Janelle Priya Mathur. The example will also prove that despite Markion's ethical rigorism in his collection, we encounter a Paul who, especially on the question of homosexuality, takes a position contrary to that of the collection of ten letters expanded with the Pastoral Epistles, which is rather in harmony with the tolerance on this question that can also be observed elsewhere in the first and second centuries. [[107]](#footnote-107)

The example is significant because, with the growing ascetic tendency of Christianity observed more often before, its handling of homosexuality in particular has led to a position that still has devastating effects today, since homosexuality is still regarded as a grave sin in many churches. To this day, with reference to the canonical Paul, it is claimed that "Paul and the later followers of Christ defined the boundaries of their movement through sexual ideas." [[108]](#footnote-108)In the Catholic Church's first official document on the subject, *Homosexualitas problema* (1986), the Church reacts vigorously against "a new exegesis of Sacred Scripture which variously claims that Scripture has nothing to say on the subject of homosexuality, or that it silently endorses it." [[109]](#footnote-109)In fact, there is a relevant passage in Jewish Scripture; Lev 20:13 states:

"If a man sleeps with a man as one sleeps with a woman, both do what is to be abhorred. They must be punished with death; their blood will be on their own heads."

Now, there are also three relevant passages in the canonical New Testament, interestingly none in the Gospels, but all within the collection of fourteen letters (Rom 1:26-27; 1Cor 6:9-10; 1Tim 1:9-10), [[110]](#footnote-110)but, as will be shown below in the appendix, none of these seem to have been included in the collection of ten letters. If we look at the historical context, this collection of ten letters is more in keeping with the picture of the time. For the paucity of evidence against homosexuality in the Jewish scriptures and in the New Testament reflects the widespread lack of criticism outside the canonical literature. The one time that homosexuality is problematised in this period is due to a specific situation.

Shortly after the middle of the second century, Justin writes in an apologia addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius (and the Roman Senate): "We who not long ago delighted in fornication have now embraced restraint alone" (1Apol. 14). But with this writing Justin criticises the predecessor of this emperor for an immoral behaviour of the same that had become known. For Hadrian had fallen in love with a young man whom he had presumably met on his journey to Bithynia in 124 AD, before the emperor had travelled on to Athens. But the unfortunate boy was reported to have drowned in the Nile later in 130 on Hadrian's second trip to Egypt. [[111]](#footnote-111)A second harsh criticism of homosexuality also seems to refer to this prominent case and is found in the Syriac version of another Christian apologist, Aristides of Athens. [[112]](#footnote-112)Apparently he too criticised Hadrian's dubious treatment of the youth, and like Justin, he also addressed his writing to Hadrian's successor Antoninus Pius after his death. [[113]](#footnote-113)Perhaps it is the same criticism of homosexuality that is found in the Epistle to Timothy and which, as a result of the pastoral epistle editing of Rom and 1Cor, was also entered into these letters of Paul as another contemporaneous reaction to this obviously widely famous incident.

Let us draw the further conclusion from these small examples to the ideas of the beginnings of Christianity. After the collection of ten letters, Paul did indeed see moral transgressions within the young congregation (being intimate with the father's wife), and resolutely called on the congregation to exclude such persons from the congregation, but he did not present this demand as a judgment, and certainly not as a divine judgement. Even more, divine judgement is alien to this Paul, a Paul who represents divine praise and a salvation of all people.

If we add to this picture of Paul the question of Paul's authority over the other apostles, the closeness of this Paul to the theological positions of Markion becomes even clearer. It was not only Tertullian who, in his commentary on the collection of ten letters, pointed out their constant proximity to Markion and therefore argued vehemently against Markion's views. For him, Markion's collection of ten letters lacked, among other things, the concept of the judging God, the authority of the twelve apostles and their apostolic tradition, which he saw preserved in the Gospels named after apostles and disciples of the apostles, but not in Markion's New Nestament.

Now one can ask - if the shorter text of the smaller number of Pauline letters is, as seems to suggest, the older text vis-à-vis the canonical version - how can this text so closely reflect the theology of the collector? Had Markion found these letters and merely put them in some order, bound them together and published them, drawing from them his own view? Or is it not more likely that Markion - not unlike the redactors after him who made their cross-references, substantive edits and new letters, which in turn let their moral and theological positions shine through - entered his own ideas into his Paul as he did into his Gospel? If this were the case, the oldest form of the writings of the New Testament, even if only attested by second witnesses and at best by divergent readings in our manuscripts and by ancient readers, is the recension of Markion, beyond which older traditions can only be hypothetically inferred.

If one adheres to the review of Markion, one will in any case read it with great caution, infer the author's intention from the preface and always have to ask oneself to what extent it reflects his view of the beginnings of Christianity, as is the case with the aforementioned and treated authors. The very fact that in Markion's New Testament the letters of Paul followed the Gospel and were preceded by the preface of the *Antitheses* makes it clear that Markion consciously wanted to put his glasses on the readership so that they would perceive this collection accordingly, namely through the glasses of the "opposites", as they have already been described in detail above.

Contrary to the presumably low interest in retrospective history of Paul, who was rather oriented towards the approaching end and the Second Coming of the Lord, Markion nevertheless placed the Gospel account of the descent, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus at the beginning. In this he conveyed a picture of the beginnings of Christianity, according to which from the heaven of the unknown, alien God, his great prophet, Son and Spirit suddenly and unexpectedly burst into Roman-Jewish history. From the beginning, the Lord himself remained unrecognised, misjudged by the authorities of the Romans and by the leading figures of the Jews. Not even the disciples chosen by Jesus, the appointed apostles, had an eye for the new. The new law, the new edict of the beatitude of all, God's judgeless, all-good saving action, his sacrifice of his own Son on the cross and the liberation of all people, even Christ's resurrection aroused nothing but doubt, suspicion and jealousy in all these authorities.

Only those on the margins of traditional society, the poor, the prostitutes, the sick, the outcasts, the publicans, etc. were accessible to revelation. For Markion, Paul also finds his place in this line. He is the one called and chosen by God alone as an apostle, he who had persecuted the church out of blindness with which his zeal for the law of the Jewish God had struck him.

Overall, Markion's New Testament has a historical layout - it begins, after the systematic thoughts of the preface, with the biography of the protagonist, then, after his resurrection, the letters of the one apostle called by him follow, giving us insight into the beginning of the churches. With this historicising collection, Markion laid the foundation for the later historicising follow-up collection of the canonical New Testament, even though it still took decades and centuries for these texts to be read with historical eyes and out of historical interests rather than apologetic ones.

Nevertheless, Markion's New Testament would be misunderstood if it had wanted to provide us with a historicising picture of the beginnings of Christianity. Rather, Markion brought together a collection with which he wanted to expose every history of the flesh, that is, every physical-temporal history, as provisional. This history was for him merely the product of a judgmental and rather pathetic-jealous demiurge whose judgmentalism, fickleness, short-sightedness and self-centredness were laid down in the Jewish scriptures. For Markion, the created time was not a history of salvation but a history of disaster, into which the unknown and the stranger to this history, the wholly other, had to penetrate in order to liberate the people in their world and their history from their own fetters and entanglements. But the liberation itself only happened through the one who was bound, crucified and sacrificed. Paul fared no better, even though the collection reports nothing of his martyrdom. The worldview conveyed by the collection is a gloomy one whose light consists solely in God's saving revelation.

# Outlook: How did it really happen ?

If the oldest witnesses who can give us an idea of the beginnings of Christianity are neither Jesus nor Paul, and do not go back beyond the time before the end of the second Jewish war, i.e. before the year 135 AD, what was it really like? Can we, as has often been and is attempted in research, see through these witnesses and distil the words and deeds of Jesus, the words and life of Paul, the ideas and developments of the first Christians from their writings?

As the account before shows, even the later Christian historians Gregory of Tours, Orosius and Eusebius, but also still the chronicler Iulius Africanus, hardly used the Christian writings of the New Testament as historical sources, but rather made use of extra-Christian and so-called apocryphal texts, although they had a decided interest not only in theological but also in questions that we can describe as time-driven-historical. Certainly they wanted to write history. They wrote Christian history or even a history of Christianity.

In this they differ to a certain extent from the great authors of the 3rd and 2nd centuries, Origen, Tertullian, Irenaeus and also Markion, who for their part made comparatively greater use of the New Testament writings, but had rather less interest in a historical account, but rather wrote history as an apology or with a view to an intended religious practice.

In general, today's historiography, as well as the older and even the oldest historiography, differs from our testimonies of the first 150 years in that it understands the beginnings as those of "Christianity". Even when the question is asked today "whether Christian sources have a place within the study of Jews and Judaism" and "whether Christian sects and sources are by definition not Jewish", the thoroughly Christian historiography leads to such a flashback that even the beginnings of Christianity are not simply understood as "Jewish history", [[114]](#footnote-114)but rather the designation "Jewish Christianity", invented in the modern era, is used for this purpose, which is more obfuscating than illuminating. [[115]](#footnote-115)

Origen was the great scholar of the Scriptures, both the Jewish and the Christian works brought together in the Bible, in the Old and New Testaments. But he too read these texts less from the historian's point of view than aimed at their spiritual reading. He was not interested in the factuality, nor in the physical or psychological beginnings of Christianity, but in its spiritual level.

Tertullian, on the other hand, knew both a charismatic-prophetic reading of the writings of the Old and New Testaments, but he was well aware that the writings of the New Testament in particular were brought into the field by his opponents, the heretics, were studied by them and formed their basis of argumentation. That is why Tertullian did not want to conduct debates based on Scripture in the first place, even though he devoted more than half of his life's work to the discussion with Markion and the New Testament of a Gospel and ten Pauline Epistles compiled by him, together with an introduction to the *Antitheses.* Instead, Tertullian referred to ecclesiastical tradition, which alone seemed to grant him membership of orthodoxy. He saw the authority handed down by Christ to the apostles as being passed on by them to the apostolic congregations they founded, which in turn passed this authority on to the congregations that went back to them.

Irenaeus laid the foundations for both Origen and Tertullian by propagating the new format of the New Testament compiled in his time, which comprised four Gospels, the 13 or 14 Pauline Epistles, the Acts of the Apostles with the Catholic Epistles and Revelation, and by attempting to establish authority for this corpus. Like Tertullian, Irenaeus still knew of the importance of the New Testament as a bearer of authority for his opponents, which is why he developed his argumentation for the new format of the New Testament precisely in his work "Against Heresies", even though he was still critical of the title "New Testament". Thus he made use of the expanded version of the New Testament compared to Markion in order to develop his own construction of the beginnings of Christianity on this basis. In contrast to the anti-historical design of Markion (and the Valentinians), for Irenaeus it is the salvation-historical Christ event that is inscribed in the writings of the Old and New Testaments and that is revealed to people through them. For Irenaeus, this scripture is both a spiritual reading and a historical source directed against the heretics, laying the foundation for authority in the Church and safeguarding Orthodoxy against any heresy. As with Origen and Tertullian, it is the scholars who read and interpret these writings correctly and create the right picture of the beginnings of Christianity.

How it really was? Not unlike the various and often controversial reconstructions of the beginnings of Christianity presented by the different early Christian authors, my own answer to this question is also a subjective reconstruction. Jan Bremmer inspired me to write this final outlook and give it the title "How it really was?". Of course, the question mark already indicates that this is a slight irony to perpetuate the often misunderstood dictum of the great historian Ranke. [[116]](#footnote-116)If no one in early Christianity was interested in a historical idea of the beginnings of Christianity, can we work out our own picture of those beginnings on the basis of such evidence? Such a picture, already because of the nature of the testimonies, cannot inscribe itself in the "classical ideal of historicism", but, as has become abundantly clear in the preceding pages, sketch the past "in the mode of the present" and indeed "in interpreted and selected" perception, [[117]](#footnote-117)and must interpret the past itself as an open beginning.

I am not only returning to a common level with New Testament research, but also to the starting point, the wish of my Cambridge colleague James Carleton-Paget, to present the consequences of my previous research on early Christianity. I do not want to refuse to do so, even if I explicitly point out the hypothetical construction of this idea.

If we do not get behind Markion's testimonies, I will start with him. As I tried to demonstrate in an earlier post, Markion seems to me to have come from a Hellenistic-Jewish milieu;[[118]](#footnote-118) Adolf von Harnack already placed him close to Jewish proselytes. Who else would have such detailed knowledge of the Jewish scriptures and a passion for their interpretation, even if he emerged with an idiosyncratic opinion of them? Who else would be deeply touched by two other Jews, first of all by Paul and his writings, and presumably through them by the words and deeds of the Jesus named in those writings, whom he reveres as prophet and Messiah, Christ?

The fact that we cannot go back beyond the years of the Jewish revolt under Bar Kokhba and also hear and read for the first time afterwards about Christian teachers in Rome, indeed that at the same time as Markion there was evidently a transfer of teachers from Asia Minor and Greece to Rome after this Jewish war of the years 132 to 135, and we can recognise a rapidly flourishing Christian literature from this time onwards, indicates that this Jewish war represented a socio-political situation in which Jewish as well as Roman life was faced with new, extraordinary challenges and corresponding innovative impulses were triggered. This is not to say that these conditions were without preconditions. History rarely develops in leaps and bounds, even if there was (and still is) a tendency in historiography to highlight caesuras and mark certain moments of cultural thrusts. [[119]](#footnote-119)

History therefore does not have a beginning, at least not one that is closed on two sides. Neither is it unambiguous and monolithic with regard to what develops in the course of history - we have spoken above of the diversity of what has developed over the decades - but it is also not closed to the past. For when I speak of the "open beginning", I also refer this openness to the prehistory of these developments. Here, the universal historians in particular have already shown the way, as they have drawn out their history into the past, but even if one wants to take up this approach in contemporary historiography, the hitherto chronologically goal-oriented narration of a triumphalist success story as an ideological teleology must be avoided. Instead, the history of Christianity is at the beginning a marginal within Jewish history, and indeed in a Jewish history that is itself deeply integrated into that of the Hellenistic-Roman world.

If we look at the surviving canonical and non-canonical literature of Jews and Christians as well as the non-Jewish and non-Christian testimonies, it will be difficult to deny that in the Greco-Roman-Jewish area of the 1st century a movement had formed with the figure of Jesus of Nazareth, which, although initially poor, is nevertheless sufficiently historically tangible. Even if it was itself part of a multifaceted Jewish life, it seems to have remained very manageable for decades. Its insiders seemed for a long time to have perceived themselves as Jewish and perhaps not even to have understood themselves as anything else, not even as a movement or group, while outsiders and non-Jews identified them more easily and were more visible and tangible to them. Yet Justin after the middle of the 2nd century still wants to be "true Israel" ("verus Israel"), even though at that time there were already voices like those of Markion or, at the same time, Aristides of Athens, who tried to propagate the Christians as their own greatness.

Nevertheless - if one may trust the few testimonies - the "Christians" designated as such by the Outsiders seem to have been distinguishable and named from other Jews in some places such as Rome in the late forties and the sixties of the 1st century.[[120]](#footnote-120)In the seventies they are described as "Christians" in Titus' Council of War in the same breath as "one religion" ("superstitio") and then with regard to Jews as two rival "religions" ("superstitiones") and described with the image of root and branch. Finally, in Bithynia, after the year 110, in the correspondence between the local procurator, Pliny the Younger, and the Roman Emperor Trajan, there is a report of local cases of denigration in which people were denigrated as "Christians". But these cases are neither geographically nor temporally representative of the outsider description, let alone of the existence of a movement that was self-aware of its special position, and the scattered testimonies certainly do not speak for a constant persecution situation of these "Christians". Quite the contrary: the fact that the experienced Pliny, who was in his last posting after many leading positions in Roman justice, cannot fall back on any precedents in dealing with "Christians", but has to turn directly to the emperor with a request for an instruction, speaks both against the importance of these "Christians" in Rome or elsewhere in the Roman Empire and against the assumption that there was already a legal template on how to deal with them. The movement, if it was one, was of no significance to the Romans, and for Jews, if they had noticed it at all, at best an annoyance to Pharisaic-oriented scholars such as Paul, or for Josephus a phenomenon among many others.

The historical Jesus of Nazareth, neither his life, nor his deeds, nor his later claimed resurrection seem to have played a major role for the movement in the 1st century, at least not outside the reading of Paul and Pharisaic circles. It was different with some of Jesus' Torah interpretations, with his striking and pointed, often socially critical and spiritual aphorisms, and with his death.

Jesus' death in particular provoked different responses. Some Jews, committed to the Sadducee priestly tradition but also inspired by Jesus, saw him as a critic and a victim of the Pharisaic interpretation of the Mosaic Law. The learned Pharisee Paul, on the other hand, regarded him as part of his own Pharisaic movement, whose death was brought about by Sadducee-Roman collaboration, but who testified by his resurrection that Pharisaic doctrine meant the end of the physical temple and the political leadership of the Roman-appointed Jewish puppet kings and high priests. People who were closer to the Qumran community may have seen a closeness to their ideas of purity, similarities with their fasting and calendar practices, and also their temple criticism.

Since the first Jewish war of the years 66 to 70 AD, the pressure for solidarity grew among Jews and, rather involuntarily, also a Jewish identity. For with the destruction of the Jewish Temple of Jerusalem in this war, not only were temple implements, the menorah, gold and other valuables confiscated by Rome and brought to Rome in a triumphal procession as trophies of victory, but these funds were also used to build and finance Titus' Colosseum. Cynically, the temple tax imposed by the Jews on themselves was now collected by the Romans, but this tax was no longer allocated to the temple but to a newly created department of the Roman treasury. Even though this tax was hardly enforced with the thoroughness of German tax authorities and police clout, there were cases in which people were officially prodded about their Jewish affiliation, not for the sake of the privilege of not having to work on the Sabbath, but to pay an additional tax to the Roman treasury because of their religious practice or social affiliation. We know of no case in which a Christian would have refused such a tax, but, on the contrary, Jesus' word from the Gospel is before us, according to which Caesar's is to be given to Caesar (Mt 22:21).

It is therefore not surprising that during the Bar Kokhba war, if Justin reports correctly, the Jewish rebel leader subjected Christians to the harshest punishments, perhaps the death penalty. This is only plausible if Bar Kokhba basically assumed that Christians, like other Jews, should support his rebellion and he therefore had renegades punished, even though we know of other Jews, such as the scholar Rabbi Akiba, who is said not to have supported the revolt either, even if he went unpunished.

Perhaps it was this warlike confrontation, which far surpassed the first Jewish revolt in brutality and cruelty, but above all in the annihilation of Roman soldiers and Jewish revolutionaries, that presented Jews and Romans with a new challenge. It is reported of Emperor Hadrian that after the war he had been the first Roman commander in history to appear before the Senate and announce the end of the war not with the message of victory: "The Emperor and his soldiers are well", but with a silence that gave the dark impression that Rome had suffered defeat for the first time in history. In any case, there was no triumphal procession in Rome, but instead draconian punitive measures against Jews. First, they were forbidden to be present in Jerusalem - except for one day a year when they were supposed to celebrate the victory of the Romans - then the Temple Mount was cleared and a statue of Zeus was erected on its site for the Roman garrison city of Aelia Capitolina, which was to replace the holy city of Jerusalem. Whether non-Jewish Christians were allowed to live in Aelia Capitolina in the period thereafter because Christians became known as non-supporters of the revolt seems rather out of the question, since Eusebius reports that Christians were given an uncircumcised bishop in Jerusalem for the first time at that time. It therefore seems more likely that Christians escaped the ban on presence because their Jewish parishioners had left Jerusalem, but because uncircumcised people were also accepted into the Christian congregations, they did not fall under the ban on Jews.

In any case, the oldest apologia of Aristides that has come down to us, in which he divides humanity for the first time into three or four different cultural peoples, Barbarians, Greeks, Jews, Christians, fits into this period. While the first two trace their identity back to their gods, the Jews, according to Aristides, do not refer to their God, but to the patriarchs, to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, his twelve sons and finally the lawgiver Moses, also to their geographical homeland, because they were called Hebrews after their exile in Egypt and Jews after their arrival in the promised land. The Christians, however, he sees without reference to this tradition of the Jews, because according to Aristides they derive their origin from Jesus Christ alone and form precisely not a geographically limited, but a universally oriented messianic people. Only the birth of Jesus from a Jewish virgin still forms the connection to the Jews. It is striking that Aristides does not mention the Romans in his division of humanity. Romanitas thus seems to form universality as a matter of course as the socio-political space within which the various cultural peoples live. With the fiction of the Roman emperor as the addressee of this apologia, this framework of life is presupposed as authoritatively tacit and unquestioned.

In his preface to the New Testament, Markion is no less radical in defining the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, even though his Gospel also clearly marks a distance from the Roman political sphere. In the preface, however, he is exclusively concerned with distancing Judaism and Christianity, which he constructs as antitheses. In general, Markion seems to be the first in history to give the name "Christianity" to the "new" religion in contrast to the name "Judaism". And presumably it was he who not only found the first Gospel, but also wrote it and brought together Paul's writings in his collection of ten letters and connected them with this Gospel.

As already explained, Markion, as a ship owner, had the financial means and the corresponding network in ports of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea to find Paul's letters, have them copied and have them physically copied into a codex. Perhaps inspired by them, or perhaps prompted by an already existing affiliation with a Jewish community in which Jesus was a teaching authority, he set about collecting the oral traditions concerning Jesus of Nazareth in the context of the emerging Christian identity in Bithynia and further prompted by the Christian martyrs in the Bar Kokhba War. Unlike Paul, to whose authorship of the letters he refers, the Jesus traditions do not seem to have been available to him as written models. That is why he brought them together without a name in what he called an "Eu-angelion", the "good news of an angel" - since, according to him, it was the revelation of God's angel or messenger to mankind. This text may have been the basis for all the other, later Gospels, the prerequisite for the fact that all the Gospels no longer saw in this Jesus primarily a historical rabbi, but rather the Jewish-historical root was superimposed and often replaced by a pre-existent, timeless, angelic or divine miracle worker and healer, who rose from pre-existence into time and from this time again into timelessness. Against the Markionite model, this angelic figure was supplemented with the idea of an apocalyptic impending judgement, an idea nourished by the Jewish scriptures, against which Markion had explicitly formulated the message of precisely this non-judging Jesus. Or, to put it another way, without the Markionite notion of an unhistorical saviour sent into history by the unknown God to rescue people from this terrible world history created by a demiurge, the Jewish rabbi Jesus would have remained what he was from birth to death and for a long time beyond, a man who charismatically inspired people for his scholarly freedom in dealing with his tradition and obviously sought to win over Jews of the most diverse religious directions from this freedom and order of Torah interpretation far beyond the more liberal Rabbi Hillel for his interpretation. At the same time, he seems to have won a Quasineurotic Pharisee like Paul from an opponent of this free oral Pharisaic interpretation of the Torah to one of the most convinced, no less zealous supporters and promoters of this conviction. However, he himself had no longer met this Paul - even though Paul seems to have claimed that none other than this very Jesus as Christ and Lord had given him the impetus and revelation for this turn of life. But this construction, too, is unfortunately only to be found in the Markionite testimonies, and I am aware that many of the emphatic ideas about Paul and Jesus are shaped by the no less charismatic Markion.

The learned and not impecunious Markion had not written down his writings in the form of the scroll used by the Jews, but, whether for antithetical reasons or for practical reasons, in the innovative, school-bound form of the codex. Already in his copy he seems to have used abbreviations for the names of God, the Father, the Son, Jesus Christ and the Spirit. The fact that largely all later manuscripts of Christian texts make use of these abbreviations suggests that they go back to such an original innovation. But perhaps the material here tempts the historian to a tunnel vision that tries to explain things too systematically and too monocausally.

How it really was? Would it change our world if we knew this? However the idea of the beginnings of Christianity is constructed, it cannot be understood as a dogmatically closed beginning, because beyond the initial witnessing of Christianity around the middle of the 2nd century, we only have a black box into which we can set further ideas about ourselves. These, however, should serve a world in which it is less about separating from and competing with each other, less about religions, denominations, ideologies and "fake news", less about who derives from what in contrast to others, who walks in the truth of light and who in the darkness of error, but in contrast to Aristides and Markion, a contemporary description of these beginnings would offer the opportunity to describe contrasts despite different cultures and religions and to bring their representatives into peaceful conversation with each other.

But already early on, the judge seems to have been superior to the all-saviour, the nameable God to the unnameable, and the male to the non-sexually determined and the ascetic to the permissive. How I would love to look into the 1st century, but here the gap opens up between the hard work of interpretive reading and the even more hypothetical imagination.

1. D. Trobisch, Die Paulusbriefe und die Anfänge der christlichen Publizistik (1994).astonishing how little attention has been paid to this research perspective so far, compared to the mountains of theological-historical research on Paul; just read the overview of the years since 1945 published in 1987, H. Hübner, Paulusforschung seit 1945. Ein kritischer Literaturbericht (1987). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. E.W. Scherbenske, Canonizing Paul. Ancient Editorial Practice and the Corpus Paulinum (2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. In this, this research differs from older research, which is often based on the portrait of Acts and also takes into account the pseudo-Pauline texts of the New Testament and has easily encountered the philosopher Paul, cf. for example the famous Deems Lectures by W.M. Ramsay, The Teaching of Paul in Terms of the Present Day. The Deems Lectures in New York University (1913).Nevertheless, on the same basis, one could also arrive at an opinion contrary to Ramsay's and read Paul as a literarily illiterate Jew, cf. G.A. Deissmann, Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History (1926); A. Schweitzer, Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus (1930).for example, shows what a different conclusion can be reached if one concentrates exclusively on Paul's seven letters. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. "Jesus came as the messiah long expected by the Jews, who now, by his death and resurrection, offers freedom from sin and death and reconciliation with God to all people. What began in these two earth-shattering events will soon be consummated in the resurrection of all who trust in Jesus and the full realization of God's kingdom in a redeemed creation." This is the summary of a presentation on "Counsels of perfection: the place of Colossians, Ephesians, and Hebrews in Clement of Alexandria's reading of Pauline theology" for the Conference on International Patristic Studies 2019 by Judith Kovacs (Charlottesville, USA). See also, for example, H. Schlier, Grundzüge einer Paulinischen Theologie (1978); H.-J. Schoeps, Paul. The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History (1961); E.P. Sanders, Paulus und das palästinische Judentum. Ein Vergleich zweier Religionsstrukturen (1985).An overview of Pauline studies can be found, for example, in S. Westerholm, Perspectives Old and New on Paul. The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics (2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. "Emphasizing knowledge of God as the Christian's most important concern, the pursuit of perfection, and the hope of ascent through the heavenly spheres to the perfect end of everlasting contemplation of God." ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. "An emphasis on heavenly realities, celebration of the mysteries of divine knowledge (Col 1-2; Eph 3, Heb 5), and reflections on Christ's pre-existence as creator of all (Col 1:15-20) and his role as forerunner in the believer's heavenly ascent (Heb 4:14; 6:20).", ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. L.S.a.M. Vinzent, Ed. Index Eckhardianus I, Die Bibel : Meister Eckhart und seine Quellen (2015). Cf. the brief remarks made in the preface of ibid. co-edited. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. "The letter [to the Romans] became one of the most influential documents of Western history ... We learn, first, who Paul thought he was" E.P. Sanders, Paul (2001), 2.Epistle to the Romans as a pre-text of the Pastoral Epistles is highlighted by M. Theobald, Israel-Vergessenheit in den Pastoralbriefen. Ein neuer Vorschlag zu ihrer historisch-theologischen Verortung im 2. Jahrhundert n. Chr. unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Ignatius-Briefe (2016), 56-57. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. On such attempts (Wilhelm Wrede, Arnold Meyer, Alfred Rosenberg) to stylise Paul as the founder or second founder of Christianity, cf. R. Bultmann, Jesus and Paul (1961 (1936)), 183-184.On Wrede critically H. Rollmann, Paulus alienus: William Wrede on Comparing Jesus and Paul (1984); J. Weiss, Paul and Jesus (1909).still provides support for Wrede. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The two final chapters of the Letter to the Romans are missing in Markion's version of the Letter to the Romans, also in other witnesses, and are therefore considered "the most difficult problem ever posed to New Testament textual criticism", according to K. Aland, Der Schluss und die ursprüngliche Gestalt des Römerbriefes (1979); E.P. Sanders, Paul (2001), 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. E.P. Sanders, Paul (2001), 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. E. Käsemann, An die Römer (1973), 375. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. U. Wilckens, Der Brief an die Römer (2014), 118.Probably for dogmatic reasons, it is sometimes disputed that priestly sacrificial terminology is meant here, cf. for example C.E.B. Cranfield, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (1979), 754-755. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. H. Räisänen, Römer 9-11: Analyse eines geistigen Ringens (1987). Cf. for instance ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. U. Wilckens, Der Brief an die Römer (2014), 181; H. Räisänen, Römer 9-11: Analyse eines geistigen Ringens (1987), 2894-2895. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. "Chaps. IX-XI form a compact and continuous whole, which can be read quite satisfactorily without reference to the rest of the epistle ... the epistle could be read without any gap, if these chapters were omitted", according to C.H. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans (1959), 148-149; U. Wilckens, Der Brief an die Römer (2014), 181; C.H. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans (1959), 148-149.This position is contested by U. Wilckens, Der Brief an die Römer (2014), 181; H. Räisänen, Römer 9-11: Analyse eines geistigen Ringens (1987), 2895. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. D. Wenham, Paul and the Historical Jesus (1998), 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. K. Hammann and A. Beutel, Rudolf Bultmann und seine Zeit. Biographische und theologische Konstellationen (2016); K. Hammann, Rudolf Bultmann. Eine Biographie (2012). Cf. K. Hammann and A. Beutel, Rudolf Bultmann und seine Zeit. Biographische und theologische Konstellationen (2016); K. Hammann, Rudolf Bultmann. Eine Biographie (2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. R. Bultmann, The Significance of the Historical Jesus for the Theology of Paul (1969 (1929)); R. Bultmann, Jesus and Paul (1961 (1936)). Cf. R. Bultmann, The Significance of the Historical Jesus for the Theology of Paul (1969 (1929)); R. Bultmann, Jesus and Paul (1961 (1936)). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. E. Käsemann, Blind Alleys in the 'Jesus of History' Controversy (1969). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. W.G. Kümmel, Jesus und Paulus (1965). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. J. Jeremias, The Present Position in the Controversy Concerning the Problem of the Historical Jesus (1958). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. S.G. Wilson, From Jesus to Paul: The Contours and Consequences of a Debate (1984); V.P. Furnish, The Jesus-Paul Debate: from Baur to Bultmann (1989); G.R.C. Schoberg. (2014). "Perspectives of Jesus in the Writings of Paul: A Historical Examination of Shared Core Commitments with a View to Determining the Extent of Paul's Dependence on Jesus." See also S.G. Wilson, From Jesus to Paul: The Contours and Consequences of a Debate (1984); V.P. Furnish, The Jesus-Paul Debate: from Baur to Bultmann (1989); G.R.C. Schoberg. (2014). "Perspectives of Jesus in the Writings of Paul: A Historical Examination of Shared Core Commitments with a View to Determining the Extent of Paul's Dependence on Jesus." [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. R. Bultmann, The Significance of the Historical Jesus for the Theology of Paul (1969 (1929)), 221. Cf. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. R. Bultmann, Jesus and Paul (1961 (1936)), 185. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. R. Bultmann, The Significance of the Historical Jesus for the Theology of Paul (1969 (1929)), 246. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. R. Bultmann, Jesus and Paul (1961 (1936)), 185. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. R. Bultmann, The Significance of the Historical Jesus for the Theology of Paul (1969 (1929)), 221; C. Wolff, True Apostolic Knowledge of Christ: Exegetical Reflections on 2 Corinthians 5.14ff. (1989).2 Corinthians 5:16 ('So from now on we know no one according to the flesh; even though we used to know Christ according to the flesh, now we no longer know him so') does not seem to contradict this, as does R. Bultmann, The Significance of the Historical Jesus for the Theology of Paul (1969 (1929)), 221; C. Wolff, True Apostolic Knowledge of Christ: Exegetical Reflections on 2 Corinthians 5.14ff. (1989). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Acts 7,58 - 8,3: Paul was present at the stoning of Stephen; Acts 22,3: "here in this city [= Jerusalem] I was brought up, trained at the feet of Gamaliël exactly according to the law of the fathers, a zealot for God, as you all are today". So already earlier scholars, though not without dissenting voices, which again Bultmann did not consider convincing, cf. R. Bultmann, Die Bedeutung des geschichtlichen Jesus für die Theologie des Paulus (1929). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. S.G. Wilson, From Jesus to Paul: The Contours and Consequences of a Debate (1984), 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. R. Bultmann, Die Bedeutung des geschichtlichen Jesus für die Theologie des Paulus (1929). Cf. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. It is puzzling when this is described as knowledge of a fixed written source, for which there is, in my opinion, no indication in the text (Paul speaks of having received *from the Lord* what he passes on here, not from a written source), but this is the opinion of N. Walter, Paul and the Early Christian Jesus-Tradition (1989), 54-55. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. R. Bultmann, Die Bedeutung des geschichtlichen Jesus für die Theologie des Paulus (1929); D. Wenham, Paul and the Historical Jesus (1998); S.G. Wilson, From Jesus to Paul: The Contours and Consequences of a Debate (1984), 7-8; N. Walter, Paul and the Early Christian Jesus-Tradition (1989), 56-59. Cf. the lists in R. Bultmann, Die Bedeutung des geschichtlichen Jesus für die Theologie des Paulus (1929); D. Wenham, Paul and the Historical Jesus (1998); S.G. Wilson, From Jesus to Paul: The Contours and Consequences of a Debate (1984), 7-8; N. Walter, Paul and the Early Christian Jesus-Tradition (1989), 56-59.However, it is unclear whether these echoes in the Gospels are spun out of Paul, or whether Paul is a witness to traditions found independently of Paul in the Gospels, to whose early existence Paul then testifies, as Wenham assumes. Wilson calls Paul's citation of further words of the Lord, as collected by Resch, "fantasies", cf. A. Resch, Der Paulinismus und die Logia Jesu in ihrem gegenseitigen Verhältnis untersucht (1904). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. N. Walter, Paul and the Early Christian Jesus-Tradition (1989), 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. S.G. Wilson, From Jesus to Paul: The Contours and Consequences of a Debate (1984), 8. "Embarrassingly few in number", ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. "From the evidence of his letters we are bound to say that he showed little or no interest in him and that to this extent Bultmann's judgment that Paul was concerned with *that* and not the *what of* Jesus' existence seems irrefutable", so ibidibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Cf. ibid. Ibid. 8-9 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. An example of this is the recent study by G.R.C. Schoberg. (2014). "Perspectives of Jesus in the Writings of Paul: A Historical Examination of Shared Core Commitments with a View to Determining the Extent of Paul's Dependence on Jesus." [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. H. Merkel, Der Epheserbrief in der neueren exegetischen Diskussion (1987); A. Jülicher and E. Fascher, Einleitung in das Neue Testament (1931), 142. , cfibid. also W.G. Kümmel, Das Neue Testament im 20. Jahrhundert ein Forschungsbericht (1970), 54; H. Merkel, Der Epheserbrief in der neueren exegetischen Diskussion (1987).gives a research overview. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. R. Schnackenburg, Der Brief an die Epheser (1982), 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. E. Best, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians (1998), 103-154 mit reichlich Lit. Cf. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. That this is a Pauline conception of being a Jew can be seen from Gal. 4,4f. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. D. Trobisch, Who Published the New Testament (2007/2008), 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. H.O. Maier, Marcion the Circumsizer (2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. G. Häfner, Die Pastoralbriefe (1 Tim/2 Tim/Tit) (2013), 459-462; M. Theobald, Israel-Vergessenheit in den Pastoralbriefen. Ein neuer Vorschlag zu ihrer historisch-theologischen Verortung im 2. Jahrhundert n. Chr. unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Ignatius-Briefe (2016); H.O. Maier, Marcion the Circumsizer (2019).Maier refers to J.W. Marshall, ‘I Left You in Crete’: Narrative Deception and Social Hierarchy in the Letter to Titus (2008).On the pseudonymity of the Pastoral EpistlesG. Häfner, Die Pastoralbriefe (1 Tim/2 Tim/Tit) (2013), 459-462; M. Theobald, Israel-Vergessenheit in den Pastoralbriefen. Ein neuer Vorschlag zu ihrer historisch-theologischen Verortung im 2. Jahrhundert n. Chr. unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Ignatius-Briefe (2016).see also G. Häfner, Die Pastoralbriefe (1 Tim/2 Tim/Tit) (2013), 459-462; M. Theobald, Israel-Vergessenheit in den Pastoralbriefen. Ein neuer Vorschlag zu ihrer historisch-theologischen Verortung im 2. Jahrhundert n. Chr. unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Ignatius-Briefe (2016).However, there is also the researcher opinion that holds to the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles, one cf. for example L.T. Johnson, The First and Second Letters to Timothy. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (2001), 63-64, 89-90; R.d. Fuchs, Unerwartete Unterschiede müssen wir unsere Ansichten über "die" Pastoralbriefe revidieren? (2003); P.H. Towner, The Letters to Timothy and Titus (2006), 88-89.See the discussion in J. Herzer, Abschied vom Konsens? Die Pseudepigraphie der Pastoralbriefe als Herausforderung an die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft (2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. H.O. Maier, Marcion the Circumsizer (2019). Thus ibid. Maier here invokes R.F. Collins and Paulus, 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus. A Commentary (2003), 181-183. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. J. Herzer, Abschied vom Konsens? Die Pseudepigraphie der Pastoralbriefe als Herausforderung an die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft (2004), 1267-1268. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Ibid. 1280 [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. S.E. Porter, When and How Was the Pauline Canon Compiled? An Assessment of Theories (2004). Cf. for example with further literature ibid. whole volume is of importance for the present chapter, S.E. Porter, The Pauline canon (2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. M. Theobald, Israel-Vergessenheit in den Pastoralbriefen. Ein neuer Vorschlag zu ihrer historisch-theologischen Verortung im 2. Jahrhundert n. Chr. unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Ignatius-Briefe (2016), 57.Here he refers to P. Trummer, Corpus Paulinum - Corpus Pastorale (1981). [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. 1-2Tim, Tit, Phlm, Rev are missing in the *Codex Vaticanus,* so their order cannot be determined. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. M. Theobald, Israel-Vergessenheit in den Pastoralbriefen. Ein neuer Vorschlag zu ihrer historisch-theologischen Verortung im 2. Jahrhundert n. Chr. unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Ignatius-Briefe (2016), 40-42. Modern research also suggests that the original order was Tit - 1-2Tim, so with older lit. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. D. Trobisch, Die Paulusbriefe und die Anfänge der christlichen Publizistik (1994), 43. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. J.W. Aageson, Paul, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Early Church (2008), 7-8; J.W. Aageson, The Pastoral Epistles, Apostolic Authority, and the Development of the Pauline Scriptures (2004); R.W. Wall, The Function of the Pastoral Letters within the Pauline Canon of the New Testament: A Canonical Approach (2004). In this he follows D.R. MacDonald, The Legend and the Apostle. The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon (1983), 34-77; A. Merz, Die fiktive Selbstauslegung des Paulus. Intertextuelle Studien zur Intention und Rezeption der Pastoralbriefe (2004), 218-222, 318-333, 374-375.To cf. is also J.W. Aageson, Paul, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Early Church (2008), 7-8; J.W. Aageson, The Pastoral Epistles, Apostolic Authority, and the Development of the Pauline Scriptures (2004); R.W. Wall, The Function of the Pastoral Letters within the Pauline Canon of the New Testament: A Canonical Approach (2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. H.v. Campenhausen, Polykarp von Smyrna und die Pastoralbriefe (1951); N. Brox, Die Pastoralbriefe (1969), 32.Cf. H.v. Campenhausen, Polykarp von Smyrna und die Pastoralbriefe (1951). [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Cf. Iren., Adv. haer. I 30,5.9. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. G. Häfner, Die Pastoralbriefe (1 Tim/2 Tim/Tit) (2013), 461. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Thus, with further lit. M. Theobald, Israel-Vergessenheit in den Pastoralbriefen. Ein neuer Vorschlag zu ihrer historisch-theologischen Verortung im 2. Jahrhundert n. Chr. unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Ignatius-Briefe (2016), 155-156.Since Theobald nevertheless fundamentally assumes the canonical textual stock of the Pauline Epistles, he takes it for granted, without being asked, that in other places where the Pastoral Epistles show parallels to the other Pauline Epistles (for example 1Tim 1,2 and 1Cor 4,16f., a parallel to which we will return below), the Pastoral Epistles "take their cue" from the Pauline Epistles (ibid. 160), whereas we suggest below that it is more likely that in editing the Pastoral Epistles the existing Pauline Epistles were revised so that the Pastoral Epistles could be fitted and inscribed accordingly in this corpus. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. M.-E. Boismard, Paul's Letter to the Laodiceans (2004). Cf. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. "Colossians could fairly be described as the most intriguing of the Pauline letters. This is primarily because it serves as a bridge between the undisputed Paulines and those members of the Pauline corpus that are generally considered post-Pauline. That is to say, on the one hand, it is remarkably close at many points to Ephesians, whose post-Pauline authorship is a matter of substantial consensus in Pauline scholarship. Yet at the same time, particularly in its christology and ecclesiology, it is significantly less developed than Ephesians and the Pastorals. In a post-Pauline trajectory, Colossians would have to be placed very close to the beginning. On the other hand, some of its detail locates it in close proximity to Philemon, whose Pauline authorship has been little questioned in the history of Christianity. Yet at the same time, again particularly in its christology and ecclesiology, and also its parenesis, it seems to be significantly developed beyond what we find in the undisputed Paulines", so J.D.G. Dunn, The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon. A Commentary on the Greek Text (1996), 19.Cf. also A. Lindemann, Der Kolosserbrief (1983), 73-75. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. G. Strecker, Paulus in nachpaulinischer Zeit (1970), 210; K.M. Fischer, Tendenz und Absicht des Epheserbriefes (1973), 95-108; A. Lindemann, Paulus im ältesten Christentum. Überlegungen zur gegenwärtigen Diskussion über die frühe Paulusrezeption (1979), 40; J. Gnilka, Das Paulusbild im Kolosser- und Epheserbrief (1981). Cf. G. Strecker, Paulus in nachpaulinischer Zeit (1970), 210; K.M. Fischer, Tendenz und Absicht des Epheserbriefes (1973), 95-108; A. Lindemann, Paulus im ältesten Christentum. Überlegungen zur gegenwärtigen Diskussion über die frühe Paulusrezeption (1979), 40; J. Gnilka, Das Paulusbild im Kolosser- und Epheserbrief (1981). [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. See, for example, A.T. Lincoln and A.J.M. Wedderburn, The Theology of the Later Pauline Letters (2010); J.P. Hering, The Colossian and Ephesian Haustafeln in Theological Context. An Analysis of their Origins, Relationship, and Message (2007), 107-156.Hering writes: "The large amount of common material, as well as the coincidence of its ordering, indicate an intricate literary relationship between the two forms", adapting the material from Kol, ibid. Ibid. 154-155 [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. E. Schweizer, The Letter to the Colossians: A Commentary (1982), 241; E. Schweizer, Der Brief an die Kolosser (1976); A. Standhartinger, Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte und Intention des Kolosserbriefs (1999), 10-16 mit dem Urteil der Fiktionalität von Verfasser und Adressaten. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. W. Schenk, Der Kolosserbrief in der neueren Forschung (1845-1985) (1987), 3338-3349. Cf. the quite different evaluation of Col within the canonical New Testament, ibid. However, one would still have to add the references to Acts (or vice versa) here. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Tert., Adv. Marc. V 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Cf. here, Comm. in Gal. (PL 26, 313A): "sciendum quoque in Marcionis apostolo non esse scriptum 'et per deum patrem', volentis exponere, Christum non a deo patre, sed per semetipsum suscitatum." [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. U.B. Schmid, Marcion und sein Apostolos. Rekonstruktion und historische Einordnung der marcionitischen Paulusbriefausgabe (1995), I/331. Cf. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. This reference unfortunately escaped Schmid. Even if Schmid's work is a highly learned study both methodologically and text-critically, it still needs improvements in details here and there, as here, and a similar methodological discussion on the reconstruction of the Markionite Pauline text would have to be conducted again, as is currently underway on the question of the reconstruction of Markion's Gospel. On this, cf. most recently with older literature J. Heilmann and M. Klinghardt, Das Neue Testament und sein Text im 2. Jahrhundert (2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. A. Camplani, John the Baptist According to Marcion's Gospel and Early Syriac Texts (2018); M. Vinzent, Methodological Assumptions in the Reconstruction of Marcion’s Gospel (Mcn). The Example of the Lord’s Prayer (2018). Cf. A. Camplani, John the Baptist According to Marcion's Gospel and Early Syriac Texts (2018); M. Vinzent, Methodological Assumptions in the Reconstruction of Marcion’s Gospel (Mcn). The Example of the Lord’s Prayer (2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. M. Klinghardt, Das älteste Evangelium und die Entstehung der kanonischen Evangelien (2015).Tert., Adv. Marc. V 2. I take the abbreviation Mcn for Markion's Gospel from ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. M. Theobald, Israel-Vergessenheit in den Pastoralbriefen. Ein neuer Vorschlag zu ihrer historisch-theologischen Verortung im 2. Jahrhundert n. Chr. unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Ignatius-Briefe (2016). same observation with the extended indication that the Pastoral Epistles share this view can be found in ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. So Tert., Adv. Marc. IV 20,5-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Tert., Adv. Marc. IV 6,3. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. How alien the term "Judaism" as an abstract religion was to Jewish ears was again recently highlighted by C.A. Barton and D. Boyarin, Imagine No Religion: How Modern Abstractions Hide Ancient Realities (2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Cf. in detail my commentary on the anti-Marcionite texts of Tertullian, M. Vinzent, Tertullian's Preface to Marcion's Gospel (2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. According to Adolf Harnack, of the "27 writings now in the N. T., Tertullian knew all except II Pet., II and III John and Jacob", according to A. Harnack, Tertullians Bibliothek christlicher Schriften (1914), 304. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Wolfram Kinzig has been able to show that the title "New Testament" is a creation of Markion, W. Kinzig, Καινὴ διαϑήκη: The title of the New Testament in the second and third centuries (1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. M. Klinghardt, Das älteste Evangelium und die Entstehung der kanonischen Evangelien (2015); J. BeDuhn, The First New Testament: Marcion’s Scriptural Canon (2013).Cf. also the different positions in the anthology J. Heilmann and M. Klinghardt, Das Neue Testament und sein Text im 2. Jahrhundert (2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. D.E. Wilhite, Introduction (2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. "Either he [Paul] himself or one of his followers in Corinth could have created the oldest collection of Pauline letters from these four letters [Rom, 1-2Cor, Gal]. But this is only a possibility and not really provable." Even if one wants to accept this assumption, it is doubtful when it is concluded: "If the assumption of such a primary collection were true, then the ... criterion [completeness] of canonicity would have been fulfilled (retrospectively) already during Paul's lifetime for his own letters." Both quotations from G. Theißen, Wie wurden urchristliche Texte zur Heiligen Schrift? Kanonizität als literaturgeschichtliches Problem (2012), 436.Trobisch's history of the development of epistle collections and our example of the Ignatians shows that a collection does not yet constitute a canon. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Cf. for instance the historical positions of the 'Dutch radical critics' Allard Pierson (1831-1896), Abraham Dirk Loman (1823-1897), Willem Christiaan van Manen (1842-1905), G.J.P.J. Bolland (1854-1922), Gustaaf Adolf van den Bergh van Eysinga (1874-1957); cf. E. Verhoef, Die holländische radikale Kritik (1996); A. Wechsler, Geschichtsbild und Apostelstreit. Eine forschungsgeschichtliche und exegetische Studie über den antiochenischen Zwischenfall (Gal 2,11 - 14) (1991), 99-128; S.J. De Vries, Bible and Theology in the Netherlands Dutch Old Testament Criticism under Modernist and Conservative Auspices 1850 to World War I (1968), 52-55.Successors who reinforced this radical critique include R.M. Price, The Amazing Colossal Apostle: The Search for the Historical Paul (2012); H. Detering, Der gefälschte Paulus. Das Urchristentum im Zwielicht (1995); H. Detering, Paulusbriefe ohne Paulus? Die Paulusbriefe in der holländischen Radikalkritik (1992); P.L. Couchoud, The First Edition of the Paulina. Translated by Frans-Joris Fabri and Michael Conley (2002 (1928)). [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. On the outstanding importance of the Second Epistle of Peter in the question of the formation of the 'canonical edition' of the New TestamentD. Trobisch, Die Endredaktion des Neuen Testaments: Eine Untersuchung zur Entstehung der christlichen Bibel (1996), 125-154; W. Grünstäudl, Geschätzt und bezweifelt. Der zweite Petrusbrief im kanongeschichtlichen Paradgomenstreit (2018).cf. D. Trobisch, Die Endredaktion des Neuen Testaments: Eine Untersuchung zur Entstehung der christlichen Bibel (1996), 125-154; W. Grünstäudl, Geschätzt und bezweifelt. Der zweite Petrusbrief im kanongeschichtlichen Paradgomenstreit (2018).Although Grünstäudl presents a number of counter-arguments to Trobisch, he does accept (ibid. 85) the formulation of the 'editorial idea' in the following way: 'The 2nd Epistle of Peter is an editorial in epistolary form for a canonical edition of the New Testament in the 2nd century', according to G. Theissen, Literaturgeschichte und Literaturästhetik. Zu D. Trobisch: Das Neue Testament als literaturgeschichtliches Problem (2011), 136.Cf. now also J. Frey, M.d. Dulk and J.G.v.d. Watt, Eds., 2 Peter and the Apocalypse of Peter: Towards a New Perspective (2019), 62-65. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. J.N. Bremmer, The *Apocalypse of Peter* as the First Christian Martyr Text: Its Date, Provenance and Relationship with 2 Peter (2019), 87-88. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. "But because the letter hardly shows any knowledge of 1 Peter, and the characterisation does not quite fit the content and scope of 1 Peter, it is of course not undisputed that "this first letter ... is hardly a lost or unknown letter, but the 1st Epistle of Peter", according to H. Balz and W. Schrage, Die "Katholischen" Briefe. Die Briefe des Jakobus, Petrus, Johannes und Judas (1982), 147. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. 2Peter 1:1: "1 Simon Peter, slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ have obtained the same precious faith as we"; 1Peter 1:1: "1 Peter, apostle of Jesus Christ, the chosen stranger in the Diaspora in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, the province of Asia and Bithynia." [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. On 2Petr cf. (with older lit.) W. Grünstäudl, Petrus Alexandrinus. Studien zum historischen und theologischen Ort des zweiten Petrusbriefes (2013); L. Doering, Apostle, Co-Elder, and Witness of Suffering. Author Construction and Peter Image in First Peter (2009); W. Grünstäudl, U. Poplutz and T. Nicklas, Der zweite Petrusbrief und das Neue Testament (2017); W. Grünstäudl, Petrus, das Feuer und die Interpretation der Schrift. Beobachtungen zum Motiv des Weltenbrandes im zweiten Petrusbrief (2013). Grünstäudl notes: '2Petr sketches ... artfully creates a complex image of Peter, but refrains from reconciling this fiction with the only text of Peter that he explicitly mentions and thus presumes to be known by his addressees! It is not surprising that this finding has been interpreted to mean that 2Petr does not want to hide its pseudepigraphical character at all, but on the contrary to reveal it to its readers in a propopian manner." [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Cf. for example P.H. Davids, The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude (2006), 126-130; K.H. Schelkle, Die Petrusbriefe, der Judasbrief (1980), 179-181.Cf. also Schrage: "Almost unanimously, the letter is rightly regarded as a pseudepigraphical letter. If the 1st Epistle of Peter does not originate from Peter, the 2nd Epistle of Peter, which refers to him (3:1), is even less likely to do so. It is irrelevant whether the author himself considers the 1st Letter of Peter to be genuine or not. That both letters cannot be derived from one and the same author is shown by the great differences in language and theology", according to H. Balz and W. Schrage, Die "Katholischen" Briefe. Die Briefe des Jakobus, Petrus, Johannes und Judas (1982), 127.On the Second Epistle of Peter, cf. W. Grünstäudl, Petrus Alexandrinus. Studien zum historischen und theologischen Ort des zweiten Petrusbriefes (2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Referring to harmonisation and differentiation of the two traditions through 2PetrJ. Frey, M.d. Dulk and J.G.v.d. Watt, Eds., 2 Peter and the Apocalypse of Peter: Towards a New Perspective (2019), 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. H. Balz and W. Schrage, Die "Katholischen" Briefe. Die Briefe des Jakobus, Petrus, Johannes und Judas (1982), 152.Anders ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Ibid. 122 Cf. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. K.H. Schelkle, Die Petrusbriefe, der Judasbrief (1980), 182. Cf. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Cf. Euseb. Caes., Hist. eccl. VI 14,1; nevertheless Schelkle claims that Clement "also explained 2 Peter" after this passage, ibidibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. J.N. Bremmer, The *Apocalypse of Peter* as the First Christian Martyr Text: Its Date, Provenance and Relationship with 2 Peter (2019). Thus C. Detlef G. Müller, in NTApo6 II (1990), 263-264. Cf. on this text also J.N. Bremmer, The Apocalypse of Peter (2003).Now also with new considerations J.N. Bremmer, The *Apocalypse of Peter* as the First Christian Martyr Text: Its Date, Provenance and Relationship with 2 Peter (2019).Cf. in general the new volume J. Frey, M.d. Dulk and J.G.v.d. Watt, Eds., 2 Peter and the Apocalypse of Peter: Towards a New Perspective (2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Euseb. Caes., Hist. eccl. VI 25,8. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Cf. Orig., In libr. Jesu Nave 7,1 (GCS 7,328). [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Euseb. Caes., Hist. eccl. III 3,4. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Euseb. Caes., Hist. eccl. III 3,1; cf. also III 25,3. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. K.H. Schelkle, Die Petrusbriefe, der Judasbrief (1980), 182-183. Cf. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. M. Vinzent, Marcion and the Dating of the Synoptic Gospels (2014). Thus my suggestion in ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. E.W. Scherbenske, Canonizing Paul. Ancient Editorial Practice and the Corpus Paulinum (2013), 71-116. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Cf. also Rom 1,1. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. A.J. Hultgren, Paul's Pre-Christian Persecutions of the Church: Their Purpose, Locale, and Nature (1976). Cf. the juxtaposition of the actions as presented in Paul's letters and Acts in ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Cf. also the use of language in Jos. X 51; XIII 297; XIII 408; XIX 349; but also Mk 7,3.5 ("the tradition of the elders"). [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. M. Theobald, Israel-Vergessenheit in den Pastoralbriefen. Ein neuer Vorschlag zu ihrer historisch-theologischen Verortung im 2. Jahrhundert n. Chr. unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Ignatius-Briefe (2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. In what follows, I elaborate on what was first drafted with me by Janelle Priya Mathur, cf. J.P. Mathur and M. Vinzent, Pre-canonical Paul. His Views Towards Sexual Immorality (2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. "Paul and later followers of Christ frequently defined the boundaries of their movement in sexual terms", J.W. Knust, Abandoned to Lust. Sexual Slander and Ancient Christianity (2006), 51-87, 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Letter "Homosexualitas problema" on pastoral care for homosexual persons, AAS 79 (1987) 543-554; Engl.: Announcements of the Apostolic See 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Some compare Mt 19:4-6 and Mk 10:5-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. S. Perowne, Hadrian (1960), 100. Cf. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Arist., Apol. 8:1; 9:3; 13:5; 17:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. R.M. Grant, Greek apologists of the second century (1988), 38-39. Cf. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. M. Vinzent, Earliest 'Christian' Art is Jewish Art (2016). As I tried to show in ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. A.Y. Reed, Jewish-Christianity and the History of Judaism. Collected Essays (2018), xv. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. "History has been given the task of judging the past, of instructing the world for the benefit of future years: the present attempt does not subjugate itself to such high offices: it merely wants to show how things actually were", according to L.v. Ranke, Sämmtliche Werke (1877), 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. U. Schnelle, Die ersten 100 Jahre des Christentums 30-130 n. Chr. Die Entstehungsgeschichte einer Weltreligion (2016), 17-18. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. M. Vinzent, Marcion the Jew (2013); A. Camplani, Mosè, Elia e Abramo nel Vangelo di Marcione (2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. For a critique of the contemporary tendency to single out such "moments when everything changed", see S. Schwartz, How Many Judaisms Were There? A Critique of Neusner and Smith on Definition and Mason and Boyarin on Categorization (2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Cf. the discussion on the distinctiveness of 'Christians' (even if they did not call themselves such) in connection with the persecution under Nero: B. van der Lans and J.N. Bremmer, Tacitus and the Persecution of the Christians: An Invention of Tradition? (2017), 303-304, 308-309. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)