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New Testament Studies in the 20th Century¹

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Twentieth-century New Testament scholarship is a story of a great proliferation in approaches, emphases and methods, a growing diversity of scholars in gender, ethnicity, geography, and religious stances, and also a greater diversity in the types of academic settings in which their scholarship was conducted than had characterized preceding centuries. One of the most observable changes apparent in the latter decades of the century was the considerably greater salience and influence of North American scholars and issues arising from their work, whereas previously the field was heavily dominated by the work of European (especially German) figures. Another major development was the much greater participation of Roman Catholic scholars, particularly after World War II, this flowering of Catholic biblical scholarship flowing from the Papal Encyclical, *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943). Also, perhaps especially in the North American setting, but also in other locales as well, an increasing number of women obtained doctorates and became significant contributors to the field. In the final decades, there were also indications of a far greater trans-cultural diversity in scholars and approaches, involving figures and developments in Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

One way to survey these and other important developments is to take a diachronic approach, and this will be followed here. Given the considerable number of active NT scholars through the century, and the limits of this article, however, it will be necessary to be highly selective (and the choices unavoidably subjective to some measure), focusing on some figures, publications, projects and approaches that were particularly salient in their own time and also influential subsequently.

Likewise, although scholarly study of the NT also involves consideration of the historical, religious and literary environment of the early Roman period (including Jewish and pagan material), space limitations prevent adequate treatment of many of the scholars and publications that have contributed to this complex and important body of subjects. For a much fuller presentation of information and treatment of

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many more scholars than can be mentioned here, see especially William Baird's multi-volume work.

1. *Early Decades*. At the outset of the century, among the dominant influences upon NT study were scholars associated with the so-called *religionsgeschichtliche Schule* (history of religion school), who emphasized earliest Christianity as a phenomenon of history, to be understood within its historical context, and who also focused on the *religion* of earliest Christianity, in distinction from the more typical scholarly concern with the *theology* reflected in and justified by the NT. This newer approach actually had its immediate beginnings in the late nineteenth century with scholars such as Otto Pfleiderer, but the height of the influence was ca. 1900-1920, owing in particular to several scholars who held posts in Göttingen University: e.g., Hermann Gunkel, Wilhelm Heitmüller, Richard Reitzenstein (known especially for his emphasis on ancient mystery cults), William Wrede, and Wilhelm Bousset. Bousset's *Kyrios Christos*, 1913 (2nd ed., 1921), is perhaps the classic publication from this influential group and it remained singularly influential upon subsequent scholarly approaches to earliest faith in Christ for many decades after its appearance (English translation in 1970). Likewise, Bousset's *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter* (1st ed., 1903) remained a standard text in German theological faculties through several subsequent editions until at least the 1960s.

The great contribution of these scholars was to approach the NT rigorously in terms of its historical setting. They were enormously learned, and they each produced an impressive body of work. In addition, Bousset and Gunkel edited the monograph series, *Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments*, one of the most important of the numerous German monograph series in the field. They were accused (not entirely fairly) of emphasizing the larger pagan environment and not doing justice to the influences of the variegated first-century Jewish tradition. In addition to the corrections that arose from subsequent discoveries and critique, it is also clear that, for all their effort at exacting historical scholarship, their work was also shaped by their own religious orientation as liberal Protestants of their time (influenced particularly by Albrecht Ritschl). Thus, e.g., Bousset's evaluation of the kind of devotion to Jesus that is reflected in Paul's epistles and in subsequent Christian tradition as an unfortunate development and effectively an early paganization of a supposedly purer faith of the "primitive Palestinian community" reflects much more Bousset's own religious preferences than scholarly judgement.

Nevertheless, Bousset and his colleagues were perhaps unrivalled in their time in their prodigious scholarship. Moreover, their work heavily shaped the agenda of issues addressed by other and subsequent scholars. Even those who sought to correct or refute the conclusions of the history of religion school were shaped by their work and the way they framed the questions.

1.1. *Other Early Figures.* Other influential German-speaking figures of the very early twentieth century such as Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer emphasized Jewish eschatology as a key influence upon Jesus and Paul and the NT more generally. Schweitzer's classic, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede* (1906), both critically reviewed nearly 150 years of historical Jesus scholarship and also firmly emphasized apocalyptic thought as the crucial influence upon Jesus. Although many NT scholars dissented from particulars of his own sketch of Jesus, Schweitzer's emphasis on eschatology was highly influential well beyond German-speaking scholarship, especially thanks to a widely-read English translation of his book, the title of which, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (1910), quickly became the designation of a whole line of scholarly discussion that has continued into the present day. Indeed, in his critically acclaimed study published in 1984, *Jesus and Judaism*, E. P. Sanders pointed to Schweitzer as rightly underscoring the futurist eschatological element in Jesus' ministry. Schweitzer was also influential in arguing that the Gospels do not provide sufficient material for a "life" of Jesus (at least in the modern sense of that term), and in warning that any attempt to produce a "historical" Jesus will involve more imagination than hard evidence, and that any portrait of Jesus almost invariably incorporates the personality and preferences of the scholar who constructs it.

Adolf Deissmann notably underscored recently-available archaeological and papyrological evidence for the language of the Greek NT and for grasping more clearly the social and political setting in which Christian faith was first articulated. His classic study, *Licht vom Osten* (1908; ET 1910, 1927) remains a monumental handling of these matters. Also, his discussion of Paul as a social and religious figure rather than a theologian is a notable contribution that still repays reading. Deissmann and others also contributed to a new lexicography of NT Greek in which the language of the NT was seen as more related to the ordinary Koine Greek of the Roman period, whereas previous scholars had often relied more heavily on classical Greek literary texts of the fourth century BCE and earlier, or had sometimes suggested that the Greek of the NT was a unique dialect of "Holy Spirit" Greek. The fruits of this

philological work were incorporated by Walter Bauer into a highly influential lexicon (*Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur*) that first appeared under his editorship in 1928 and went through several editions, with an English translation in 1958 that has also gone through several revisions.

Ernst Lohmeyer is another particularly interesting scholar of the time. His 1928 study, *Kyrios Jesus*, was the first work to demonstrate persuasively that Philippians 2:6-11 derives from a pre-Pauline Christian hymn, a conclusion that has subsequently shaped study of this passage and the wider investigation of christological passages in the NT. His *Galiläa und Jerusalem* (1936) influentially contended that there was an early Galilean Christianity distinguishable from the Jerusalem-centered Christianity described in Acts. Tragically, after being forced to move from his position in Breslau to Greifswald on account of his anti-Nazi views, in February 1946, shortly after being appointed Rector of the University, he was arrested by Soviet military authorities and, for reasons unknown, executed several months later.

Still another noteworthy figure is Gustaf Dalman, especially remembered for his studies of the archaeology and geography of Palestine, and his contributions to the study of Aramaic as the language of Jesus and earliest Christianity. His scholarly publications began just before the turn of the century and continued on until just after his death in 1941. Dalman drew upon his many years of residence in Palestine in his studies, especially in his eight-volume *magnum opus*, *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina* (1928-42). But the works for which he is most known in NT studies came from the earlier part of his career. These include an Aramaic grammar (1892, 1905) and two-volume dictionary (1897-1901, with revised editions subsequently), and, perhaps most famously, *Die Worte Jesu* (1898, 1930; ET 1902), and *Jesus-Jeschua* (1922; ET 1929). In these last two books he sought to probe the original Aramaic words of Jesus by attempting his own retro-translation of sayings in the Gospels. In this effort, Dalman anticipated and stimulated studies by scholars such as Joachim Jeremias and, later, the Matthew Black and Max Wilcox.

1.2. *Gospel Studies*. New developments in Gospel studies were particularly notable in these early years. By the opening of the century, the “Markan Hypothesis” (the view that the Gospel of Mark was the first Gospel and was used as the principal narrative source by the authors of Matthew and Luke) had become dominant, and the

further hypothesis that Matthew and Luke drew upon a second source (commonly referred to as "Q") for the large body of Jesus' sayings that they share was also gaining widespread acceptance. Among English-speaking scholars especially, B. H. Streeter's *The Four Gospels* (1924) proved an influential exposition of these views (drawing upon earlier work by scholars such as John Hawkins), and also presented arguments for a Four Document Hypothesis involving two further putative sources ("M," reflected in material peculiar to Matthew, and "L" representing material peculiar to Luke). As well, Streeter argued, far less successfully in the minds of most scholars, that behind the Gospel of Luke was an earlier edition, "Proto-Luke."

Streeter's large tome remained in use well past World War II, but was already dated in its approach and assumptions by the time of its publication. Especially in German NT scholarship, "Form Criticism" was emerging to cast a very different light on the formation of the Gospels. Whereas Streeter's work reflected convictions that larger texts such as the Gospels were comprised of prior literary sources, the form-critical approach projected a more complex and heavily oral transmission of Jesus-tradition behind the Gospels. The three key early figures included Karl Ludwig Schmidt (*Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu*, 1919), who showed that the narrative links connecting the individual episodes in the Gospels are most likely the products of the Evangelists. In light of this, Schmidt contended that the Evangelists drew upon a reservoir of individual stories about Jesus and collections of his sayings, and wove them into continuous narratives. In another influential study published in 1923 ("Die Stellung der Evangelien in der allgemeinen Literaturgeschichte"), Schmidt argued that the Gospels comprised a unique type of text not significantly related to literary genres of the Roman period such as biography. Instead, he portrayed the Gospels as purely shaped by the preaching and teaching needs and activities of first-century Christianity. This view became thereafter dominant until the late 1970s, and retains a certain following still.

In the same year, Martin Dibelius' *Formgeschichte des Evangeliums* appeared, and gave the emerging approach to the Gospels its name: "*Formgeschichte*" (usually translated "Form-Criticism" in English). He proposed a categorization of Gospel material into five main types (or "forms"): "Paradigms" (brief, often controversial episodes which culminate in a memorable statement of Jesus), "Novellen" (a story told mainly for its own sake, often involving some demonstration of Jesus' miraculous powers), "Legends" (which focus on some moral or spiritual quality of

Jesus), “Edifying Material” (the greater body of Jesus’ sayings), and “Myths” (stories with a strong supernatural quality). His further contribution was his emphasis that the various categories of Jesus-tradition probably reflect the different settings in the early churches in which the Jesus-tradition was used, e.g., evangelism, ethical formation of converts, and worship. So, Dibelius argued, the Gospels reflect both Jesus’ ministry and also these settings and concerns of churches of the very first decades of the Christian movement.

The third early founder-figure in Form-Criticism of the Gospels was Rudolf Bultmann, whose book, *Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (1921) actually became the most influential of the pioneering articulations of this approach. In addition to proposing slightly different categories of Gospel material, Bultmann also pressed more forcefully the question about the historicity of the Jesus tradition, arguing that a good deal of it represents legendary growth, the appropriation of sayings and stories also reported about other figures from ancient times, and other factors. In short, in Bultmann’s view, very little of the Gospel material could be taken with confidence as solid evidence for making historical claims about Jesus himself. But this scepticism certainly did not reflect any departure from Christian faith. Indeed, in his theological viewpoint (which involved a distinctive amalgam of a Lutheran understanding of faith and works as mutually exclusive and his own appropriation of elements of existentialist philosophy), an inability to make any assured statements about Jesus other than his crucifixion was not at all a problem. Instead, Bultmann contended that radical scepticism about the Jesus-tradition had a positive effect in preventing Christian faith from being anything other than the sheer trust in God that he held to be essential for it to be authentic.

Although Bultmann’s own enthusiastically negative view of the historicity of the Gospel material was certainly controversial, in the decades following the appearance of these three key studies, the form-critical approach to the Gospels won favorable attention from other scholars within and beyond Germany. Among British scholars, C. H. Dodd in particular drew upon the method and produced notable studies that were in turn influential upon many others. In his *Parables of the Kingdom* (1935), acknowledging that the Gospels present Jesus’ parables very much with a view to the needs of the churches for which the Evangelists wrote, Dodd also sought to recover the original import of the parables in the setting of Jesus’ ministry. The broad effect of Dodd’s argument was that the parables of the Gospels preserved (with

some adaptation) an authentic body of Jesus-tradition. Moreover, Dodd contended that Jesus operated in the strong conviction that his ministry was charged with ultimate eschatological significance as the decisive setting in which God's kingdom was manifested. So, Dodd argued that the parables took on fresh and exciting meaning when set within the context of this conviction and when seen as Jesus' bold articulations of the immediate challenge facing his audience to recognize and embrace God's redemptive summons expressed in his own preaching and actions. The international impact of Dodd's slender volume on the parables was acknowledged by Joachim Jeremias in his own highly influential study, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu* (1947), although Jeremias and a good many other scholars regarded Dodd's emphasis on "realized eschatology" as insufficiently reflecting the element of futurity in Jesus' references to the coming of the kingdom of God.

Just a year after his book on the parables, Dodd released another small but influential volume, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*, in which he sought to analyze form-critically the earliest contents of Christian proclamation ("kerygma"). Sifting material from the speeches in Acts and from other NT passages, Dodd argued that the earliest preaching comprised a declaration of God's acts in Jesus, especially in his death, resurrection, exaltation and future return in glory. Dodd also identified other material in the NT as reflecting the instruction of converts ("didache"), which complemented evangelistic proclamation.

Dodd was probably the most significant British NT scholar of the century, with a number of other notable publications, including *The Authority of the Bible* (1928), a commentary on Romans (1932). *The Bible and the Greeks* (1935, a set of lectures on the relevance of the Septuagint for NT studies), *History and the Gospel* (1938, carrying further his interests in Form Criticism), *According to the Scriptures* (1952, an influential study of the use of the OT in the NT), and other studies extending down to 1970 (shortly before his death in 1973). Scholars widely judge his greatest work to have been *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (1953). His effort of widest general impact was as director of the New English Bible translation project.

1.3. *Major German Projects.* But both in the development of new approaches and in the mounting of major scholarly projects, German scholarship was pre-eminent in the period between the world wars, and well into the 1960s. Among the impressive publication projects of the first few decades of the century was the four-volume work on rabbinic literature, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*

(1922-28) by H. L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck (essentially the work of Billerbeck, a pastor, Strack added to the project to help secure its publication). Though today this work is often criticized, it represented a major effort to draw upon a vast and demanding body of primary sources from rabbinic Judaism. Strack's introduction to rabbinic literature (*Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch*, 1887, extensively revised editions in 1908 and 1920, ET 1931) quickly became the essential tool for NT scholars, and the revised edition of 1982 (carried out by Günther Stemberger, ET 1991) continues to serve this role.

An even larger project was the nine-volume *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* (1932-73). Begun by Gerhard Kittel, who edited the first five volumes, the project was taken to completion by Gerhard Friedrich. This massive work provides extended discussions of the meanings of a great many Greek words used in the Greek NT, some of the individual entries nearly equivalent to small monographs. The many contributors include nearly all the significant German scholars of the several decades in which the volumes were produced. It won a massively greater readership through the English translation (1964-74). Although a number of the contributions to the early volumes in particular have been criticized in the light of modern semantic principles, "Kittel" was undoubtedly a monumental project in NT studies. Moreover, as its title suggests, part of the aim was explicitly to link the work of critical scholarship broadly with theological concerns. The dedication of the first volume to Adolf Schlatter (Tübingen), who fervently argued that theological interests and critical NT study were not incompatible, also reflects something of Kittel's motivation.

In 1900 the first issue of the journal *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche* appeared. With contributions accepted in German, English and French, it is the oldest continuously-published journal dedicated to New Testament studies, and has an international readership and a prestigious reputation.

1.4. *Text-critical Developments.* Key nineteenth-century publications (especially editions of the Greek New Testament by Tischendorf, Tragelless, and the particularly influential 1881 edition by Westcott and Hort) had established the necessity of, and basic principles for, a critical text of the New Testament that involved assessing the many textual variants that had developed in the copying of the New Testament writings in the centuries before the printing press. The first edition of

Eberhard Nestle's simple and practical, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, had appeared in 1898, and from the thirteenth edition in 1927 under the editorship of his son, Erwin, it incorporated a critical apparatus that included readings of a selection of ancient manuscripts, church Fathers, and ancient translations. In numerous successive editions (the twenty-seventh appeared in 1993 under Kurt Aland's direction, who took over the work from the twenty-first edition in 1952), with hundreds of thousands of copies printed, "Nestle" (subsequently "Nestle-Aland") became (and remains) the standard hand-edition of the Greek New Testament for students and scholars. Among German scholars of the early part of the century, Hermann von Soden was probably the most salient NT text critic, remembered especially for his massive four-volume work (*Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt, auf Grund ihrer Textgeschichte*, 1911, 1913) that includes a review of previous text-critical scholarship, his theories about the history of the NT text, and his own critical text of the NT. However, his complicated notation system, unverifiable theories, and errors in recording of data have made this work more of a historical monument than an influential contribution.

In text-critical matters, it was probably English-speaking scholarship that was dominant in these early decades. In part, this was the result of the acquisition of important early manuscripts in Britain and the United States. In 1906 the Detroit magnate Charles Freer acquired four Greek manuscripts that included the Freer Codex of the Gospels, which was palaeographically dated to the early fifth or late fourth century, making it at the time the third oldest copy of the Gospels known. The four Freer biblical manuscripts (and two more subsequently purchased by Freer) were put into the hands of the American scholar, Henry A. Sanders, who expertly edited them and produced a series of facsimiles and valuable studies 1910-27. The Freer Gospels manuscript in particular received enormous scholarly and popular attention at the time, and became crucial in studies by Kirsopp Lake, B. H. Streeter and others concerned to probe the early textual history of the Gospels.

Lake is one of the most impressive scholars of his day, and devoted much energy to study of early manuscripts. Early in his career (1902) he identified a particular group of medieval Gospel manuscripts known thereafter as "Family 1". Subsequently, Lake linked these and other Gospels witnesses, and in collaboration with R. P. Blake (1923) and also Silva New (1928), Lake produced lengthy journal articles aimed to show that these and certain other witnesses represented an important

early text-type in the Gospels. In the 1924 book mentioned above, Streeter argued similarly, and gave this large group of textual witnesses the name “Caesarean text”. Shortly after the Freer Gospels appeared, Lake and Streeter judged it to be the earliest extant witness to this text-type in the Gospel of Mark. The whole theory of a Caesarean text of the Gospels was, however, disputed then, and decades later the claim that the Freer Gospels codex represents an early form of the Caesarea text was decisively shown to be fallacious by L. W. Hurtado (1981). Nevertheless, Lake was certainly a major figure in his time, with a number of publications on various subjects in NT study, although his lasting reputation is mainly in text-critical studies of the NT. His work in identifying and characterizing early groups of Gospels manuscripts, particularly Family 1 and (in collaboration with Silva Lake) Family 13 continues to be highly regarded. One of Lake’s other enduring contributions to promoting basic research in the manuscript tradition of the NT was to found (1934 with Silva Lake) the monograph series “Studies and Documents,” in which the Lakes and a number of other scholars published important studies thereafter.

The other major new manuscript development for NT scholars came in 1933, when Frederick Kenyon began publishing the twelve Chester Beatty biblical papyri. In NT studies, the two most important of these codices were P45, still the earliest extant manuscript containing the four Gospels and Acts (dated ca. 250 CE), and P46, the earliest extant collection of Paul’s epistles (dated ca. 200 CE). The Chester Beatty biblical papyri provided scholars with copies of NT writings a century or more earlier than anything previously known, and well before the official recognition of Christianity under Constantine. Kenyon was one of the most prolific biblical scholars of his time, but his most enduring contribution was undoubtedly the multi-volume publication of facsimiles and studies of the Chester Beatty manuscripts.

1.5. *Other Notable Projects and Scholars.* Another notable publication project of these decades was the five-volume work, *The Beginnings of Christianity*, edited by Kirsopp Lake and F. J. Foakes Jackson (1920-33), to which a number of important American and British scholars of the time were contributors. Volume three, by J. H. Ropes, is the most thorough text-critical study of Acts published, and remains an essential resource for this topic. Volume four, by Lake and H. J. Cadbury, is still probably the most important commentary on Acts from English-speaking scholars, and, together with the thirty-seven extensive notes by various scholars that make up

volume five, comprises a contribution of enduring value for all subsequent studies of Acts.

In addition to his contributions to this project, Cadbury published a number of other influential studies focused on Luke-Acts, and he is doubtlessly the most notable American scholar in the study of these texts. Beginning with *The Style and Literary Method of Luke* (1919-20), Cadbury published several more important works, including particularly *The Making of Luke-Acts* (1928). Cadbury emphasized the unity of Luke-Acts (whereas previously many scholars had tended to study Luke and Acts separately), and he also urged the importance of the historical and literary setting of its composition. The net effect of his studies was to underscore Luke-Acts as a work whose author drew upon literary conventions of his time. In these and other matters, Cadbury both anticipated and heavily influenced subsequent scholarly trends in the study of Luke-Acts.

Other notable American scholars of this time include E. J. Goodspeed (Chicago), who was internationally recognized for many contributions to the study of the NT and other early Christian writings, but became perhaps most noted for his theory that the epistle to the Ephesians had originated as a pseudonymous cover-letter for an early collection of Paul's letters.

Contemporary British scholars included F. C. Burkitt, particularly remembered for his studies of the Syriac NT, and in whose honour the Burkitt Medal in Biblical Studies is awarded by the British Academy. R. H. Charles produced numerous studies of extra-canonical texts and noted commentaries on Daniel and Revelation, but is most well known as general editor of *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (1913), a widely-used two-volume collection of introductions to and translations of a number of ancient texts directly relevant for NT study. In 1905 J. H. Moulton published the first edition of the prolegomena volume of what became a widely-used multi-volume grammar of NT Greek, subsequent volumes produced after Moulton's death by W. F. Howard (1919) and then Nigel Turner (1963, 1976). This four-volume work remains the most extensive discussion of NT Greek grammar in English. Moulton and George Milligan also prepared an important lexicon that drew upon then recently-available papyri to inform the meanings of many terms used in the NT, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (1930). William Ramsay's publications stretched across the later years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth, and is noted for his studies of

the historical setting of the NT, including *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia* (1904), *The Cities of St. Paul* (1907), and *Luke the Physician and Other Studies in the History of Religion* (1908). He is particularly known for his strong espousal of the “South Galatian” theory that the epistle to the Galatians was written early in Paul’s ministry to churches mentioned in the book of Acts. The Scottish scholar, H. A. A. Kennedy began his career with an insightful analysis of the relevance of the Septuagint for the Greek of the NT (1895), but was much more known in English-speaking circles for his careful appraisal of the work of the history of religion school on the putative influence of Hellenistic mystery religion on Paul (*St. Paul and the Mystery Religions*, 1913).

1.6. *Pioneering Catholic Scholars.* All of those mentioned to this point were of Protestant background. In the early decades of the century, the Roman Catholic Church took a negative stance toward biblical criticism, and did not facilitate scholarly study of the Bible as it had come to be practiced. But two French-speaking Catholic scholars of the day are noteworthy: Alfred Loisy and Marie-Joseph Lagrange. Loisy was heavily involved in the Catholic modernist movement, and his open rejection of papal teaching on the inerrancy of the Bible led eventually to his excommunication. His publications on the NT form a prodigious body, with major studies of the Gospels, Jesus, Acts, Paul’s epistles, Revelation, and major NT themes and issues. But, although highly prominent in his day and a scholar of undoubted abilities, his significance is mainly as a colourful demonstration that biblical criticism which stemmed heavily from German scholars and was shaped much by Enlightenment ideas could make its way into Paris and French Catholic circles of the early twentieth century.

In M.-J. Lagrange, however, we have a much more influential figure. After studies in law, theology, and languages, he was sent by his ecclesiastical superiors to Jerusalem to establish a centre for biblical studies. In 1890 Lagrange opened what became the École Biblique et Archéologique Française, and in 1892 launched the first Catholic journal devoted to critical study of the Scriptures, *Revue biblique*. When the Pontifical Biblical Commission was established in 1903, *Revue biblique* became its official journal. Although much more ready than Loisy to submit to church authorities, even indicating a readiness to recant his own opinions if ordered to do so, Lagrange was nevertheless attacked by ultra-conservative Catholics as a modernist. But Lagrange managed to survive, in large part through a shrewd use of Thomistic

philosophical thought to articulate and defend his critical interests. Like Loisy, Lagrange was prolific, publishing twenty-nine books and well over 200 articles. Aside from earlier studies on the OT, his books include major studies of the historical setting of the NT, large commentaries on various NT writings, and, his *magnum opus*, a multi-volume introduction to the study of the NT (1933-37). Volume two is an oft-noted discussion of NT textual criticism, and the final volume comprises a detailed engagement with the question of Christianity's relationship to Hellenistic religion.

It is important to observe that when the official Catholic attitude toward critical biblical scholarship later became more favorable (especially signified in the papal encyclical, *Divino afflante Spiritu*, 1943), Lagrange's rationale for biblical criticism was essentially adopted. So, in addition to his many studies, his larger contribution was in his own carefully thought out articulation of the warrants of Catholic biblical scholarship, which succeeded in shaping his Church's thinking at the highest levels. It is a degree of influence that is perhaps unique for any one figure in the history of NT scholarship.

1.7. *NT Scholars and Naziism*. Given the prominence of German NT scholarship in the early twentieth century, it is relevant to note its response to Naziism. Regrettably, some scholars such as Kittel (along with some other German NT scholars of the time, among whom Walther Grundmann was the most enthusiastically prolific representative) allowed their scholarly abilities to serve hateful propagandistic purposes of the Nazi regime. Some other scholars who opposed the Nazi regime experienced various hardships as a result, such as Lohmeyer, and Schmidt, who was one of the first to be deposed from his post (in Bonn) and moved to Switzerland, where at first he served as a pastor before being appointed in Basel (1935). Still others, among whom Bultmann is most prominent, were not sympathetic to Naziism but managed to retain their university posts by shrewdly avoiding direct conflict.

2. *After World War II*. The careers of a number of important scholars span the years before and after World War II. Hence, many of those already mentioned could equally be discussed as contributors in the decades immediately following the war. There were, however, notable developments in NT studies in the early post-war decades, and also the beginnings of interesting changes in the demography of NT scholarship. But in these years European Protestant scholars (especially German)

remained dominant in setting the agenda for others. The questions comprised a combination of historical-critical ones and overtly theological ones, reflecting the widely-shared interest of the time in “biblical theology” (a label for a variegated movement among biblical scholars focused on developing theology that was based on thorough historical investigation of the texts and critical reflection on their continuing meaning for the life of the churches).

Among the important figures of this time was Joachim Jeremias. Although he began his academic career in 1928, and took a position in Göttingen in 1935 where he remained thereafter until his retirement in 1968, it was really after the war that he achieved major salience, both in Germany and, through translation of his works, in other countries as well. Similarly to Dalman, Jeremias had lived in Palestine for an extended period, and his *Jerusalem zur Zeit Jesu* (1922, with several revised editions subsequently; ET 1969) reflects his interest and competence in probing the history of the holy land in Jesus’ time. Among his many other publications, his monumental studies, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (1935, with later revised editions; ET 1955, 1966), and *The Parables of Jesus* (1946, and later revised editions; ET 1954, 1963), are most well known and most influential. In both of these studies, he sought to strip off layers of tradition and lay bare Jesus’ own exact words and their original meaning. For Jeremias, the heart of the NT and of Christian faith was the preaching of Jesus. Although he likely would not approve of some of the directions that historical Jesus studies took after his death, his scholarly focus and his theological emphasis on Jesus’ own words anticipate the concerns and ambitions of a number of later scholars, including (ironically) the American project began in 1985, the Jesus Seminar. Many saw Jeremias and his approach as the main German alternative to Bultmann’s radical scepticism about historical knowledge of Jesus.

Another impressive figure whose career began prior to the war but who achieved his greatest prominence in the decades following it was the Swiss scholar, Oscar Cullmann. Early in his studies Cullmann enthusiastically welcomed Form Criticism as an approach to the Gospels and other NT writings. In his influential study, *The Earliest Christian Confessions* (1943; ET 1949), Cullmann identified creedal formulae in the NT, particularly confessions of Jesus as “Lord”, contending that they were early and crucially indicative of the heart of early Christian piety. Cullmann was both amazingly prolific and also successful in having many of his books translated into English very soon after their initial appearance in German and/or

French. This made him particularly famous in America and other English-speaking areas, where he was seen by many in the 1950s and 1960s as perhaps the only NT scholar who might merit comparison with Bultmann in both the quality of his historical-critical studies and also the sweep of his theological concerns. In *Christ and Time* (1946; ET 1952), Cullmann sketched his “salvation-history” approach to the entirety of the biblical canon, arguing for a coherence and meaning in the diversity of the biblical texts. In a later book he developed this approach more fully, *Salvation in History* (1965; ET 1967), overtly contrasting his views with the existentialist orientation of Bultmann and his followers. He was also one of the first to draw upon the Qumran scrolls as illuminating the first-century Palestinian setting of the Jesus and early Jewish Christians. His *The State in the New Testament* (1956; ET 1956) is indicative of post-war concerns about Nazi and Communist totalitarianism, but also remains an instructive study of the matter. His *The Christology of the New Testament* (1957; ET 1963) was perhaps the most important study of the subject subsequent to Bousset’s *Kyrios Christos* (1913). He wrote also on many other NT subjects including worship, baptism, resurrection (influentially contrasting this hope for bodily salvation with pagan ideas of survival of the soul), and on extra-canonical texts as well, such as the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Peter, and the so-called Pseudo-Clementine literature. Moreover, Cullmann participated vigorously in ecumenical discussions, and was an active observer of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). Although his theological programme was controversial and did not generate a large following, many of his studies of particular historical matters in the NT are milestones and remain valuable for scholarly investigation.

W.G. Kümmel’s significant publications began with his 1929 study of Romans 7 (*Römer 7 und die Bekehrung des Paulus*), which has been influential in scholarly understanding of the passage, taking it as Paul’s portrayal of the situation of non-Christians. His *Promise and Fulfilment* (1945; ET 1961) was a respected study of the eschatological element in Jesus’ preaching. His complete revision of the older Feine-Behm introduction to the NT (1963, 1973) quickly became widely regarded as the standard work in the subject especially in Germany and, via the English translation (1966, 1973) in many English-speaking circles as well.

Among British scholars whose careers spanned the years before and after the war, in addition to Dodd, whose considerable significance has already been mentioned, other noteworthy figures include Vincent Taylor. He produced a

historical investigation of the idea of Jesus' virginal conception (1920), an engagement with Form Criticism (1933) that served as an introduction to the then recent approach to the Gospels for many English-speaking students and scholars of the day, and widely-read studies of the theme of Jesus' sacrificial death (1937) and NT christology (1958). But it was his commentary on the Greek text of Mark that was probably his most well known publication (1952), superseding H. B. Swete's commentary and the most substantial English-language commentary for a few decades thereafter.

T. W. Manson is, however, likely still more well known and influential. From 1936 until his death in 1958 he held the post then regarded as the most prestigious NT position in England open to non-Anglicans, the Rylands Professorship in Manchester. His focus was on the Gospels and Jesus' teachings and view of himself, in publications that commenced with *The Teaching of Jesus*, 1931, 1955²) and continued on through several other volumes: *The Mission and Message of Jesus* (1937), *The Sayings of Jesus* (1937, 1949), and *The Servant-Messiah* (1953). Until the renewed focus on the Q sayings-source that emerged in the late 1960s, Manson's *The Sayings of Jesus* was regarded as the most substantial study on the subject by an English-speaking scholar, and it remains a classic analysis. Manson was also known for his distinctive view that Jesus' use of the expression "the Son of Man" originally connoted a corporate entity comprised of Jesus and his followers, a view that has not found much favour subsequently.

His Scottish contemporary, William Manson, also produced noted studies both before and after the war, many of his publications likewise focused heavily on Jesus and the Gospels, beginning with *Christ's View of the Kingdom of God* (1914), in which he addressed questions then raging about the relevance of Jewish apocalyptic for Jesus' preaching. Better known is his *Jesus the Messiah* (1943) engaged the Gospels in the light of Form Criticism. But he is probably most remembered for his book on Hebrews (1949), in which he laid out his view that behind Hebrews lay the teaching of Stephen and the "Hellenists" mentioned in the book of Acts.

Among American scholars, F. C. Grant (Union Seminary, New York) published extensively both for scholars and the wider public, edited *Anglican Theological Review* (1924-55), and later served on the translation committee of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. His early work included an enthusiastic discussion of Form Criticism (1934) that served as introduction to this approach for

many English-speaking students and scholars, and his English translations of key works by Martin Dibelius and Johannes Weiss opened these studies to much wider circles of scholars and students. His studies of the Roman and Jewish backgrounds of the NT were widely used well into the 1970s.

2. 1. *Bultmann and His Followers*. Unquestionably, however, the dominant figure of the post-war period was Rudolf Bultmann, whom many regard as the most noteworthy NT scholar of the century. We have noted his early contribution to the development of Form Criticism of the Gospels, which, along with a number of his other writings very much reflected the strong influences upon him of the history of religion scholars under whom he studied. But Bultmann early associated himself with Karl Barth and the “dialectical theology” movement that emerged in the Weimar period in Germany, which broke with liberal Protestant ethicism and re-emphasized classical biblical themes and Lutheran and Reformed categories. But Bultmann did not depart so fully from his liberal Protestant studies, distinctively combining its discomfort with dogma with selected emphases from then-current existentialist philosophy and with a warm piety that reflected his Lutheran upbringing. His magisterial commentary on the Gospel of John appeared in 1941, with numerous subsequent editions and English translation in 1971, and is regarded as one of the most impressive examples of rigorous critical analysis combined with theological interpretation. But his theory of a pre-Christian gnostic redeemer myth lying behind John is now commonly regarded as a major fallacy.

Several of his influential writings were on Jesus, reflecting his combination of historical scepticism about the Jesus tradition and his fervent devotion to the figure of Jesus. Bultmann’s *Jesus and the Word* (1926, ET 1934), and his controversial essay, “Neues Testament und Mythologie” (1941) provoked ensuing debate over myth in the NT that raged for a few decades thereafter. In his two-volume theology of the NT (1948, 1953; ET 1952, 1955), however, his synthesis of historical-critical and theological concerns is presented in its fullest scope. Even if his construal of some matters is now dated and unpersuasive, the sympathetic warmth of his treatment of Paul and John remains evident, even at times moving. Well after his retirement from his post in Marburg in 1951, Bultmann continued producing important works and exercising powerful influences upon the NT scholarly agenda of the day.

Bultmann also was impressive in attracting and mentoring doctoral students who then went on to their own successes as scholars. The “Bultmann school,”

however, as they were sometimes known, did not merely parrot their master, and comprise notable figures in their own right. One of these was Günter Bornkamm, whose studies on the Gospel of Matthew (beginning with his 1948 analysis of the Gospel story of the stilling of the storm) included early examples of what came to be called “Redaction Criticism” which focused on the authors of the Gospels as editors with individual theological aims and emphases. But Bornkamm’s *Jesus von Nazareth* (1956 and numerous subsequent editions, ET 1960) became his most widely-read publication, in which he departed from Bultmann’s view that historical information about Jesus was not theologically relevant for Christian faith. Bornkamm insisted that it was possible to determine some historical information about Jesus, and that this information could be theologically significant.

In taking this stance, Bornkamm allied himself with some others among the “Bultmann school,” especially Ernst Käsemann, who were referred to as pursuing what J. M. Robinson famously called “a new quest of the historical Jesus” (in the widely-noted book by that title that appeared in 1959). Käsemann, too, insisted that historical knowledge about Jesus was feasible and theologically vital. Käsemann also influentially emphasized the positive relevance of the eschatological outlook of the NT, calling apocalyptic thought the “mother of Christian theology, all of Christian life seen as standing between the crucifixion of Jesus and his future return in glory. Käsemann’s slender study of John 17 (*The Testament of Jesus*, 1966, ET 1968) and even more his commentary on Romans (1973, ET 1980) continue to be regarded as essential studies for scholars working on these texts. Among other Bultmann students, E. Haenchen is notable, especially for his widely-cited commentary on Acts (1956).

The influence of Bultmann and his school extended well beyond Germany, however. In the American scene, R. W. Funk and J. M. Robinson were avid promoters of the ideas and works of Bultmann and others associated with him. Robinson’s “new quest” volume mentioned above is indicative of this. Funk translated a number of publications by theologians linked to Bultmann such as G. Ebeling and E. Fuchs, and published them in several volumes in a series named *Journal for Theology and the Church* (1964-1974). Both Robinson and Funk later went on to become prominent scholars in their own right, although, ironically, they shed their early strong theological orientation, both of them adopting what might be called a kind of post-Christian stance.

2.2. *New Discoveries.* In these years there were three major discoveries of texts that were immediately of interest for NT scholars and subsequently proved to be of continuing significance. In 1945, at Nag Hammadi Egyptian peasants discovered a cache of leather-bound codices written in Coptic, containing 52 texts, including a number that were immediately seen as reflecting and deriving directly from early Christian gnostic circles. Among these texts, the Gospel of Thomas is undoubtedly the most famous. This collection of sayings of Jesus immediately confirmed that texts such as the “Q” sayings source circulated, and also vividly offered direct evidence of the sort of diversity that characterized Christianity in the early centuries. Publication of the Nag Hammadi texts began in 1956 but proceeded slowly until J. M. Robinson took on supervision of the task in 1970, producing a commendably rapid and careful completion of this work 1972-1977.

Very shortly thereafter (1947-1953), a much larger and earlier body of manuscripts of Jewish provenance was discovered by Bedouins at a site (Qumran) on the north-western shore of the Dead Sea. These were largely pre-Christian in origin, but provided scholars with a huge wealth of material for various questions about Jewish traditions in the time of Jesus, the state and use of OT texts in that time, and many other matters. The apocalyptic thrust and strong ethical dualism of the Qumran scrolls gave interesting parallels to emphases in the NT, forcing revision of earlier views that the NT reflected gnostic influences in dualistic language and imagery. Possible connections between the Qumran community and John the Baptist were also mooted, and similarities were noted between aspects of Qumran community structure and rules and church patterns reflected in the NT. Although some crucial texts were published in the 1950s and other Qumran texts continued to appear irregularly thereafter, it was not until the 1990s that the full body of material was put into the public domain.

A third major manuscript acquisition far less noted in the popular press but of enormous importance for NT textual scholarship was comprised in the several NT papyri of the Bodmer collection, which come from a discovery in 1952 in Egypt, and were acquired by the Bibliotheca Bodmeriana (Geneva). Of particular importance for NT studies are P66, dated ca. 200 CE and containing nearly all of the Gospel of John (published by Rudolf Kasser in 1956, 1958, rev. ed. 1962), and P75, dated third century CE and containing large portions of Luke and John (published by Victor Martin and Kasser in 1961). Along with the Chester Beatty papyri mentioned

already, these manuscripts further enhanced the ability of textual critics to trace the transmission of the Gospels back to the late second century or thereabouts. Important studies of these Bodmer papyri were made by C. L. Porter (1961, 1962), C. M. Martini (1966), and Gordon Fee (1966, 1968) among others. Fee in particular argued that these manuscripts showed that the so-called “Alexandrian” textual tradition was much older than some had suspected, and refuted the theory that this tradition had originated in a fourth-century recension of the Gospels.

2.3. *Gospel Studies*. The emergence of Redaction Criticism in studies by Bornkamm and others led to a flood of works pursuing this approach to the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke). On the widely shared view of the priority of Mark, these studies involved detailed attention to (often small) variations in the way that the authors of Matthew and Luke modified the traditions about Jesus in comparison with Mark’s account. Also scholars such as Willi Marxsen attempted redaction-critical analysis of Mark as well, these in the end proved considerably less successful. With no pre-Markan written source available, it was impossible convincingly to identify what the author of Mark may have done with the tradition that he used.

2.4. *Paul*. Whereas history of religion scholars had tended to portray Paul as influenced by the larger pagan religious environment of his day, in the post-war years several important studies argued that Paul’s Jewish background was much more relevant. W. D. Davies’ 1948 study, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, has rightly been described as one of the most important studies on Paul of the century, argued that Paul’s Christian thought was expressed almost entirely in categories and themes deriving from a Palestinian Jewish setting, and could be better understood by comparison with rabbinic materials and other Jewish texts of the early Roman period. Davies’ influence can be seen in later in the landmark study of Paul by E. P. Sanders (1977) noted later in this article. J. Munck’s 1954 volume, *Paulus und die Heilsgeschichte* (ET 1959), more polemically refuted earlier representations of Paul’s thought as a thoroughly Hellenized re-formulation of Christian faith radically different from Jerusalem Christianity. Munck’s influence shows up later as well, particularly in Krister Stendahl’s influential emphasis on Paul’s Jewishness (1963, 1976).

H. J. Schoeps (1959, ET 1961) made an impressive attempt to re-affirm basically the older history-of-religion approach, but modified in light of Davies and other work. Nevertheless, although Schoeps granted an influence on Paul from his Jewish background, he argued that Paul’s diaspora origins meant that in important

matters, innocently but tragically, he misunderstood Jewish tradition, and also that Paul was to be sharply distinguished from what Schoeps saw as the religious beliefs of Jewish Christians (“Ebionites” as Schoeps referred to them). This notion of Paul’s background either as de facto pagan or as a seriously adulterated form of Judaism continues on in some circles, especially in some popular thought. But from Davies’ study onward, the overwhelming majority of scholars came to recognize Paul’s essential Jewishness, even in his work and teaching as an apostle to the Gentiles.

2. 5. *Signs of Emergent Diversification.* As indicated earlier, critical NT studies before World War II was, with a few notable exceptions, essentially a Protestant enterprise, and heavily dominated by developments in German circles. Between World War II and the 1970s, especially in North America and Britain, we see early stages of a diversification in the confessional backgrounds of scholars who actively contributed to the field. The 1943 papal encyclical noted earlier authorized a much greater Roman Catholic commitment to critical biblical studies, prompting a number of young Catholics to take advanced studies to equip themselves for a scholarly career. For some, the École Biblique in Jerusalem served, but others took studies in major non-Catholic centres. Among these, perhaps the most notable were the two American Catholics, R. E. Brown and J. A. Fitzmyer. Each took a PhD at Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore) in the late 1950s, and they quickly made valuable contributions to NT studies. Brown’s two-volume commentary on John (1966, 1970), the first volume published just eight years after his PhD, remains one of the essential contributions of the genre. Fitzmyer’s contributions commenced with technical studies of the Qumran scrolls (1966), the Aramaic language (1967), and a small but well-received study of Paul’s theology (1967).

Brown and Fitzmyer went on to become prolific scholars, their works respected internationally and across confessional lines. This respect was reflected in them each being elected as president of the Catholic Biblical Association, the Society of Biblical Literature, and the Society for New Testament Studies (the only two figures thus far to have held presidential positions in all three scholarly societies). There were also European Catholics who emerged in this period as significant NT scholars, including figures such as Rudolf Schnackenburg and Wilhelm Thüsing, as harbingers of the increasing contributions of Catholic NT scholarship in the succeeding decades of the century.

In the same period as this emergence of a new Catholic biblical scholarship, there were also moves to stimulate a greater participation of Protestant Evangelicals in mainstream NT studies, particularly in America and Britain. The opening of Fuller Theological Seminary in 1947 represented an explicit move to promote a reformation among conservative Protestant circles in America, away from anti-intellectualism and cultural isolationism, and towards an engagement in mainstream intellectual and cultural life. In NT studies, the key Fuller figure in the first decades was G. E. Ladd, who sought himself to move as a scholar from his very conservative origins to a somewhat more progressive and engaged scholarship in his field. In hindsight, two early portents of subsequently larger American Evangelical efforts to participate in mainstream scholarship were Ladd's *Jesus and the Kingdom*, and R. N. Longenecker's *Paul: Apostle of Liberty*, both published in 1964 by Harper & Row, a respected trade publisher of the day not associated with Evangelical authors. Longenecker (then a young scholar at Wheaton College) went on to a distinguished career (Toronto) in which he mentored numerous doctoral students and produced many further publications in the field. Another scholar early in the emergence of Evangelical scholarship was E. E. Ellis, whose 1957 study of Paul's use of the OT was the first of many subsequent contributions. As the case with American Catholic biblical scholarship (although considerably more slowly and less saliently), by the later decades of the century a number of American Evangelical scholars were participating more robustly and confidently in mainstream NT studies and some were winning respect for their contributions.

In Britain, the establishment of the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical and Theological Research, and Tyndale House (a biblical-studies research library and residential facilities opened in 1944) were clear indications of a similar aspiration. However, whereas in this period American Evangelical scholars tended to hold posts in theological seminaries and colleges overtly identified as Evangelical in character (e.g. Fuller, and Wheaton College), the aspirations behind the Tyndale Fellowship and Tyndale House included the scholarly preparation of young Evangelicals to compete for university posts and participate more fully in mainstream scholarship. The key NT exemplar and inspiration was F. F. Bruce, a Scottish scholar trained in classics who founded the Department of Biblical History and Literature in the University of Sheffield (1947), and was later appointed to the respected Rylands Chair in Manchester (1959). Bruce's published output is remarkable, including commentaries

on Acts, John, and Pauline epistles, and many other topics in NT studies. He was not known for original ideas or approaches, but was respected as a judicious and careful scholar with wide competence. In his years in Manchester (1959-1978), he also mentored many PhD students, among whom many (perhaps most) were from an Evangelical background in Britain and various other countries (including many from North America). Thereby, Bruce was particularly influential in the development of other Evangelicals as serious NT scholars internationally. In Britain especially, from the 1970s onwards NT scholars of Evangelical background were remarkably successful in obtaining major university posts and in making notable contributions to scholarship.

2.6. *Christological Matters.* The approach taken in Cullmann's important 1957 study of NT christology noted earlier focused very much on important terms by which Jesus' significance is expressed in the NT, such as "Christ," "Son of God," "Lord," and "Son of Man." In the following decade or so, a number of other studies appeared that had a similar focus. F. Hahn's 1963 analysis of the honorific titles used in the Gospels was particularly noted and influential for a time. Likewise, H. E. Tödt's 1959 study (ET 1965) of the Gospels saying referring to "the Son of Man" both reflected and promoted the great interest of the time in this particular expression, and in Tödt's particular focus on the "Q" sayings source was also a harbinger later intense focus on this matter. W. Kramer (1963, ET 1966) produced a detailed analysis of Paul's use of major christological titles that remains important. Under the impact of such works, by the 1970s many scholars had come to think of "NT christology" as almost entirely a study of christological titles; but later studies brought about refreshing changes in the questions and approach to analysis of the significance of Jesus in the NT and early Christianity.

2.7. *Other Notable Developments.* The post-war period was also marked by a vigorous renewal and expansion of scholarly work and publication, and fervent efforts to make NT studies a truly international discipline, a motivation in part inspired by the desire to overcome the traumatic national divisions of the war. The initial meeting of the *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas* (Society for New Testament Studies) in London in 1947 is a clear illustration of this move. Although the idea of an international academic society devoted to NT studies had been mooted as early as 1937, the war had prevented further steps. From an initial small membership almost entirely European and British, SNTS became a progressively larger and more truly

international scholarly body. By the later years of the century, the membership was in the hundreds, with a large number of members from North America and a growing number from nations in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. The society's journal, *New Testament Studies*, first appeared in 1954 and is highly respected, publishing articles in English, German, and French, reflecting the multi-lingual scope of papers in the SNTS annual meetings. Subsequently, the SNTS Monograph Series was launched, quickly becoming a prestigious venue for scholarly books in the field.

In 1956, another international journal devoted to the field, *Novum Testamentum*, made its debut. This journal also publishes in several languages, and the associated book series, *Novum Testamentum Supplements*, is another respected venue for scholarly books on NT studies.

In textual criticism, two major projects got underway. The International Greek NT Project (IGNTP) commenced in 1948 with the aim of producing a new critical apparatus reflecting all relevant witnesses to the NT text. The group was made up of British and North American scholars, but the size of the task, the complexity of certain methodological issues involved, and the limited resources available resulted in very slow progress. By the end of the century the IGNTP had managed only a two-volume set on Luke (1984, 1987). The Institute for NT Textual Research, established by Kurt Aland in Münster (1959), was far more productive. Under Aland's energetic direction, the Institute acquired films of NT manuscripts (eventually, more than 90% of the ca. 5,600 manuscripts extant), and became the international centre for NT text-critical work. From 1963 onward, Aland also took charge of successive editions of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*, and from the Institute came a number of other important publications, including an essential descriptive list of NT Greek manuscripts (1963), a concordance of the Greek NT (1975-83), and other works.

3. *1970s and Thereafter.* By the 1970s, and increasingly thereafter, there were further noteworthy developments in NT studies and also a significantly increasing diversity in the scholars contributing to the field and in the questions and approaches pursued.

3.1. *A Renewed Historicist Emphasis.* From at least the nineteenth century onward scholarly study of the NT very much involved attention to historical questions, and the history of religion school tended to focus almost entirely on a

historicizing approach to the NT. In the 1930s and for several decades thereafter, the history of religions approach was eclipsed by a more explicitly theological emphasis. Among the reasons were the impact of the “dialectical theology” movement (associated with K. Barth and others), Bultmann’s combination of historical and theological concerns, and several other factors. In the 1970s, however, especially in North America, there were several signs of a renewed interest in identifiably history-of-religion questions and in particular scholarly works of the pre-war period that represented a strong historicizing approach.

Indicative of this were the American translations of several earlier German works, such as Bousset’s *Kyrios Christos* (1913, ET 1970) and W. Bauer’s *Orthodoxy and Heresy* (1934, ET 1971, the product of a team of NT scholars based in Philadelphia). Bauer’s book, claiming that early Christianity was radically diverse and that versions later deemed heretical were, in some important locales, initially dominant, had received only limited attention after its publication. But the translation brought wide and enthusiastic interest. Transplanted German scholars such as Hans Dieter Betz (Chicago) and Helmut Koester (Harvard) were also influential in promoting a history-of-religion emphasis, especially in the American setting. Indeed, Koester later indicated that his own scholarly approach was heavily shaped by Bauer’s book in particular.

But, other studies in the 1970s and thereafter, while taking up the classic history of religion questions, influentially argued for very different conclusions. Perhaps the most well-known example, Martin Hengel’s monumental two-volume work, *Judaism and Hellenism* (1969, 1973, ET 1974), gave a wide-ranging and detailed analysis that effectively challenged earlier simplistic distinctions between “Jewish” and “Hellenistic” traditions that had been widely used, e.g., in claims about Paul’s supposedly Hellenized gospel in strong distinction to Jewish Christian beliefs. From this major study onward, Hengel’s sizeable body of subsequent publications made him one of the most salient and influential NT scholars of the time, with substantial studies of Paul, the Gospels of Mark and John, NT christology, and also many discussions of the Jewish setting of the NT.

The work of a number of other scholars was either inspired in part by Hengel’s studies, or at least compatible with them. Hengel’s endorsement of L. W. Hurtado’s *One God, One Lord* (1988) referred to a “new *religionsgeschichtliche Schule*,” made up of a number of scholars of various nationalities and confessional stances whose

work involved a renewed emphasis on the particular importance of the Jewish context of Jesus and earliest Christianity.

But other scholars urged a renewal of theological exegesis, such as W. Wink and R. B. Hays in America (whose book on NT ethics generated wide discussion), F. Watson in Britain, and P. Stuhlmacher in Germany. Their specific proposals varied, as did their attitudes toward historical criticism, but their calls for theological engagement with the NT reflected the concerns of a wider number of other scholars, and also obviously the concerns of Christian churches.

3.2. *The Gospels' Genre.* There was also renewed interest in the literary genre of the Gospels, as scholars came to question the earlier widespread view promoted by Form Criticism and explicitly articulated by Schmidt that the Gospels comprised a unique kind of literature. An early expression of the re-opened question was the 1970 re-publication of journal articles by C. W. Votaw (originally published in 1915) in a small booklet series widely read by scholars and students at the time. Votaw had argued that the Gospels could be likened to Roman-era biography, and Schmidt's influential study had been intended to refute Votaw. But in the 1970s, a number of scholars, especially in America (e.g., C. H. Talbert, 1977), argued that Votaw's approach was essentially correct. By 1987, in his wide-ranging study of the NT and its literary "environment," D. E. Aune concluded that the Gospels were best seen as a distinctive sub-genre of the broad biographical type of writings of the Roman period. A few years later, R. A. Burridge's 1992 book presented a similar conclusion, proposing that there was a broad category of Roman-era "bios" literature in which the Gospels could rightly be set. Although some scholars continued to emphasise the distinctive qualities of the Gospels, by the closing decades of the century most seemed ready to accept such a view.

3.3. *Literary and Rhetorical Criticism.* NT scholars also began to approach the NT writings with insights and categories borrowed from studies of modern literature. As narrative texts, the Gospels lent themselves to this kind of analysis more readily. R. A. Culpepper's *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* (1983) is particularly noteworthy, both for its own insights and for its influence upon subsequent literary-critical studies of John and other Gospels. In some cases, studies drew more upon modern literary-critical concepts (such as the "implied author"), but in other cases scholars focused more on noting the conventions and features of Roman-era literature (e.g., studies likening Acts to ancient novels or historical writings). Some efforts later seemed

faddish, such as “structuralist” analysis, but in general there was a growing appreciation of NT texts as literature.

Other scholars approached various NT texts in light of ancient rhetorical conventions. H. D. Betz’s 1979 commentary on Galatians was an early instance that stimulated others thereafter. As ancient rhetoric involved conventions and devices of effective speaking and writing, the clear concerns with persuasion and correction in Paul’s letters made them particularly suitable for rhetorical analysis.

3.4. *Pauline Studies.* E. P. Sanders’ monumental *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (1977) alluded to earlier is surely among the most influential NT publications of the latter decades of the century. It was credited by J. D. G. Dunn with establishing a “new perspective” on Paul, challenging traditional views that Paul’s gospel represented primarily a message of grace over against Jewish legalism. A re-appraisal of the relationship between Paul and his Jewish background had begun earlier, as we noted already, but Sanders’ sharp criticism of previous scholarship, particularly his stinging comments about Luther and much German scholarship, helped to make his book a focus of lively debate. In the decades following, there were many articles and books on Paul and his relationship to the Torah and Judaism, some of which argued against Sanders in particular matters or more broadly; but it remains necessary to engage Sanders’ work in any study of these matters.

3.5. *Social and Anthropological Approaches.* Another important example of the diversification in approaches and questions was the emergence of a new interest in social description and analysis of the Christian groups that lay behind the NT texts. Because Paul’s letters were sent to identifiable places and groups, these texts lent themselves most readily to this kind of study, and the earliest and most influential works focused particularly on them. Though the work of an historian rather than a NT scholar, Edwin Judge’s slender 1960 study, *The Social Pattern of Christian Groups in the First Century*, seemed suddenly to receive attention and stimulated a number of valuable works. Among these, W. A. Meeks’ *The First Urban Christians* (1983), which focused specifically on the social features of Paul’s churches, drew upon earlier studies by A. J. Malberbe and others, but became surely the most widely noted.

Meeks and those on whom he drew took a “social description” approach, essentially making observations about the social phenomena identifiable in Paul’s letters. Other scholars employed somewhat more technical sociological categories

and, thereafter, approaches that drew upon various anthropological theories and models. B. Malina and P. Esler are prominent advocates, and a number of scholars formed the “Contexts” group to explore this sort of study further. In Germany, G. Theissen produced important studies on the Gospels and Paul from a sociological perspective that were widely noted. These and a number of his other works were translated into English ensuring a wider international impact.

3.6. *“Q” Studies*. In the 1989 massive review of NT scholarship edited by Epp and MacRae, there is no section on the “Q” sayings source, but shortly thereafter Q became a major subject of scholarly discussion. D. Lührmann's 1969 redaction-critical study had ascribed to Q certain theological emphases, and the volume co-authored by H. Koester and J. M. Robinson contained essays arguing that Q represented a distinctive and early genre of text about Jesus that could be likened to other ancient collections of sayings of wise men (*Trajectories through Early Christianity*, 1971). But it was J. Kloppenborg's 1987 study, *The Formation of Q*, which propelled Q into the scholarly limelight. Kloppenborg developed further the theory that Q had gone through several redactional stages, argued that sayings of an apocalyptic thrust were added in secondary stages, and urged that Q fundamentally represented a very different type of early Christian belief about Jesus in which his teachings were central and his death and resurrection were not emphasized. After Kloppenborg's study, a veritable flurry of other publications appeared, including Kloppenborg's very useful *Q Parallels* (1988), which greatly facilitates analysis of relevant Gospels evidence, whatever one's view of the controversial issues. A number of other scholars aligned broadly with Kloppenborg's positions and others were firmly critical of them. In 2000, Robinson, Kloppenborg and colleagues issued a massive volume presented as a critical edition of Q, and in the same year Kloppenborg published a wide-ranging study that addressed the issues involved in the scholarly discussion. Indeed, major interest and publications on Q have continued beyond the century. Many, however, perhaps most NT scholars, while granting the plausibility of a Q sayings source, were dubious about claims that it represented a distinctive kind of early Christianity, that discrete redactional stages could be identified, and that the putative critical edition of Q was much more than an elaborate exercise in speculation. Among those offering perspectives different from Kloppenborg were D. C. Allison (USA), C. M. Tuckett (Britain), and J. Schröter (Germany).

3.7. *Historical Jesus*. Beginning with C. H. Dodd's final book, *The Founder of Christianity* (1970), a remarkable flood of studies of the historical figure of Jesus appeared in the final decades of the century. Notable publications include G. Vermes' *Jesus the Jew* (1973), and B. F. Meyer's *The Aims of Jesus* (1979, 2002²), E. P. Sanders' celebrated *Jesus and Judaism* (1985), and works by J. D. Crossan (1991), J. P. Meier (three-volumes, 1991, 1994, 2001), and N. T. Wright (1996). The "new quest" of the 1950s and 1960s had been shaped very much by theological questions arising within the Bultmann school, but this so-called "third quest" involved scholars of various religious persuasions, and represented a renewed interest and controversy over what we can say with confidence about Jesus.

One of the more controversial projects of this period was the Jesus Seminar, founded by R. W. Funk in 1985, and devoted to determining what in the Jesus tradition can be treated with confidence as authentically Jesus. The focus on Jesus as a historical figure was unexceptionable, but the assumptions and approach of the Jesus Seminar (e.g., the notion that Jesus was essentially a wandering sage and that eschatological ideas were not significant in his message) made their work questionable in the eyes of many other scholars.

3.8. *Feminist Studies and Women Scholars*. Reflecting major changes in western cultures regarding women in the 1960s and thereafter, significant scholarly studies representing various feminist approaches appeared, especially in North America. Of these, the works of E. S. Fiorenza are certainly the most well known and influential. In particular, Fiorenza's *In Memory of Her* (1983), a magisterial study arguing that within the NT were reflections of an early more egalitarian place of women in churches, and subsequent studies cemented her place as the leading feminist scholar in the NT field.

It is also noteworthy that from the 1970s onward an increasing number of NT scholars were women, among whom a growing number achieved prominence in the field. In the North American scene, A. Y. Collins, B. Gaventa, C. Osiek, P. Fredriksen, A.-J. Levine, A. Reinhartz, and M. M. Thompson are illustrative. In Britain, M. D. Hooker held the prestigious Lady Margaret's Chair in Cambridge, and in 2005 was awarded the Burkitt Medal in biblical studies by the British Academy, as was M. Thrall (Bangor) in 1998. J. Lieu's professorial appointment in London is another instance of British women attaining prominence in the field.

3.10. *English-speaking Scholarship.* The increasingly influential role that North American scholarship came to have in shaping the agenda of NT studies was probably a result of multiple factors, one of which was the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL). Established in 1880 with a membership essentially North American, from the 1970s onward, initially under the leadership of R. W. Funk (1968-73), the SBL grew in size (now several thousand members), outlook, and activities to become a major force promoting and facilitating biblical studies internationally. It is an American academic society with an increasingly active international profile and membership. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, launched by the SBL in 1881, is a premier journal in biblical studies. Scholars Press (estab. 1974) enabled the SBL to expand its role in publishing in the field, which included further journals and several monograph series. After the demise of Scholars Press (1999), the SBL has continued an extensive publishing program its own name.

As well, the SBL facilitated major collaborative groups focused on particular subjects that were influential, such as, groups on the genre of “apocalypse”, and on the formal features of Paul’s letters, and Pauline theology. J. M. Robinson led an SBL group that produced the critical edition of Q.

Although British scholarship did not shape the agenda of the field as widely, notable figures of this period included C. F. D. Moule, J. D. G. Dunn (a substantial body of publications focused heavily on Pauline studies and christology), G. N. Stanton (particularly known for studies on Matthew, and winner of the Burkitt Medal in 2006), and R. Bauckham, whose impressive publications ranged over various texts and topics.

3.11. *Other Noteworthy Publishing Developments.* The monograph series, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*, became a major venue for books in NT studies, and from the 1980s onward published increasingly volumes in English as well as German. The *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* appeared in the 1970s, initially as one of several academic publishing projects from a press established by scholars in the University of Sheffield. The companion monograph series, *JSNT Supplements*, issued a large number of volumes.

3.11. *The Future?* By the end of the century, NT studies was a much larger academic endeavour than ever before, with much more being published and by a wider range of scholars. Many newer interpretative approaches and foci were evident (e.g., various gender-related emphases). Moreover, scholars in Latin America, Africa,

and Asia were coming to have a more visible place internationally. These scholars often advocated "Liberationist" and "Post-Colonial" approaches, in which the cultural situations of readers in these countries were programmatically crucial, and the more dominant historically oriented studies were criticized as elitist. Yet historical-critical inquiry and traditional exegetical concerns continued to be pursued vigorously.

At the end of the century, no particular scholar or school of thought dominated, as had been the case in Bultmann's heyday. Indeed, it was more difficult to posit a centre in the field or to predict where the main lines of future development might lie. How many of the newer approaches would turn out to be temporary fads, or ultimately unproductive? Was the diversification in approaches and concerns fissiparous or a positive development? In any case, there was no sign of decline in interest in the NT or in the readiness of younger scholars to commit themselves to the demanding task of contributing to this lively field.

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